



4-H Council Structure

4-H Council Handbook Tip Sheet

The purpose of the 4-H Council is to help plan and implement a 4-H program that is consistent with the mission and vision of Purdue Extension and the Indiana 4-H Youth Development Program. The county 4-H program should offer a variety of high-quality 4-H youth educational opportunities, be adequately supported, and be in accordance with the developmental needs of today's youth.

Goals and Objectives

The 4-H Council's goals should be similar to and supportive of the Indiana 4-H program goals. In addition, three to five local, long-term goals with short-term objectives should be established. Some objectives that the 4-H Council may want to consider are:

- Conduct an annual program-planning process to assure the relevancy of the program.
- Maintain and support a year-round 4-H program.
- Maintain and support 4-H professionals.
- Assure representation of the county's demographic categories on the 4-H Council, and in 4-H membership and volunteers.
- Promote 4-H year-round in local media.

Membership

Membership on the 4-H Council should provide broad-based support from youth and adults who work for the benefit of the total 4-H Youth Development program. They must understand the planning function.

It is recommended that the 4-H Council consist of 12-30 members. These members should represent all geographic areas of the county, include different ages (youth, young adults, and older adults), include all ethnic groups in the county, and have a mix of community leaders. Members should understand various family structures and economic levels.

It is the policy of the Purdue University Cooperative Extension Service that all persons have equal opportunity and access to its educational programs, services, activities, and facilities without regard to race, religion, color, sex, age, national origin or ancestry, marital status, parental status, sexual orientation, disability or status as a veteran.

Purdue University is an Affirmative Action institution. This material may be available in alternative formats.

The selection and renewal process of the membership is critical. By-laws should establish a selection and renewal process as well as a plan for change in membership. Members must adhere to all 4-H volunteer screening and re-enrollment procedures.

Responsibilities

The mission of Extension, 4-H, and the needs of local residents must be reviewed on a regular basis to ensure that 4-H programs are helping youth gain the knowledge and skills that they need for their future.

Purdue Extension is supported with federal, state, and county tax dollars, which lead to obligations related to the use of these funds. Some ways to be efficient include:

- Conducting meetings in a democratic way (i.e. using parliamentary procedure).
- Using a written agenda that is communicated to the members.
- Valuing different opinions.
- Making group decisions.
- Sharing the workload through the use of committees.
- Operating within a consistent, yet flexible, structure (i.e., constitution).
- Following financial procedures.
- Communicating decisions clearly and within a reasonable time frame (i.e. posting meeting minutes).
- Communicating and interacting with the 4-H Youth Development Educator.
- Staying current on issues relevant to positive youth development.

To learn more about the 4-H Council Structure, please visit the 4-H Youth Development Council Structure section of the Indiana 4-H Youth Development Council Handbook (<http://bit.ly/4HCouncilStructure>).