

## PLANNING AND ORGANIZING

### *Organizational Skills*

Planning and goal setting are essential life skills that should be learned and developed for youth and young adults<sup>1</sup>. 4-H members need support, instruction, and practice to become competent in these skills. This fact sheet provides a framework for setting club goals, planning annual activities, and organizing meeting agendas.

### **Planning and Setting 4-H Club Goals**

At the beginning of each year, 4-H clubs and groups plan and set goals for the upcoming year. Consider the following:

- Meet with club officers to review the previous year's goals and set new goals.
- Gather input from other members and parents. Information may be gathered at the end of the year, through a survey or questionnaire, or informally as part of an icebreaker activity.
- Have members brainstorm, discuss, and become familiar with possible service activities and social events in which the club could participate.
- Consider if any goals are needed to retain the club charter, meet county program requirements, and other pursuits that the club would like to accomplish.
- Develop a few attainable goals and gradually expand the list to include more challenging ones.

Goals are most easily accomplished if they are broken down into action steps. Use Handout #1, *"Goals, Objectives, and Action Steps,"* to assist the club in goal setting and developing an annual action plan.

### **Develop a 4-H Club Year Calendar**

After the club has set goals, the next step is to choose activities to help it accomplish its goals. The county 4-H calendar from the Extension Office and the Handout *"4-H Club Annual Plan of Meetings and Activities"* have club members contribute their ideas.

When developing the *4-H Club Annual Plan of Meetings and Activities* (Handout #2), create a balanced program for the year, consisting of equivalent time for educational, leadership development, community service, and recreational activities. The annual plan should cover the entire year but provide flexibility to include some unexpected events. At the end of the year, the club should review their goals and accomplishments and submit their records to the Extension office.

Accomplishing club goals is more easily accomplished and engages more people when specific goals are assigned to committees. Active committees make meetings more efficient because most of the discussion, planning, and organizing occur during the committee meeting. Committees can spend time brainstorming options and developing alternatives and solutions. Each option and choice can be expanded upon and eventually refined. The committee chair can present the most popular solutions for adoption or revision to the club. Clubs usually form committees for planning programs, organizing events,



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recruiting members, fundraising, and developing community service projects.

Each club member should be allowed to volunteer to serve on at least one committee that interests them. After everyone has had the opportunity to volunteer to serve on a committee, the club president should appoint members to committees, ensuring that everyone serves on a committee each year. Each committee must have a chairperson. The chairperson can either be appointed by the club president or elected by the committee members. The chairperson leads the committee meeting and reports on the committee's work and progress. Each committee should have either an adult volunteer or a teen leader serving as an advisor to the group.

## Club Officers and Committees

Most 4-H clubs will elect club officers. Club offices have an opportunity to develop

leadership skills through planning and conducting 4-H meetings. Officers can also help develop the 4-H Club Year Calendar and run meetings by following the meeting agenda. Possible club offices can include:

- President
- Vice president(s)
- Secretary
- Treasurer
- Reporter

Other club officer positions, such as service coordinator or field trip coordinator, can be created when needed. Also, committees can be formed for more significant events, like field trips or service projects.

## Developing a 4-H Club Meeting Agenda

An agenda is an essential tool for every meeting. The adult volunteers should meet with the club officers to develop the agenda before the meeting. (Handout #3 *Developing the 4-H Meeting Agenda*). Ideally, the agenda should be distributed to all club members before the meeting. The agenda could be distributed by emailing it, posting it to the county Extension webpage, or posting it on the club's Facebook page.

The agenda is an organized plan for what will happen at the meeting. It should include secretary and treasurer reports, committee reports, unfinished business, new business, educational activities (demonstrations, guest speakers, project work), recreation and refreshments. Announcements should be made at the end of the meeting.

## Conclusion

Planning and organizing are critical skills to be learned and used by 4-H members and volunteers. Planning for a successful club year includes setting goals, preparing an annual program of activities, and engaging members in committee and project work. Planning ensures a valuable experience for 4-H members, parents, and volunteers.



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## References:

- <sup>1</sup>Eccles, J. & Gootman, J.A., eds. (2002). *Community programs to promote youth development*. Washington, DC: National Academy Press
- <sup>2</sup>Franks, M., Hebert, L., Lepley, T. (2021). Planning and Conducting 4-H Meetings. LSU AgCenter. Pub. 2856-C.

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