

# IOWA STATE UNIVERSITY

## Extension and Outreach

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May 14, 2020

Dear Extension and Outreach Colleagues:

In response to questions and concerns received by my office about chartering of 4-H clubs, I am providing this letter in addition to the public resources posted about club chartering.

Occasionally, we get questions if a certain type of group is a club. Iowa 4-H defines a 4-H club is an organized learning community who meet regularly with adult volunteers or staff for a long-term, progressive series of educational experiences. Our federal partner, NIFA, defines a 4-H club as an organized group of youth, led by an adult, with a planned program that is carried on throughout all or most of the year.

All resources can be found at <https://www.extension.iastate.edu/4h/regulations-and-guidance> under the heading Club Chartering. You may be very interested in the guidance from NIFA on why chartering of clubs is required by the federal agency.

[https://www.extension.iastate.edu/4h/files/page/files/nifa\\_4-h-charter-fact-sheet.pdf](https://www.extension.iastate.edu/4h/files/page/files/nifa_4-h-charter-fact-sheet.pdf)

Simply put, the reason a club must be chartered is for its formal recognition as a 4-H club to use the 4-H Name and Emblem, which is a federally-protected mark. NIFA gives Iowa 4-H the responsibility for ensuring all active 4-H clubs are chartered. This means the State Office gives permission for counties and clubs to use the Name and Emblem for something as simple as club t-shirts, for example.

You may notice the document from NIFA is dated 2013. Iowa 4-H began developing guidance on chartering in 2017 and began offering education and training for state and county staff in 2017. Much of that material can be found on the Guidance page linked above.

Our campus specialists provided training on chartering through webinars and at in-person meetings, such as our spring and fall Youth Program Specialist meetings, our annual YouthFest, and our monthly webinars, as well as occasional updates in the FOCUS newsletter.

To recap, counties had the option to begin chartering their active 4-H clubs beginning September 2018, the start of the 2018-2019 program year. This was completely optional, but gave counties a head start on making sure they understood the requirements and had time to upload required documents. For the 2019-2020 program year, progress on chartering needed to start for those counties that had not yet done so.

Beginning September 1, 2020, all active clubs that are not chartered will be closed to enrollment in 4HOnline. This also coincides with the national rollout of 4HOnline 2.0 by RegistrationMax, which owns 4HOnline.

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In order to make sure the club is not closed to members, the county needs to upload three (3) documents. The first is a club calendar. Our volunteer specialists created a video to explain why club calendars are important: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cJZYvBz5-0g> and <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wIvsG6Nsmz4>. We want to ensure youth are receiving an educational experience. We also want to ensure risk management practices are in place for club activities. This has been an annual requirement for many years in Iowa – the only new addition is those calendars need to be uploaded in 4HOnline.

The second document is the Iowa 4-H Annual Compliance Report, found here [https://www.extension.iastate.edu/4h/files/page/files/nifa\\_4-h-charter-fact-sheet.pdf](https://www.extension.iastate.edu/4h/files/page/files/nifa_4-h-charter-fact-sheet.pdf)

This, too, is not a new requirement. This form has been requested for many years as part of our Civil Rights compliance with Federal and State laws. The only difference is that this form needs to be uploaded in 4HOnline.

A third document is called the Charter Application/Agreement. This document is to be physically signed by the primary club leader to essentially agree to the terms and conditions of leading a 4-H club. This form only needs to be uploaded once UNLESS there is a change in the direct and ongoing club leader. Signatures from the YPS and CYC are required as well.

Many counties have completed these steps and their clubs will be open to enrollment in September. For those not in that position, we suggest working with your Youth Program Specialist to get these forms uploaded by August 1, 2020. If your county is unable to upload forms, you can mail them to the State Office to the address on this letter.

The August 1 deadline is due to the planned rollover from 4HOnline 1.0 to 2.0. RegistrationMax has set our data conversation date on August 5. They are charging Iowa \$3,000 for the conversion, so we want to make the most of our investment by having the company do the data conversion. If your county's documents are uploaded by August 1, we have faith they will be moved into 4HOnline 2.0.

I hope this information clarifies the process, the expectations, and the deadlines for this Federal requirement for use of the 4-H Name and Emblem.

Should you have questions, please don't hesitate to contact your Youth Program Specialist, or our campus team of Marybeth Foster, Strategies and Systems Manager; Mitch Hoyer, Program Specialist; or Leslie Stonehocker, Data Manager.

Thank you for your attention to these importance compliance matters. We appreciate your cooperation and partnership.

Sincerely,

*Debbie Nistler*

Debbie Nistler, Ph.D.  
Iowa State University Extension and Outreach  
State 4-H Program Leader

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