What is 4-H? The 4-H Development Program is the youth outreach program from the land-grant universities’ Cooperative Extension Services and the United States Department of Agriculture.¹

Who is considered a 4-H Youth? Any youth taking part in programs provided as a result of action by extension personnel (professional, paraprofessional, and volunteer). This includes youth participating in programs conducted through 1862, 1890, and 1994 land-grant universities, EFNEP, urban gardening, and other programs that may not actually use the 4-H name and emblem with participants.²

How does the 4-H Partnership work? 4-H is the youth development program of the US Department of Agriculture and is implemented by the Cooperative Extension system through the over 110+ land-grant colleges and universities.³

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¹ Strategic Plan 4-H Youth Development: A 2025 Vision, NIFA/4-H Headquarters, National 4-H Council and ECOP US Cooperative Extension
³ Strategic Plan 4-H Youth Development: A 2025 Vision, NIFA/4-H Headquarters, National 4-H Council and ECOP US Cooperative Extension
Overview of County Roll in 4-H Programming (usually delegated by extension council to a County Director):

- Agree to adhere to Federal guidelines for use of 4-H name and emblem to carry out core 4-H Youth Development educational programs.
- Identify local/regional needs and emerging issues, and share findings/understanding of those needs with program directors [4-H State Leader] for the core curriculum and educational program development process.
- Work with program specialists to provide local support for educational program delivery; budget funds for programs and services to ensure an effective regional/county Extension and Outreach program.

Council Responsibilities: The County Extension Council [or its designee] shall be responsible for the preparation and adoption of the educational program on extension work in agriculture, home economics and 4-H club work, and periodically review said program and for the carrying out of the same in cooperation with the extension service in accordance with the Memorandum of Understanding with said extension service. The extension council and its employed personnel may cooperate with, give information and advice to organized and unorganized groups, but shall not promote, sponsor or engage in the organization of any group for any purpose except the promoting organization and the development of the programs of 4-H ...  

Counties Role: Use program planning process and program catalog to determine programming based on local needs. Select programs from core programs listed in program catalog, or develop programs locally. Locally developed programs must fit within the scope of the Extension and Outreach mission, provide instruction or information, and are Peer reviewed as outlined in Curriculum Review Process. Locally developed programs must fit within the scope of the Extension and Outreach mission, provide instruction or information, and are peer reviewed as outlined in Curriculum Review Process. The 4-H Review Process is [https://www.extension.iastate.edu/4h/files/page/files/Product%20Development%20Process.docx](https://www.extension.iastate.edu/4h/files/page/files/Product%20Development%20Process.docx). The 4-H Catalogue is available at: [https://www.extension.iastate.edu/4h/product](https://www.extension.iastate.edu/4h/product)

What are 4-H Clubs and Learning Communities?

4-H Clubs and Learning Communities create a culture of learning, in which everyone is involved in a collective effort of understanding. Successful learning communities – and successful 4-H clubs – have the following characteristics:

- Connect people to purposefully build a sense of community and establish a community identity.
- Embrace diversity of expertise and experiences within the group;
- Foster a culture of shared learning through collaborative and active learning experiences;
- Set common goals, develop standards to measure quality work, provide ample opportunities for reflection, and assess individual and group progress toward those goals;
- Share knowledge and question learning through respectful discussion and feedback between group members;
- Support distributed leadership by providing a range of leadership roles and skill building activities;
- Value all members of the group and allow them to participate to the extent possible.
- Truly successful and innovative learning communities advance the collective knowledge of the community via projects as a way to help individual members learn.

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5 Iowa Code 176.a
6 County MOU [https://www.extension.iastate.edu/countyservices/files/page/files/Memorandum%20of%20Understanding.pdf](https://www.extension.iastate.edu/countyservices/files/page/files/Memorandum%20of%20Understanding.pdf)
7 Club Definition [https://www.extension.iastate.edu/4hfiles/policy/20161025%204H%20Club%20Requirements%20and%20Definitions.pdf](https://www.extension.iastate.edu/4hfiles/policy/20161025%204H%20Club%20Requirements%20and%20Definitions.pdf)