



WELCOME TO  **MONTANA 4-H**



MONTANA
STATE UNIVERSITY

EXTENSION



WELCOME

Congratulations! Your family has taken the first step in joining the Montana 4-H community. You are probably wondering what this means. Here are just a few of the benefits that Montana 4-H offers its members:

ACCESS

To begin, this means that the youth in your life have access to 200+ research-based projects that are overseen by Montana State University Extension professionals. Youth are sure to find subjects that spark their interest, all while having fun and gaining skills to become life-long leaders.

CONNECTION

As a 4-H family, you are not only connected to other members in your community, and to a network of 4-H'ers and caring, knowledgeable adults across the state. These connections allow you to create meaningful and positive relationships near and far. Youth who feel connected are less likely to participate in risky behaviors, suffer from severe depression, or attempt suicide.

COMMUNITY

Montana 4-H provides a community where all youth are welcomed regardless of gender, race, or sexual orientation. This inclusive community allows youth to truly be themselves and discover what they are passionate about in a judgment-free environment.

PERSPECTIVE

Just like Montana, 4-H is a diverse community and has members from all walks of life. Meeting others with different experiences and perspective gives 4-H'ers a greater sense of compassion that ultimately allows them to become better citizens locally and globally. Over 44% of 4-H youth in 7th-12th grade surveyed credit their 4-H experience for providing a greater opportunity to learn about people who are different from them.

THE 4-H PLEDGE LEADS TO LIFE SKILLS



4-H PLEDGE

I pledge my **HEAD** to clearer thinking,
My **HEART** to greater loyalty,
My **HANDS** to larger service,
and my **HEALTH** to better living,
for my club, my community, my country,
and my world.



HEAD

THINKING

Learning to Learn, Decision Making, Problem Solving, Critical Thinking, Service Learning

MANAGING

Goal Setting, Planning/Organization, Wise Use of Resources, Keeping Records, Resiliency



HEART

RELATING

Communications, Cooperation, Social Skills, Conflict Resolution, Accepting Differences

CARING

Concern for others, Empathy, Sharing, Nurturing Relationships



HANDS

GIVING

Community Service, Volunteering, Leadership, Responsible Citizenship, Contribution to Group

WORKING

Marketable/ Useful Skills, Teamwork, Self-motivation



HEALTH

LIVING

Healthy Lifestyle Choices, Stress Management, Disease Prevention, Personal Safety

BEING

Self Esteem, Self Responsibility, Character, Managing Feelings, Self Discipline

4-H provides youth with the unique opportunity to acquire valuable life skills and employable skills through project-based learning.

LIFE SKILLS

Montana youth enrolled in animal and vet science projects, from lizards to llamas and snakes to steers, learn the importance of responsibility, goal setting, record keeping, and resiliency. Youth enrolled in animal projects master skills such as self-motivation and discipline. These are transferable skills as they reach higher education and a career.

EMPLOYABLE SKILLS

The large numbers of Montana youth enrolled in food and nutrition projects, plant science and weeds projects, and technology and engineering 4-H projects are exploring rewarding career opportunities and finding passion in employable fields at early ages. In other words, the knowledge and skills gained mastering 4-H projects like crop science, robotics, and food science prepares youth for meaningful employment later in life.

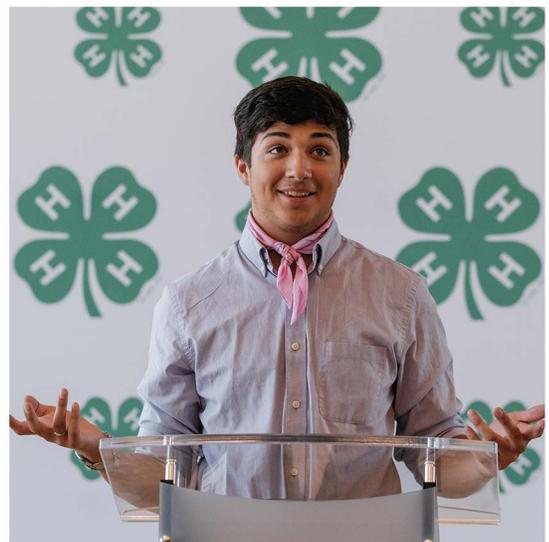
LEADERSHIP SKILLS

Montana youth enrolled in the leadership project develop character, focus on personal growth and practice goal setting. 4-H members identify needs in their communities and are encouraged to mobilize and lead members to meet those needs through community-based projects.

COMMUNICATION SKILLS

An average 4-H member has multiple opportunities to present and interview throughout the 4-H year. These unique opportunities add up and allow 4-H'ers to develop confidence and skills communicating in both prepared and spontaneous settings.

"I have participated in multiple presentations, from one person in the audience to hundreds. If I had not done 4-H I would not have [had] these opportunities to develop my speaking and listening skills."



THE STAGES OF 4-H MEMBERSHIP



CLOVERBUD / INTRODUCTION /

5 TO 8 YEARS

4-H Cloverbuds is open to any youth who is 5 years old as of October 1. Cloverbuds is a non-competitive educational program that introduces participating youth to fun, age-appropriate group activities in a structured meeting environment. The Cloverbud stage is an excellent opportunity to set the groundwork for future success as it has been shown that early life experiences affect a child's future development.



JUNIOR OR INTERMEDIATE / EXPLORATION /

9 TO 13 YEARS

The Junior/Intermediate stage is a great time for youth to explore a variety of topics that spark their passion. Members are empowered in the hands-on learning activities and gain the confidence to be successful in their selected project areas. While youth develop a love of learning through engaging curriculum, they are picking up the life skills needed to become contributing members of society.



SENIOR / PROFICIENCY /

14 TO 19 YEARS

During the Senior stage of 4-H membership, youth can further hone their skills and knowledge in the project areas they find the most interesting. This is also the time members gain proficiency in the life skills learned throughout their 4-H careers. Many senior-aged youth also take on more active leadership roles not only in their local communities, but also at the state level and beyond.



ALUMNI / GIVING BACK /

Although Alumni are no longer active members of Montana 4-H, this stage is just as significant as the others. This is a time when former 4-H members can serve as word-of-mouth ambassadors for the program, volunteer to help teach the youth as caring adults had done for them in the past, or donate to the Montana 4-H Foundation to help support Positive Youth Development Programming across the state.

MONTANA 4-H STATEWIDE EVENTS

Through participation in county, regional and statewide events, 4-H members build their network of peers and caring adults that support them as they grow and develop. Participation in events and activities is not only a fun motivator to keep them on track but is also an important part of their social and emotional learning.

Montana Citizenship Seminar: *Early January*

Montana Citizenship Seminar is designed to educate and inspire 4-H youth as they learn and experience the rights and responsibilities of citizenship. Delegates participate in a mock trial, create and debate bills, meet with elected officials, and participate in a service learning project. Citizenship Seminar is traditionally held in Helena.

Legislative Breakfast: *In Conjunction with Citizenship Seminar*

The Legislative Breakfast provides an opportunity to educate Montana legislators about the work and success of Montana 4-H. It brings together youth and adult constituents from across Montana to share stories of achievement drawn from their 4-H experiences. The breakfast also reinforces the vital role of the MSU Extension budget, which supports 4-H in Montana communities.

Recreation (Rec) Lab: *March/April*

This event provides an opportunity for youth and adults to enhance their leadership, communication and team building skills in an action-packed and interactive setting. Rec Lab programming is designed to provide participants with tips and tricks for being a better club, camp and community leader. This is an ideal event for senior members to attend a state event for the first time and begin to form relationships with 4-H peers from across the state, broadening their own skills and growing their network.

Pre-Congress: *Second Week in July (Prior to Congress)*

Pre-Congress occurs the two days before Congress. 4-H Ambassadors, teen leaders and staff come together with 4-H center staff for work and fun. Attendees work on committees to ensure the completion of all the details necessary to make the general Congress event successful. Also occurring during this weekend is the selection process for the State 4-H Ambassador Officers.

Congress: *Second Week of July*

Montana 4-H Congress provides youth from across the state an opportunity to come together on the Montana State University campus in Bozeman for four days and participate in an event like no other. Congress offers youth and adults a venue in which to learn, be challenged, and most of all, have a great time with their peers. Congress is an important tradition and is the signature event for the Montana 4-H Program.

Fall Leadership Training: *Third Weekend in October*

This event is an opportunity to build a network of 4-H teen leaders and connect them directly with the State Ambassador Officer Team, and statewide resources in order to develop capacity for individual leadership skills and practice these leadership skills at the local level.

Please visit montana4h.org for exact dates and additional events.

MONTANA 4-H RESOURCES

This welcome kit is meant to serve as a brief introduction to Montana 4-H. For more in-depth information, please refer to your New Family Guide. As always, if you have any questions regarding Montana 4-H membership and policies, please contact your local MSU Extension Office first.

Whether you belong to a club, a special interest project group, participate in school enrichment programs, or attend a 4-H camp, there are a multitude of resources available to you at www.montana4h.org. Some of these resources include, but are not limited to:

- Tools for enrolling in Montana 4-H using the Zsuite platform.
- Project descriptions with links to supporting curriculum and resources.
- Detailed descriptions and information regarding statewide events and programming initiatives.
- Club Officer materials to help run efficient club meetings.
- Record Book completion materials and guides.
- Grant and Scholarship Information.
- Montana 4-H Brand Basics: Clover usage and color palette.





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