

Volunteer Related Policy

All approved 4-H volunteers (including Advisory and Program Board members) must be fully screened. Each person must have a completed and signed Code of Conduct and Volunteer Service description on file with their local 4-H office. Those on volunteer boards must have a Board Service description on file.

The 4-H Director may dismiss a volunteer for violation of the Volunteer Code of Conduct or any Massachusetts 4-H or National 4-H policy violations. Such a dismissal will only be made following investigation by the 4-H Director. The final decision cannot be appealed.

All volunteers agree to having a CORI background check as well as a SORI check. If a 4-H club leader holds meetings in their home, all family members aged 18 and older will also have a CORI and SORI check completed.

4-H club leaders and club volunteers agree to submit all required reports, including an annual club report and financial summary.

Youth age 19 and 20 may not lead clubs on their own; they may serve as assistant leaders, working under the direct supervision of a 4-H leader, age 21 or older.

Volunteers must structure programs to avoid situations where they are alone with an individual 4-H member. If no assistant club leader is available, a trusted parent must be present at any club meeting. The 4-H adult to child ratio is a minimum of 1 adult to 10 youth. In the case of Cloverbuds, those members aged 5-7, the ratio is a minimum of two adults to every 10 youth.

During events with overnight components, adult chaperones may not stay in the same room with youth. This includes overnight camping or tenting. An exception may be made when the facility has a large dormitory type sleeping area, such as the Moses Dormitory at Eastern States Exposition. The club leader needs to obtain permission from their local 4-H Educator in these cases.

Adults are recommended to not transport youth in their car. However, in situations where this must occur, the driver must be an approved volunteer. The driver must carry automobile insurance, have a valid driver's license and adhere to all state laws related to driving and riding in a vehicle. It is recommended the driver carry a minimum of \$300,000 in liability coverage.

Volunteers must submit a 4-H Incident Report to the local Educator immediately should any serious incidents or accidents occur.

Youth Related Policy

All youth register to be a 4-H member either using paper forms or through the 4honline system. There is a fee to belong to Massachusetts 4-H.

All youth members must complete a Massachusetts 4-H Code of Conduct. Youth members who break the Code of Conduct will receive consequences which may include, but are not limited to expulsion from 4-H.

4-H members must submit Massachusetts 4-H participation fee annually.

Members must be enrolled by June 1 of the calendar year in order to submit entries into any Massachusetts 4-H Fair.

All members enrolled in clubs that are based in more than one county or region must designate one county or region as the primary enrollment location. All major awards will be applied for and presented through that county or region. Members are encouraged to take part in contests in their home county or region; however, may participate in another region with permission should they have a conflict with a date. This would include Visual Presentations, 4-H record book judging, Fairs, and other activities.

All 4-H members must belong to a 4-H club. Individual membership is only an option when a club disbands or with special permission from the Educator.

Club Related Policy

All 4-H clubs must complete paperwork as required by the Massachusetts 4-H Program. Once approved, a club will receive a 4-H Club Charter. This document is issued one time to an individual club by the State 4-H office. If leadership of the club changes the charter is passed to the new leader of the group. Should the Charter be lost, contact your local 4-H Educator to request obtaining a copy.

Each club must re-enroll annually. Members may choose to either submit all required paperwork or re-enroll online in the 4-H enrollment system.

In order to be an approved club, there must be at least 5 members from at least three different families.

The University of Massachusetts Amherst and the UMass Extension 4-H Program prohibits discrimination on the basis of race, color, religion, creed, sex, age, marital status, national origin, mental or physical disability, political belief or affiliation, veteran status, sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, genetic information, and any other class of individuals protected from discrimination under state or federal law in any aspect of the access to, admission, or treatment of students in its programs and activities, or in employment and application for employment.

4-H clubs cannot own animals, land, structures or vehicles. 4-H volunteers may own animals, land, structures or vehicles as private individuals; they are the tax responsibility of the individual 4-H volunteer.

Program Related Policy

4-H participation fees are non-refundable. If a club disbands during the program year and a suitable new club is not found the member remains enrolled for that year as an individual member.

If a club divides itself, creating more than one recognized and enrolled club, the funds from the original club will be evenly disbursed based on membership (from the original club, not new members) in each club. If members of the disbanded club join an existing club, no monies from the disbanded club will be distributed to the existing club.

Any item postmarked by the deadline date is accepted.

No alcohol can be served at 4-H sponsored events that include any youth under the age of 18.

Information about animals for sale/donation from the general public or breeders can't be shared in any form except when this information is provided by a UMass 4-H Animal Science Specialist.

Horse verification forms must be on file in the 4-H member's local office by April 1st or 90 days prior to the first horse show the member plans to exhibit in (April 1 for the Big E Horse Show). 4-H Livestock Verification Forms (for leased animal projects including beef, dairy, sheep, goat, llama, alpaca, swine, and dog) must be filed in the local 4-H office. The forms must be on file by May 1 for beef and dairy cattle and by June 1 for goats, sheep, swine and llamas.

Contact information for 4-H members is confidential and cannot be shared with others, including 4-H volunteers who do not work directly with that member. Contact information includes name, address, phone or email address. 4-H Exchange Clubs must comply with specific rules and procedures in order to host another group or visit a group out of state. Home visits must be conducted for all host families by the local Educator or volunteer(s) under the Educator's supervision. All adult household members must be CORI cleared prior to that family hosting at both the host sites and the state where the visits will occur. A complete packet with rules is available at the State 4-H Office.

Shooting Sports is not offered as a 4-H project in Massachusetts.

Health forms are required for participants at all 4-H events when parent is not present.

Any complaint/issue/concern to be addressed must be put in writing and sent to the local Educator or 4-H Director. Documentation and support for the complaint should be first hand and not based on second hand information. A form is available on the 4-H website.

Funds raised in the name of 4-H must be used for 4-H purposes. The 4-H club must get permission from the local Educator to conduct a fundraiser. If funds are raised for a charitable cause this must be clear to the donors and the 4-H group must follow through on the commitment to donate to that named charity.

Additional 4-H Policy and Guidelines

All volunteers, members and parents are expected to be familiar with all 4-H policy and guidelines and adhere to them.

Additional 4-H guidelines and policy are found on the Massachusetts 4-H Website at <https://ag.umass.edu/mass4h>

National 4-H policies and guidelines can be found at <https://4-h.org/about/leadership/national-4-h-council/>

