



4-H MEMBER'S GUIDE 2025-2026

www.colorado4h.org

<https://park.extension.colostate.edu/4-h/>

Our Team



**Elaina
Michael**

4-H, Agriculture, Natural Resources

719-839-1732

elaina.michael@parkcountyco.gov



**Abby
Schmidt
Williams**

4-H, Family and Consumer Sciences

719-839-0590

abby.schmidt@parkcountyco.gov



**Hillary
Spivak**

Administrative Assistant II

719-836-4296

hillary.spivak@parkcountyco.gov



<https://park.extension.colostate.edu>



PO Box 603, FairPlay CO 80440



Welcome!

What is 4-H?

4-H is the youth development arm of Colorado State University. Other support for the 4-H program comes from the local government, state government, and the US Department of Agriculture.

4-H is a youth organization that belongs to the members, their families, and interested adults who serve as volunteer leaders, under the direction and guidance of your County Extension Office. This organization provides learning experiences designed to help youth develop life skills such as goal setting, organization, communication, citizenship, decision-making, leadership, interpersonal relations, community involvement, and global awareness.

This mission is accomplished through the involvement of parents, volunteer leaders, and other adults who recognize and conduct educational experiences in community and family settings.

4-H is young people sharing, doing, and learning together in all kinds of projects, events, and activities in an informal situation with the guidance of their families and other volunteer leaders.

Purpose of 4-H

To provide real life learning experiences for youth through a fun, hands-on, action-oriented, and practical program.

To provide an opportunity for parents and other caring adults to work with youth in their development.

To provide an opportunity for families to develop a stronger bond through learning and having fun together.





Who can be in 4-H?

Any person, regardless of race, color, religion, gender, national origin, ancestry, marital status, family status, sexual orientation, or disability may enroll as a 4-H member. Youth between the ages of 5 and 18 who belong to a club or participate in a special-interest or school-enrichment project.

There are four 4-H age divisions:

- **Cloverbuds** – Ages 5 to 7. They are encouraged to participate in most events, but there is no competition in Cloverbuds. Parents are heavily involved.
- **Juniors** – Ages 8-10 (must be 8 on or before December 31st of the previous year). If intermediates are combined into this age division, then juniors are between the ages of 8 and 13.
- **Intermediates** – Ages 11-13 (must be 11 on or before December 31st of the previous year). The Intermediate age division is sometimes combined into the Junior division. Some projects will break them out into their own age division.
- **Senior** – Ages 14-18 (must be 14 on or before December 31st of the previous year). Anyone turning 19 on or before December 31st of the previous year has aged out of the 4-H program and is encouraged to continue as an adult 4-H volunteer leader.





How Do I Enroll?

We recommend that if there are multiple clubs available in your area that you visit all of them to see where you feel your family would best fit in. Once you have attended a meeting and found a club to join visit www.4-HOnline.com

All returning families are already enrolled in 4-H Online and have a sign in, please do not create a new account. Returning families only need to update information.

In 4-H Online:

1. Fill out all personal information. It is very important that we have correct information in order to process the enrollment correctly.
2. If you are doing any animal projects, you must fill out the Animal Care and Housing Form. This form is REQUIRED to participate in an animal project.
3. Fill out and Sign the Code of Conduct, permission to participate and photo release forms.
4. Choose only ONE club.
5. Add projects that you are interested in doing. If a project is still on the project list after the add/drop date and it is not completed, the member will not be able to enroll in that project again for at least another year.
6. Project manuals will be ordered by the club leaders through the extension office in batches.
7. Animal Identification is done through 4-H Online. Please see important dates for deadlines on species ID's.
8. For help with 4-H Online please contact the Extension Office or your Club Organizational Leaders



Fees

The annual fee for members 8-18 years of age enrolling in 4-H is \$45.00 plus any 4-H project costs. The annual fee for Cloverbuds (age 5-7) is \$25. There is no fee for leaders. We firmly believe that ANY youth who wants to join 4-H should have the opportunity to do so. Full or partial scholarships are available. These scholarships may be obtained by contacting the Extension Office.

Communication

The Extension Office will communicate through the Club Organizational Leaders, email and newsletters. If you have questions about projects or 4-H matters please contact your project and/or Organizational Leader. If they cannot answer the question they will communicate with the Extension Office to get answers.

It is extremely important for you to receive correspondence from your leaders and the Extension Office please make sure your contact info is correct in 4-H Online and update your profile if any of your information changes in both 4-H Online and with your club leaders.

If you do not have access to email, please let us know so that the office can make arrangements with you and your club leaders to ensure you are getting all the correspondence.

Record Books



In 4-H, members record what they have worked on during the year in a project record book and every 4-H Project has a record book that must be turned into the Extension Office by its designated due date. **If a record book is not completed the project is not complete and the member cannot enroll in that project again for at least a year.** Members in animal projects who do not show at fair, have an animal who dies, or does not make weight must still complete their record book for that animal project.

Keeping accurate records is one of the most valuable skills a young person can learn in 4-H. Compiling a detailed record of what was planned, accomplished, and learned in each project is an excellent way to learn record keeping. Many find the record books to be a daunting and overwhelming task especially when they wait until the last minute to start. The key is to treat them as a journal that you work on as you go through the project, this also allows for better record keeping. Often times record book scores determine the winners in many of the Special Contests. Money is often donated by a generous sponsor to award the top 6 Record Books a cash prize.



Important Dates

**All dates are subject to change*

October 1 st	Start of the 4-H Year
Weekend after Thanksgiving	Large Market Animal Weigh-In (Beef &Yak)
Monday After Weigh-In	Animal ID's Due in 4-H Online
December 31 st	Re-enrollment Deadline
Late Winter/Early Spring	Mandatory Shooting Sports Safety Meetings
Late March/Early April	Meat Quality Assurance (MQA) Testing for new or level-advancing livestock members
April 1 st	All Project Add/Drop Deadline / New Member Enrollment Deadline
May 1 st	All Animal ID's Due

Important Dates Continued

2 nd Friday of May	Park County Fair Entry Opens
1 st Friday of June	Park County Fair Entry Deadline
Last Friday of June	Rabbit and Poultry Animal ID's Due
2 nd Weekend of July	County Shooting Sports Contests
Third Full Week of July	Park County Fair
First Monday of Fair	General Projects & Shooting Sports Record Books and Projects Due / Interviews
First Thursday of August	Livestock, Horse, & Dog Record Books Due to Extension Office <i>*Clubs may have earlier deadlines</i>





Meetings

Club meetings take place once a month at a regularly scheduled time and place. Many projects have a required number of club meetings and project meetings that must be attended in order to be a member in "Good Standing". Clubs may have requirements for a certain number of hours of community service that must be performed, fundraising participation, and demonstrations. These meetings are very important to attend as they are where you will receive the majority of your information and plan your 4-H year as a Club. In order to participate in County Fair, State Fair or other 4-H sponsored events you must be a member in good standing. Club meeting attendance records may be asked for by Extension Office, Fair Board or Livestock Committee.

Returning members must attend 6 general club meetings and new members must attend 4 general club meetings. Members can attend other club meetings if they are short attending the number of required meetings.

Project meetings are specific to the project(s) you choose to participate in and are scheduled by your project leader. Project leaders may have their own requirements in place for participating in or completing projects. Project leaders can limit the number enrolled in the project. Shooting sports members must attend a minimum of 4 shoots per discipline with their leaders in order to compete at County Shoot. Shooting sports members must have a parent or guardian present at all shoots unless prior arrangements have been made with an approved Shooting Sports Leader. All Shooting Sports members must have their Hunter Safety Certification to participate in shoots.

Some projects may not have a leader, these projects will be considered self or parent led projects and should be reviewed occasionally with your organizational leader to ensure the project is on track and following guidelines.

There are many opportunities for state and district meeting, conferences and events for members to attend. Scholarships may be available to help members finance these opportunities.

Parents, Guardians and Volunteers



Parents and/or guardians are very important to the success of the children enrolled in the 4-H program. Parents and/or guardians are greatly encouraged to attend the monthly club meetings with their children. Important information is given out at these meetings that is crucial to the success of members. Parents are also encouraged to attend project meetings to see what the members are learning. The most important role adults play in 4-H is the support they give to their children. Support your child/children in the commitment they make by helping them see and complete their goals.

Adult volunteers are vital to the success of the clubs. Parents are encouraged to help at fundraisers, meetings, events, and county fair. Besides helping in these areas, there are other ways for parents /guardians to help: guide your child's project work, encourage completing the project without doing the project for them, support your club leaders and offer your services, and be an example of good sportsmanship.

4-H cannot survive without the generous donation of time given by our adult leaders. If you have a talent or knowledge in a specific area or just want to become more involved, consider volunteering as a project leader or joining one of the committees (Park County Fair Board or Park County Livestock Committee) that contribute to our youth program.



Animal Project Information

Any 4-H Member showing a market beef, sheep, swine, and/or goat must have the animals identified prior to fair and provide proof of ownership. Animals may be identified by ear tags, ear notches, tattoos, retinal scans and/or leg bands. Weigh in dates will be scheduled and are subject to rescheduling or cancellation.

A Meat Quality Assurance Program (MQA) is required for all 4-H members enrolled in a Market and/or Breeding Livestock Project.

- Once as a first year member who is a Junior or Intermediate member (between the ages of 8 and 13)
- Again when a member becomes a Senior (age is 14 years old)
- The only exception to being required to take it twice would be for a first-time member who was 14 or older, in that case it would only be required once.
- Those members not required to attend a MQA Program are encouraged to complete a Quality Assurance Checklist.
- To qualify for State Fair as a Swine exhibitor, Pork Quality Assurance must be taken the first three years and then again at age 15.

Requirements are subject to change at CSU's recommendation

Colorado 4-H Code Of Conduct

When I participate in 4-H programs, I agree to:

- Adhere to all Colorado 4-H Youth Development Program policies and procedures.
- Respect the rights and authority of 4-H volunteers and Extension and 4-H Professionals.
- Conduct myself in a courteous, respectful, and ethical manner; demonstrate good sportsmanship; and serve as a positive role model.
- Abstain from abuse (physical and/or verbal) and harassment. All aggressive, vulgar, or violent language and behavior (ex: bullying, fighting, threats, insults, cursing, discrimination, etc.) is not permitted.
- Abstain from the use of alcohol, marijuana, illegal or illicit drugs, and all tobacco or nicotine products, including e-cigarettes and vaping devices, during 4-H events and activities.
- As outlined in the Colorado 4-H Dress Code, dress appropriately for all 4-H events and activities, following any specific attire requirements. Clothing that is overly revealing or displays profanity, violence, political affiliation, or promotes tobacco, alcohol, or drugs is not permitted.
- Use mobile phones or other electronic devices during scheduled 4-H activities only in a manner that is consistent with the approved activity and does not cause disruption.
- Promote and model the responsible, respectful, and lawful use of social media. The creation or sharing of content that is abusive, threatening, defamatory, obscene, harassing, or that contributes to a hostile environment is strictly prohibited and will not be tolerated.
- Respect the property of others, including facilities, equipment, and personal belongings. Damage, destruction, theft, or removal of property is strictly prohibited. Participants and/or their parents or guardians will be held financially responsible for any damage caused to program property or the personal items of others.
- Not possess, use, or distribute firearms, archery equipment, fireworks, knives, or any other items that could be used as weapons during 4-H programs or events, except under adult supervision as part of scheduled instructional activities.
- Acknowledge that personal property may be subject to search when there is reasonable suspicion of a violation of law or 4-H policies. This may include searches of outer clothing, luggage, personal belongings, lodging rooms, and furniture.
- Complete my own work on all 4-H projects, properly cite all source materials, including those generated by artificial intelligence when appropriate, avoid plagiarism, and uphold academic integrity.

Colorado 4-H Code Of Conduct

(Continued)

Consequences for violating any part of the Colorado 4-H Code of Conduct may include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Notification of parents/guardians and appropriate 4-H volunteers and/or staff members
- Restriction from participation in future 4-H events
- Removal from 4-H officer roles held
- Removal from 4-H membership
- Removal from participation in 4-H events/activities; the participant and/or their parent(s)/guardian(s) will be responsible for all associated costs incurred because of
- their removal

The behavior of 4-H members, parents, family members, and volunteers, both during and

outside of 4-H activities, can impact their status within the program. All must share the responsibility to uphold the 4-H Code of Conduct and are encouraged to report any concerns

or violations to 4-H leadership promptly and appropriately.

Colorado 4-H Dress Code

The Colorado 4-H Dress Code is designed to promote safety and inclusion for all. Clothing worn by participants should be neat, clean, and practical for the activity occurring. When participating in this event, youth and adults are representing themselves and their organization.

Casual wear

Pants/shorts/skirts
Shirt/sweater/hoodies
Comfortable shoes/ sandals

Business casual

Nice slacks/pants/skirt
Button-up shirt/blouse
Pants suit/skiort
Comfortable/dressy shoes

Formal wear

Dresses
Suits and suit jackets
Dress pants/slacks
Button-up shirt
Bow ties/ties/suspenders
Dress Shoes

Guidelines

Shirts/sweaters/hoodies/etc:

Should be free of any reference to: drugs/alcohol/sex/profanity/violence/political affiliation. All other clothing must cover undergarments.

Pants/shorts/skirts:

Should be long enough to ensure safety and comfort in the activity occurring.

Dress-up to Semiformal:

Should cover your midriff. Outfit should be long enough to stay put while moving about.

Footwear:

Should be practical and reflect the activity occurring. Closed-toe shoes are a necessary precaution for specific activities and will be required during those activities.

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