

What do I do if I'm getting poor attendance?

It is frustrating when you've done a lot of work to plan a meeting and very few members show up. First, check to see if there are any major conflicts that night or if there are other factors that might be preventing participation (transportation, parent schedule, cost, etc.). However, even if only one child shows up, he/she is there because he/she wants to learn. You are still making a big difference with the child and that extra one-on-one time allows you ample opportunity to mentor and help him/her gain new skills. We encourage you to keep doing them!

Who can I ask if I need help at meetings?

Parents and older 4-H members can be excellent resources to lend a hand during meetings. Don't hesitate to ask them to help. Sometimes there are also other community members who are willing to help at meetings but don't want the role as the designated "project leader". Visit with the Extension Office for ideas. If you can't be at a meeting and you need someone to fill in for you, there must be a certified 4-H volunteer in attendance or the group cannot meet. Again, contact the office to see your options.

Is there anything that I need to do annually to continue being a leader?

Please let the Extension Office and/or 4-H Agent know if you plan to continue as a volunteer for another year. There is annual enrollment online to maintain your status as an active and certified 4-H volunteer.



For More Information:

MSU Extension—Gallatin County
903 N. Black Ave
Bozeman, MT 59715
406.582.3280
gallatin4h@montana.edu

Adapted by Allison Kosto, MSU Extension Agent in Broadwater County (February 2020) from "I'm a 4-H Project Leader: Now What Do I Do?," University of Wisconsin Extension.

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I'm a 4-H Leader: Now What?!

*A Guide to Frequently Asked Questions for
4-H Project Leaders in Gallatin County.*

How do I know who is in my project?

Once you are approved as a leader, the Extension Office will provide you with a list of members in the project and their contact information.

How often should I hold project meetings?

Research has shown that a minimum of 6 contact hours is necessary for youth to begin to master skills. Usually this is at least 4 to 6 meetings per year that each last 1 to 2 hours in length.

How do I establish a project meeting schedule?

You can schedule meetings during the time of year that works best for you. Some leaders prefer to meet once a month for most of the year, while others meet more frequently for a shorter period of time. Work with the Extension Office to schedule meetings and avoid conflicts with other 4-H activities. You can also ask members in your project to see if they have a preference. Spring and Summer are the busiest time for 4-H meetings and often have the most conflicts.

When do I start?

Start as soon as possible or when is most feasible for your schedule. Schedule meetings early (even if they aren't for a couple of months) to allow 4-H families to put them on their calendar and help make them a priority.



Where do I hold project meetings?

The Extension Office can help find a meeting location or provide options. Common choices are the Fairgrounds Exhibit Buildings, Extension Office, local churches, schools or homes. Email gallatin@montana.edu to book the Extension Office or Fairground facilities.

How do I cover the cost of the meeting?

There are a variety of options to cover costs associated with the meetings or activities. Work with the Extension Office, 4-H Council and/or project committees to see what options are available. Methods may include:

- Each member pays for a share of the expenses or provides a portion of the supplies.
- The 4-H Council or Project Committee agrees to cover the cost using funds in the account or funds designated for the project.
- Other funding sources could be considered such as fundraisers, grants or donations.

What is the relationship between 4-H project work and the County Fair?

The Big Sky Country State Fair is an opportunity for 4-H members to showcase what they have learned and accomplished in their 4-H projects throughout the year. The Fair projects can be outcomes of project meetings or projects they complete independently with skills learned in the project meetings. Record Books and completing a Record Book Interview are a requirement to exhibit at the Fair. Other Fair requirements are outlined in the annual Fairbook.



What should I do at the first project meeting?

Here is an example agenda for the first meeting :

- Get to know members in the project. Wearing nametags and playing Ice-breaker games are a fun way for members and leaders to get to know each other.
- Find out what members want to learn and accomplish in the project.
- Review meeting or project expectations such as schedule, safety rules, fees or structure.
- Do a short introductory hands-on activity. If possible, do something that the members can take home and get them excited about the project.
- Encourage parents to attend and participate in meetings. Parents are key to helping youth work on their projects at home between meetings.

What should a project meeting look like after the first meeting?

4-H uses the experiential learning model to plan activities. You'll find an explanation of this model in the front of most every 4-H project book and helper's guide. This model focuses on a cycle of learning of "Do, Reflect, Apply".

- **DO**—Plan a hands-on activity to help members learn new skills.
- **REFLECT**—After the activity, discuss the process. What worked? What didn't? Talk about any problems and how they were solved. This is a good opportunity to document the activity in their 4-H record books.
- **APPLY**—Ask the members to apply what they learned to real life experiences, other activities or different situations.

What resources are available to help me?

- 4-H Project Curriculum Books—The Extension Office can provide you with the literature associated with the project. There is often a Helper's Guide and three to four levels. These resources can provide ideas for activities as well as allow you to provide guidance to members to help them complete their own books.
- Local Experts—Bring in a local expert to share their ideas, skills and experiences with the group. For example, invite a Master Gardener to a gardening workshop to discuss designing a flower bed.
- Field Trips—Youth always enjoy learning things first hand. For example, take members in the foods project to a local bakery. Field trips are also an excellent way to learn about different career options in the project.
- Montana 4-H Website—Often has more information and activities for certain project.
- Other State 4-H Websites

Should I incorporate 4-H record books and project books in the meetings?

Members should be encouraged to bring their books to meetings. It is valuable to spend a couple of minutes during the meeting to fill out the record sheets and answer questions in the project books. You may also choose to focus on activities in the project book for one or more of your meetings. 7 workbook activities are required to be completed each year.

