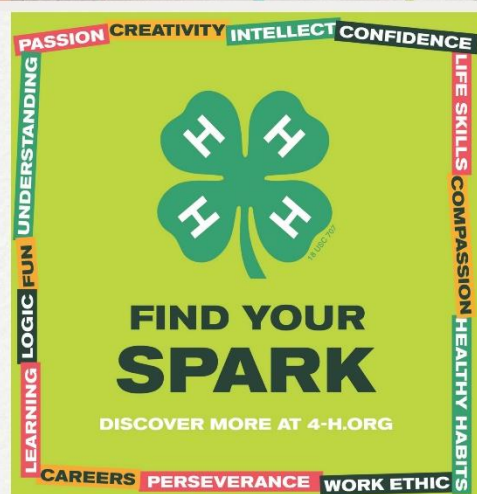


Erie County 4-H Handbook





Please take a few minutes to review the information found in this Family Guide. The guide will help you to better understand the unique educational and social opportunities that 4-H can provide for your whole family.

Sitting as a family and reading this guide together can help you and your children. This is the first step to achieving the full benefits of the 4-H Youth Development Program in Erie County.

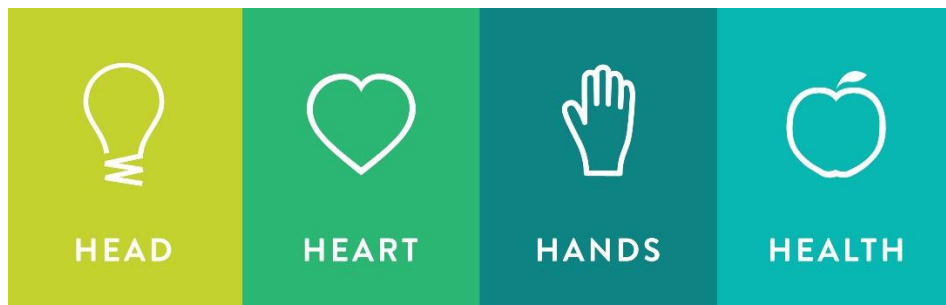
YOUR ERIE COUNTY 4-H STAFF

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4-H CLUB YEAR

Activities/Programs by Month

Our Program year runs October 1st-September 30th

OCTOBER

- National 4-H Week
- Agri-Business Career Conference
- 4-H Re-Enrollment Begins
- 4-H Open House

NOVEMBER

- CCE Annual Meeting
- Public Presentation Kick Off
- Beef Orientation

DECEMBER

- 4-H Re-Enrollment Due
- Dairy Cattle Orientation
- Llama Orientation

JANUARY

- Steer Registration Due
- Beef Market Program Begins
- 4-H Public Presentation Training
- County Horse Bowl
- Dairy Bowl Practice Sessions begin

FEBRUARY

- 4-H County Public Presentation Days
- County Horse Communications
- Market Poultry orders due

MARCH

- 4-H County Public Presentation Days
- County 4-H Hippology
- Regional 4-H Horse Bowl
- 4-H Livestock Meetings
- 4-H Western District Public Presentations (or April)
- Ag. Literacy (3rd Week)
- Pheasant Program Orientation
- Goat Orientation
- Sheep Orientation
- Swine Orientation

★Project nights offered at least once a month

APRIL

- 4-H State Dairy, Horse Bowl
- Regional Hippology
- Regional Horse Communications
- Cornell Vet School Open House
- 4-H STARR Retreat (NYS Fairgrounds)
- 4-H Scholarship Applications available
- Glads for 4-Hers Meeting
- County 4-H Fundraiser-Flower Sale-Ordering

MAY

- Horse Paperwork Due
- Livestock Paperwork Due (Sheep, Swine, Goat Dog)
- 4-H Capital Days (Albany)
- Animal Crackers (Cornell)
- Textile Review
- Chef Challenge
- State Public Presentations
- Scholarship Applications Due
- County 4-H Fundraiser-Flower sale delivery

JUNE

- 4-H Horse Show
- 4-H Cornell Career Exploration (Cornell) Awards Trip
- 4-H Livestock Meetings

JULY

- 4-H Fair Entries Due
- 4-H Workdays at the Youth Development Building at the Fairgrounds
- 4-H Livestock Meetings
- 4-H Horse Shows

AUGUST

- Erie County Fair
- New York State Fair
- Re-Enrollment packets out to families

SEPTEMBER

- Leader Reports Due
- 4-H Celebration



A MESSAGE TO PARENTS

When your child enrolls in 4-H, your whole family becomes part of the 4-H educational experience.

- You are very important to the success your child will have in the 4-H program.
- You are encouraged to attend monthly meetings and project meetings with your child whenever possible.
- Parents are encouraged to attend all county-wide 4-H events with their youth.

Your key role is to support your children. You can support your child in the commitment they make, help them think through decisions and see that they reach their goals. There are several ways for you to help your child get the most out of a 4-H experience. This can be accomplished by:

- Attending 4-H meetings and other special 4-H events.
- Making sure your child's/children's enrollment forms and fees are completed and submitted to the 4-H Office on schedule.
- Guiding your child's project work and encouraging completion without doing the work for the 4-H member. It's not how the project looks but what the member has learned that is important.
- Making it possible for your child to participate in a variety of 4-H activities at the club, county, regional and state levels.
- Being an example of good sportsmanship so that your child will learn to appreciate the success of others. 4-H is not about getting a blue ribbon, but about mastering the skills needed to succeed.
- Making others in your community aware of 4-H.
- Telling your child that you are PROUD of their accomplishments.





WELCOME TO THE WORLD OF 4-H

What is 4-H?

4-H is the largest out-of-school youth education program in the United States. 4-H can be found in every U.S. county and U.S. territory. Total youth reached by 4-H each year in the United States exceeds 6.5 million. 4-H reaches beyond the U.S. borders to some 82 countries world-wide.

4-H is the youth development component of the Cornell University Cooperative Extension System. In 4-H young people between the ages of 5 and 19 participate in individual and group learning experiences that help them learn life skills. At the National level, 4-H is under the leadership of the United States Department of Agriculture. In New York, 4-H is part of Cornell University. The State 4-H Office is located on the campus in Ithaca. 4-H leaders are considered volunteer staff members of the University. At the local level, each county has an Extension office, which administers the 4-H program.

The 4-H youth development movement began more than 100 years ago. It evolved from rural youth programs created by land-grant college and university researchers and the United States Department of Agriculture to introduce new technology to what was then a country of primarily rural communities. As our nation's economic and demographic profiles become more diverse, 4-H adapts and expands to meet the needs of all youth.

4-H'ers are...

4X more likely to give back to their communities

2X more likely to make healthier choices

2X more likely to participate in STEM activities



4-H Mission:

4-H empowers youth to reach their full potential, working and learning in partnership with caring adults.

What the Four Hs Mean:

Head, Heart, Hands, and Health are the four Hs in 4-H, and they are the four values members work on through fun and engaging programs.

- Head – Managing, Thinking
- Heart – Relating, Caring
- Hands – Giving, Working
- Health – Being, Living

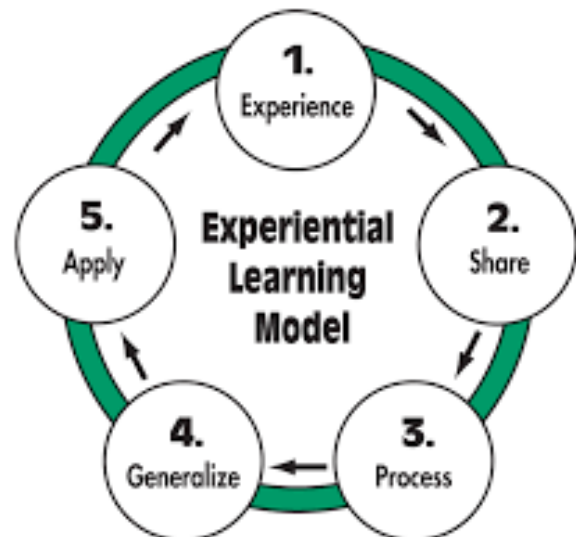


4-H Mission Mandates:

- **Science, Technology, Engineering, & Math:** 4-H's approach to STEM is comprehensive and holistic—from agriculture to climate change to alternative energy—youth are learning about highly relevant complex systems and issues that will ensure their contributions to their communities today and their success as global leaders tomorrow.
- **Citizenship:** 4-H Citizenship programs empower young people to be well-informed citizens who are actively engaged in their communities and the world.
- **Healthy Living:** Healthy living has been at the core of 4-H and remains a foundation of our pledge. Although 4-H believes that healthy living habits of young people begin in the context of their families and communities, we strive to equip youth with healthy living knowledge and skills that will prepare them physically, emotionally and socially to meet the challenges of the 21st century.

Experiential Learning:

The "experiential learning" concept occurs when youth participate in an activity, look back to reflect on the activity, draw conclusions or observations from the experience and relate that experience to future happenings in their lives. Through the experiential learning process, young people develop basic, transferable skills useful in real life experiences for the present and the future. This process is what makes 4-H different from other youth programs.



Pfeiffer, J.W., & Jones, J.E., "Reference Guide to Handbooks and Annuals"
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What Makes 4-H Different?

Although 4-H teaches a young person “hands-on” skills, the most important skills taught are LIFE SKILLS. Through 4-H projects and other learning activities, youth learn:

- by doing
- problem solving
- communication skills
- to nurture others
- to achieve
- to protect the environment
- goal setting/planning
- scientific inquiry
- teamwork
- about careers
- to use opportunities
- time and money management
- to value diversity
- cooperation
- evaluation skills
- respect for laws
- calculated risk taking
- group process
- decision making
- leadership
- creativity
- self-discipline
- responsibility
- community citizenship

Many youth organizations strive to promote positive youth development, but 4-H does it in a unique way. These essential elements of 4-H are described below.

1. A positive relationship with a caring adult. A caring adult acts as an advisor, guide and mentor. The adult helps set boundaries and expectations for young people. The adult could be called supporter, friend or advocate.
2. A safe environment - physically and emotionally. Youth should not fear physical or emotional harm while participating in a 4-H experience whether from the learning environment itself, adults, other participants or spectators.
3. Opportunity for mastery. Mastery is the building of knowledge, skills and attitudes and then demonstrating the competent use of this knowledge and skills in the manner of a proficient practitioner. The level of mastery is dependent on the developmental ability of the individual child or youth. The development of mastery is a process over time.
4. Opportunity to value and practice service for others. Finding one's self begins with losing yourself in the service of others. Service is a way for members to gain exposure to the larger community, indeed the world itself.
5. Opportunity for self-determination. Believing that you have impact over life's events rather than passively submitting to the will and whims of others is self-determination. Youth must exercise a sense of influence over their lives, exercising their potential to become self-directing, autonomous adults.
6. An inclusive environment (encouraging, affirming, belonging). An inclusive environment is one that creates a sense of belonging, encourages and supports its members with positive and specific feedback. Healthy groups celebrate the success of all members - taking pride in the collective efforts of all.
7. Opportunity to see oneself as an active participant in the future. The ability to see oneself in the future is to harness hope and optimism, to shape life choices and to facilitate the transition into participating in the future.
8. Engagement in learning. An engaged youth is one who is mindful of the subject area, building relationships and connections in order to develop understanding. Through self-reflection, youth have the ability to self-correct and learn from experience. The engaged learner has a higher degree of self-motivation and an inexhaustible capacity to create.



4-H CLUBS

A 4-H club consists of at least five children and one adult volunteer leader, called an organizational leader. Many clubs have additional adult assistant leaders and/or project leaders. Cloverbud clubs or traditional clubs with Cloverbud members must have identified Cloverbud leaders who participate in specific trainings to work with this audience.

HOW TO START A TRADITIONAL 4-H CLUB IN 10 EASY STEPS

1. Complete a Volunteer Application Process.
2. Attend an orientation session with 4-H Staff.
3. Enroll 5 youth from at least 3 different families.
4. Involve Parents in Club Support.
5. Have members choose a club name and vote officers.
6. Apply for a Club Charter.
7. Plan a yearly club program with parents and youth
8. Assist members with completing project records and member report forms
9. Check out 4-H materials and resources at the 4-H Office.
10. Participate in Leader Trainings/Meetings.

Remember, 4-H staff are only a phone call or e-mail away

MEMBERS

Youth participating in the 4-H Program can be either a member of a 4-H club or an Independent member. 4-H **Club Members** participate in the club program and work on 4-H projects under the direction of the organized club leader. **Independent members** are registered 4-H members who do not have a club or special interest program affiliation. They work on the projects of their choice at their own pace. They are encouraged to participate in county fundraisers and Erie County 4-H sponsored activities. They are required to enroll and pay the annual fee each year and they must have at least one adult leader who can attest to the completion of yearly projects.

Membership Age Policy

- ◆ **4-H Cloverbud Members** The New York State Cloverbud Policy specifies that a child must turn five by January 1 to be eligible to participate in the 4-H club program as a cloverbud member.
- ◆ **4-H Member** Youth who are at least eight years of age by January 1st of the current club year should enroll as a 4-H member. Youth who have reached their nineteenth birthday before January 1st of the 4-H club year may not enroll as a 4-H member. Accommodations for participation can be made for youth of any intellectual, mental, or physical disability status.



VOLUNTEERS

The adult leaders of 4-H clubs are volunteers. 4-H volunteers complete an application to initiate the background check orientation process. Adult volunteer leaders come from all walks of life. Some volunteer leaders may be nominated to serve on the CCE Erie Board of Directors or 4-H Program Advisory Committee. Volunteers also serve as evaluators for specific 4-H programs and often are asked to help chaperone 4-H youth trips. Following is a list of Volunteer Opportunities:

- **Organizational Leader**- establish and maintain a club structure that supports 4-H Youth Development activities.
- **Project Leader**—share your skills, talents and special interests in a single project area. For example: clothing, dogs, rabbits, horse, livestock, woodworking, photography, etc.
- **Activity Leader**-Help members plan for and participate in one or more specific activities the club has included in its yearly plan.
- **Resource Leader**-Train and work with 4-H club leaders or members on a short-term basis; specialize in a specific program area.
- **Short Term Volunteer**-Teach a special interest program, and/or assist a 4-H group with a special project.



FEES

A \$25.00 enrollment fee is required for each enrolled member; with a maximum of \$50.00 per family. **Fees are due at the time of enrollment.** If there is a hardship, and a family is unable to cover the child(ren)'s fee(s), a request form to waive fees may be submitted. **NO CHILD WILL BE TURNED AWAY FOR INABILITY TO PAY.** New member and re-enrollment fees are both due at the time of enrollment.

INSURANCE

Each 4-H member and adult volunteer, whose 4-H enrollment form is on file at the Cornell University Cooperative Extension Office, is protected automatically by liability insurance. The 4-H Office must be notified within 24 hours of an accident. The insured must be participating in an approved 4-H event/activity.

CONTRACTS

No club or leader may enter into any contract without prior approval of Cornell University Cooperative Extension and our insurer. The Executive Director is the only person authorized to enter into an agreement on behalf of CCE of Erie County and Erie County 4-H. Please submit any documents regarding any documents, rules and regulations, use of facilities form to the 4-H Office for approval.

4-H COMMITTEES

ADVISORY COMMITTEES: Advisory committees may exist to provide leadership and work with 4-H staff on program/project development and implementation. These committees are comprised of volunteer leaders, parents, youth and community members. Advisory committees may include specific livestock species, public presentations, and fundraising.



NEW YORK
STATE
4-H



4-H AT THE FAIR

MAIN OBJECTIVE OF THE FAIR

The purpose of the 4-H participating in the fairs is to support our youth development efforts. The fair is considered a “learning laboratory”, and its lessons go far beyond the winning of a white, red, blue, or purple ribbon. The fair provides a backdrop for members to learn important life-long skills and to make life-long connections. They learn the importance of evaluation based upon a pre-described standard; communicate with an adult through conference judging to learn how to ask questions and obtain knowledge; to develop a sense of teamwork and cooperation; to learn that life is constantly changing, and to adapt to these changes; to learn to be a humble winner; to develop one’s self to the fullest potential; to use knowledge for the improvement of one’s community, home, family, and self; to volunteer one’s time and skills to accomplish a common goal; to feel good about one’s self and personal accomplishments; to develop a sense of personal responsibility.

RIBBONS AT THE FAIR

Members receive ribbons and/or awards for their efforts and level of mastery at county fair. The ribbons serve as a general definition of the **quality of the learning** by the member and the quality of the final project work. Both the member’s knowledge and exhibit are important in awarding ribbons. Ribbons are given out according to the Danish System which evaluates each exhibit against a standard, not against the other exhibits. The Danish system promotes education and de-emphasizes competition. Judges are selected for their knowledge and concern for youth. Their decisions should be respected.

STATE FAIR

The New York State Fair is a fantastic opportunity for youth to go beyond the county fair with their 4-H projects. Youth that have exhibited animals at either state fair qualifying shows and/or at county fair and have received a blue ribbon have the opportunity to go on to the state fair. Horse project youth are selected on a ribbon and points-based system.

Non Animal Science 4-H projects also may be selected to go on to the state fair. County Fair Judges will recommend exhibits at the county fair to advance to the State Fair. 4-H staff will be in contact with 4-H members at the county fair to make sure all state fair paperwork is filled out correctly.





STAYING CONNECTED WITH 4-H

Erie County 4-H Facebook

For all of the latest, up to date information please turn to the 4-H Facebook page .Don't forget to follow us on Instagram!

Erie County Email List

E-mail is the most effective way of communicating with all our volunteers and members. Standard mail is reserved for formal invites only. The County 4-H office has a countywide electronic mailing list for adult volunteers, leaders, parents and 4-H members. The purpose of this list is to increase communication between staff, the volunteers and members. Email is used to update 4-H families on a regular basis of programs and activities that are occurring in the county.

Erie County CCE Website

Stay connected to all that is going on at Cornell Cooperative Extension and 4-H resources: erie.cce.cornell.edu

Erie County Speed Read

Enrolled families will receive, via email, our bi-monthly Speed Read. This publication will highlight current program opportunities and is our main communication source. Speed Reads will also be posted on the website.

COUNTY-WIDE PROGRAMS

Erie County Livestock Market Program

Do you want to raise meat chickens, goats, sheep, beef or pigs and only want them for a short period of time? This is the program for you! At the Erie County Fair we hold our annual livestock sale. Youth that ages 9 to 18 by January 1st are eligible to take part in this great program.

Youth learn not only about animal health and nutrition, but also about marketing and money management with this program. You do not necessarily need to house the animal at your home. Informational meetings are open to all members.

Contact Tammi Kron for more information. tlk6@cornell.edu or (716)652-5400 ext. 132.

Public Presentations

This program offers a workshop on the “what and how” of public presentations, practice sessions and a county level event to compete at. Youth are encouraged to participate in this program. Youth may then advance to the District level of competition. *(continued)*



Presentation categories include illustrated talks, demonstrations, dramatic interpretations, recitations or team demonstrations. There are some slightly different categories for those interested in presentations in the Horse program. **Participation in Public Presentations is required for all members exhibiting animals at the Erie County Fair.**

4-H AWARDS AND RECOGNITION

Erie County 4-H Award Trips

There are often funds or grants available to pay for a 4-H members' participation fee for regional or state events. Check with 4-H staff to see if scholarships are available for an event that you would like to participate in.

4-H College Scholarships

The Erie County 4-H Scholarship is open to graduating high school seniors who qualify. Applicants must have at least 3 consecutive years of active Erie County 4-H membership between the ages of 12 and 19. More information can be obtained by calling the 4-H office. Several other scholarships are offered throughout the year. Please check our website for information on these additional scholarships.



Not seeing what you're looking for? We have several resources and trainings available for those who would be interested in starting up a 4-H club. To begin a club an adult, over 18 and no longer in 4-H, must apply to be a 4-H Volunteer, background check and orientation process. Clubs only need a minimum of 5 youth between the ages of 5 and 18. The ages, number of youth in the club, meeting times and locations, and focus of the group is up to the leader(s) of the club. It is recommended that clubs have two or more leaders and parental involvement from the member's parents. If you are interested in becoming a leader, please contact the 4-H Office at (716)652-5400 or by email @erie4h@cornell.edu.