

January 9, 2024

Indiana 4-H Policies & Procedures Changes 2024

Project and club leaders,

Important! Please read below! There are changes at the state level that will affect our requirements for completion of 4-H projects.

Indiana 4-H has put into place some new policies and procedures for the upcoming 4-H year. These policies and procedures have been put into place in all Indiana counties to allow for 4-H to be consistent throughout the state.

Please read below the new section that has been added at the state level:

“A 4-H experience may include a variety of options and must not be misinterpreted solely as exhibition of a project at a local, county, or state fair. There are a number of ways that a young person may participate in the 4-H Youth Development Program in addition to the club-based option. Participating in these 4-H opportunities enable the youth to build skills that will serve them well throughout their adult lives.

Some of these participation options do not include the preparation of a specific exhibit by an individual that would be on display at a fair or similar event. In some cases, the youths’ actual participation may be the final product that results in their completion of a year of 4-H. Some examples of this participation include working as a team to develop a robot for a workshop or challenge; participating in a Spark Club experience; participating in State 4-H Band or Chorus; taking part in a science training or experiment; participating in an after school 4-H experience; etc.

Language of “completing” a 4-H experience should be avoided or requiring a specific output. Every 4-Hers experience may be different. 4-H members are considered complete in their 4-H educational experience for the year when they have (1) completed the 4-H member enrollment process prior to the established and published date for enrolling; and (2) had an officially recognized 4-H volunteer/Extension Educator verify the existence of the completed project/subject or the member’s participation in a 4-H educational experience – this could be in the form of an exhibit, poster, report, presentation, etc. Or, a member may choose to submit a completed record sheet in lieu of an exhibit to complete the club- or fair-based 4-H project/subject. The 4-H record sheet will be based on printed or web-based educational materials (used by Indiana 4-H Youth Development) and submitted prior to the established and published date.

Though exhibiting in local, county, and state exhibits/fairs is not required for project completion, as it does not necessarily relate directly to content and skills learned in the development of the 4-H project, project exhibition is encouraged as a continuation of the educational experience. Per state and federal guidelines, volunteers and Extension Educators may not require youth to attend 4-H club meetings in order to complete 4-H or exhibit their work, unless required by the state 4-H office for safety.”

If you would like to view more of the state policies and procedures, they can be found on the web [here](#).

What does this mean for project completion?

Members will be considered complete in each project if they turn in the physical project, poster, report, presentation, check-in their animal, etc by the established project check-in deadline **OR** they may choose to submit a completed record sheet in lieu of an exhibit.

Project Check-In Information

Manuals and record sheets will still be offered and encouraged for youth to complete and turn in with their projects. Project leaders should still accept and encourage these as projects are checked in, but they are only required to turn in the exhibit **or** the record sheet. Language in the handbook will change from “required” to “encouraged or recommended.”

Workshops and Alternate Activities

Project leaders will be expected to still hold workshops and alternate activities as they have in the past, however workshops and alternate activities cannot be counted toward eligibility of participation at the fair. An exception to this would be in the case of meetings required for safety- such as shooting sports. Livestock may still offer quizzes for youth who would like additional educational resources, but **are not** required for exhibition. Continuing to offer the workshops and quizzes as an educational opportunity for our youth is very important and the heart of what 4-H is all about. While we can't require youth to attend these opportunities, we want to strongly encourage them to do so. This is the best way for them to gain the most out of their 4-H experience.

Manuals

Manuals have already been ordered for the 2024 year. We will be distributing these just as we have in the past for club leaders to pass out to youth. Youth should be encouraged to utilize these manuals for educational purposes. Again, manual submission upon project check-in **cannot be** required moving forward, but we will certainly accept any manuals at check-in that youth would like to turn in.

Other Information

Projects that require a special card, notebook, etc. will still need these supplemental materials when turning their projects in at check in. Some of these include craft cards for arts and crafts, recipe cards for foods, notebooks for consumer clothing and other projects.

Additionally, some animal projects offer special awards/supreme champion awards. These can still be offered and used as a way to encourage youth to participate in workshops, complete record sheets/manuals and more.

While I understand these are several changes all at once, please understand that this is happening statewide. We want to ensure we are following state policies and procedures for all of our programming. The level of dedication and encouragement to our youth from all of you is incredible, and I am confident that it will continue into this year as well. I encourage you to explain to youth that by going above and beyond (completing record sheets, manuals, workshops, etc.) will only enhance their entire 4-H experience.

As you digest this new information, please feel free to email me at stephanieg@purdue.edu if you have any additional questions. I want to ensure we are all on the same page moving into the 2024 4-H season. If needed, I may schedule an opportunity to meet in person as a group. If this happens, I will be sure to inform you all. I truly appreciate everything you do for Boone County 4-H, and I can't wait for the upcoming year!

All the best,

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