



# Partnership Guidance

## Introduction

This document attempts to provide a shared vocabulary, a simple framework, and forms that can be used in the development of strong and clear partnerships. The forms provided (long and short) are intended to be used by County 4-H Staff with support of their 4-H Youth Program Specialist. The forms are designed to ensure alignment between 4-H and partners as related to goals, policies, values, and methods. They are also designed to mitigate risk and ensure the safety of the participants. **Please note** there may be instances when these tools may be insufficient. In those instances, the Iowa 4-H guidance is to work with partners to develop a formal Memorandum of Understanding.

## Definitions

**4-H Program National Definition (NIFA/ECOP):** 4-H is the youth development program of the Cooperative Extension System. 4-H is inclusive of a wide array of delivery modes, ways of learning, project and topic areas, and local adaptations, all designed to support positive youth development. 4-H encompasses Extension youth development programs facilitated by Nutrition, Agriculture, Natural Resources, Community Development or any other Extension major program area that reaches a youth audience, ages 5-19. By definition, all Extension youth development programs facilitated by an Extension professional or volunteer are part of 4-H and should be acknowledged as such in marketing and promotion efforts and be incorporated in the process of 4-H enrollment and reporting systems.

**4-H Partner:** A 4-H partner is any community entity that 4-H is working with in order to plan or deploy a youth development program of a minimum of 6 hours in length. This includes but is not limited to: colleges, schools, non-profits, service groups and government agencies that are involved youth development programming. Please note that those entities that aren't engaged directly in youth development programming may be better described as donors, supporters, or collaborators.

**Partnership Forms:** In order to simplify the local planning process, we have created a short form and a long form. Please work with your 4-H Youth Program Specialist to identify which form should be used in your particular case.

- A **Long Partnership Form** should be used in most situations to ensure a detailed understanding of program ownership, liability, and responsibility.
- A **Short Partnership Form** should only be used for one-time events or programs where there is a clear delineation of who will have ownership of the program, including participant authorizations, risk management procedures, and insurance costs.

## Categories of Responsibility

For the purposes of this document we will draw distinctions between primary categories of responsibility and accountability that would exist for any type of qualifying 4-H Youth Development Program. They are as follows:

- **Program Liability & Risk Management**, which covers all aspects of program liability and youth safety. Within the 4-H Program we are committed to making sure that parents are aware of the risks of our programs and that in the event of an emergency we will attempt to provide routine first aid or secure needed emergency medical treatment as required. In order to do this, information such as emergency

contact information, release forms and in some cases health history must be collected and held. In addition, 4-H is committed to securing permission from parents before recording audio or visual representations of their children before using them in promotional materials or news releases.

Additionally, the Iowa 4-H program takes its commitment to the safety of its youth and volunteers very seriously. The 4-H program makes sure that all programs take place in a safe environment for youth, volunteers, and staff. Consequently, we require that all adults working directly with youth are appropriately screened for criminal history, sex offender status, child abuse registry, and driving history (if they will be transporting youth). Participants in 4-H programming should be covered under a basic accident injury insurance policy, and the program should be covered by at least a \$1,000,000 liability policy to protect staff and volunteers. The Iowa 4-H program has mechanisms to ensure all of these types of coverage in the case that a partnering organization does not.

- **Civil Rights and Non-discrimination** covers state and civil rights law, policy, and procedure. Iowa State University or Iowa 4-H will not partner with organizations that discriminate on the basis of race, color, age, ethnicity, religion, national origin, pregnancy, sexual orientation, gender identity, genetic information, sex, marital status, disability, or status as a U.S. Veteran.
- **Fiscal Management** identifies the primary partner, who will hold any funds and assures compliance with all relevant local, state, and federal fiscal policies.
- **4-H Clover Requirements** covers how the 4-H name and symbol may and may not be used in advertisement and fundraising. For more information visit: <https://nifa.usda.gov/sites/default/files/asset/document/4-H%20Name%20and%20Emblem%20Policy%20Guide%204-H%20Professionals%202014.pdf>
- **Event and Program Management** covers aspects of programming related to planning, registering, enrolling, marketing and implementing a given program.
- **Alignment with Positive Youth Development Principles** covers fidelity to the Positive Youth Development model of the 4-H Youth Development Program. The 4-H program has been a leader in research and delivery of Positive Youth Development programs for over 100 years. Positive Youth Development aims to meet the 4 needs of youth, while utilizing 8 essential elements of all effective youth programs. Iowa 4-H delivers programs among four program priority areas of Leadership & Civic Engagement, Communication & the Arts, Healthy Living, and STEM. A summary of our method and purpose can be found at <https://www.extension.iastate.edu/4h/what-4-h>. To be aligned with this method and purpose, 4-H programming should be experiential in nature, allowing youth to choose their own individual and group goals, and then have an opportunity to reflect what they have learned with their peers and other audiences. Alignment also means that programming will be research based and related to one of our program priority areas. Lastly, 4-H programs are partnerships between youth and adults where youth are viewed as resources to the program and their community and not simply recipients.
- **Reporting and Evaluation** covers all aspects of program reporting requirements for partners, grantors, and public accountability. This may be quantitative in terms of reported outputs, numbers, and types of participants; or it may be qualitative in terms of program outcomes determined by evaluative processes. Iowa 4-H collects both types of data from its programs. Additionally, Iowa 4-H endeavors to research and evaluate the effects its programs have on its participants in other ways. In the case of formal or ongoing partnerships, Iowa 4-H shares data with the Iowa Department of Education to compare our program participants against their peers. Participation in that research is voluntary for program participants, but we would request that participants in Ongoing or Formal Partnerships be offered the opportunity to sign a release for participation in our research efforts.