

4-H Officer's Handbook



So Now You're an Officer

Congratulations! It's really an honor to be selected by your friends in 4-H to serve as a 4-H officer. With honors come certain responsibilities. As you assume your 4-H office, much of the responsibility for the success of your club will depend on you and the other officers.

You are now a member of a team that includes the other officers and leaders of your club. This leadership team can make the difference between a "fantastic club" that everyone wants to be a part of and a "hum-drum club" that most people couldn't care less about! Which kind of club do you want? The choice is yours . . . the success of the club depends on your leadership team.

If this is the first time you've held an office in your 4-H club, you will find many new experiences in the months ahead. If you've held an office before, consider this an opportunity to improve your leadership skills and serve your fellow 4-H'ers in a better way.

Learn the characteristics of good officers while you learn the duties of the other officers and work as a leadership team for a successful club.

Good Officers Are ...

Enthusiastic, tactful, loyal, honest, friendly—those are some words to describe good 4-H officers. They let the members of the club help decide what the club will do and give everyone a fair chance.

Officers of 4-H clubs are representatives of the local club and of the entire 4-H program of the state.

Start your own personal development program now. Be sure you can answer "yes" to each of these questions:

- Do I know the duties of my office?
- Am I willing to improve myself so I can be a better officer?
- Am I friendly? Do I work well with other members of the club, and do they work well with me?
- Do I willingly accept responsibilities that are assigned to me?
- Do I enjoy doing more than just what is required of me?
- Am I willing to give credit to others for work well done?
- Am I prompt in arriving at meetings?
- Does my appearance inspire confidence and respect?
- Am I kind, tactful, and courteous?
- Do I say "please" and "thank you" when I should?
- Am I always fair in my decisions?
- Do I appreciate my parents and 4-H volunteers for their time, effort, and devotion to club work?
- Will I attend a 4-H officers' workshop if it is offered for my club or county?

About Your Responsibilities

President

As president, your job is to help everyone in the club work together. You do all you can to make each member feel comfortable with the group. Group discussions are important to the club's working together. You want everyone to participate. You will hesitate to put in your own ideas. You will watch, listen, and toss back to the group questions asked of you. Ask questions, and make the group think.

When you feel the group is fairly well-agreed on a plan, you will ask, "Are we agreed that we should do . . . ?" Any member may say, "I think we ought to talk about it more" or, "I like this part, but not that." As president, you will let the group talk more and then ask again, "Are we agreed on this new plan?"

You will eventually have a plan on which everyone or nearly everyone agrees. No one will feel overruled.

Following are some of your duties as president:

Before the Meeting

- Plan business of the meeting with other officers and your volunteer club adviser.
- Arrange to have the vice-president (or other person if necessary) preside if you cannot attend.
- See that the meeting room is ready. Check the temperature for comfort. Arrange chairs in a circle if possible.
- Know parliamentary procedure to conduct an orderly meeting.
- Delegate responsibilities so that every member has some job in the club at one time or another.

During the Meeting

- Preside at meetings. Call the meeting to order on time and direct the business meeting.
- Appoint a temporary secretary if the elected one is absent.
- Appoint committees, unless otherwise decided by club action.
- Decide points of order fairly.
- Cast deciding vote in case of tie vote. Vote when voting by ballot or roll call.

- Plan with members and your volunteer 4-H club adviser the program for the year. Use Publication 2320 Planning with a Group.
- Be courteous to guests. Introduce them to the club.
- Check frequently on progress of committees. Ask for a report from each chairman.
- Approve payment of bills after action by the club.
- Sign minutes after approval by the club.
- Represent your club in the County 4-H Council.

Vice-President

You are the president's assistant. You preside when the president is absent. As chairman of the program committee, you work with the president and club adviser to involve the members in planning the program. Give the 4-H'er who is responsible for the program a reminder before the regular meeting.

Here are some of your duties as vice-president:

- Learn the rules of parliamentary procedure.
- Learn the duties of the president.
- Preside at meetings when the president is absent.
- Act as chairman of the program committee.
- Follow through with each regular program.
- Represent your club in the County 4-H Council.

Secretary

You keep a record of what the club does and handle its correspondence. As secretary, you will do the following:

- Record the club's plan for the year in the 4-H Secretary's Record Book (Form 636).
- Keep an accurate record of proceedings of all meetings—a record of what is done, not what is said. Include date and place of meeting; number of members and visitors present; approval of previous minutes; all reports and what was done about them; all motions, with the name of the person who made them and whether the motions were carried or lost; and the time the meeting was adjourned. (See the Secretary's Record Book for an example.)
- Keep a list of members. Call the roll at the request of the presiding officer.



4-H Emblem

The national 4-H emblem is a four-leaf clover with the letter "H" placed parallel to the midrib of each leaf.

The Hs stand for Head, Heart, Hands, and Health.

- Read the minutes of the previous meeting when the president calls for them.
- Read letters to the club at meetings.
- Write letters as directed by the club.
- Collect and record reports of all committees.
- Assist the president during the meeting by writing the motions as stated; restate the motions when requested.
- Help other officers and your club leader plan business to be handled at club meetings.
- Complete the application for 4-H charter (F772).
- Keep a record of all officers and committees.
- Represent the club in the County 4-H Council.

Treasurer

You are responsible for handling the club's money. You will do these things:

- Receive all money.
- Pay out money only when approved by the club.
- Keep an accurate record of all money received and its source; and all money paid out, showing who received the money and for what purpose.
- Put the money in a special club bank account or keep it in another safe place.
- Make regular reports to the club on money received and paid out and the amount on hand.
- Complete F1019 Mississippi 4-H Club Treasurer's Record Book.

Reporter

You are responsible for letting others know about your club—the fun you are having, the work you are doing, and the help you are giving.

Talk to your 4-H agent to learn the correct procedure to prepare and present club stories to the local newspapers and radio and television stations.

Promptness is important. To be news, a 4-H event or activity must be recent; important; close to the place of publication or to the readers, listeners or viewers; unusual; interesting; and seasonable.

Use these pointers to put your club "in the news"!

- Write in the third person. Use "Jim Smart" or "Dot Good" or "club members" instead of "I" or "we."
- Spell names and addresses correctly.
- Keep sentences short (no more than 17 to 20 words). Make each paragraph a complete thought with two or three sentences.

- The important parts of a news story are the five "Ws"—who, what, where, when, and why. Use your club's activities to explain each "W," and you have your story.
- Be prompt—get the story to the editor before his or her deadline.
- Keep trying—look for unusual and out-of-the-ordinary items.

Prepare news stories that are easy to use:

- Write or type clearly, leaving space between lines.
- Write "more" at the bottom of the page if the story continues to a second page.
- Write your name, address, phone number, and the date at the top of the paper.

As club reporter, you will do these things:

- Write announcements of meetings and special events for the newspapers and radio stations.
- Serve as chairman of the publicity committee.
- Collect news items concerning your club, and make a notebook for a permanent record if your club does not have a historian.

Historian

You are responsible for keeping a record of the activities of your club. You will work closely with the reporter and the secretary. Your duties include these:

- Collecting news items concerning your club.
- Taking pictures of club meetings and activities that show members in action.
- Using these materials to prepare the club's record for competition in the Mississippi 4-H Club Awards Program. Refer to the suggested outline in the 4-H Club Secretary's Record Book.

Song Leader

Group singing helps 4-H members feel more at ease and interested in the programs. As a song leader, you may stimulate enthusiasm or calm a noisy group, depending on your selection of songs. Learn fun songs and action songs to help your group put more life into its meetings!

Before the Meeting

- Choose the songs you plan to sing, and learn them well.
- Get a copy for each member.

At the Meeting

- Be sure you have the attention of the group before you give a definite movement to start the song.
- Begin with a familiar song, then teach a new one.
- Encourage everyone to sing.



Motto

To Make the Best Better

Recreation Leader

You are important to your club. Recreational activities such as games, parties, and picnics help accomplish the following:

- Members learn to know and appreciate one another.
- Create interest in your club.
- Promote cooperation and a sense of fair play.
- Put visitors and shy people at ease.
- Provide fun.
- Develop talents.
- Give members a chance to be creative.

Here are some tips to help you:

- Show enthusiasm.
- Plan your program.
- Know your games and have the equipment ready.
- Explain briefly and demonstrate.
- Speak clearly.
- Stand where everyone can see you.
- Use clear signals for starting and stopping.
- Overlook mistakes—games are for fun.
- Stop while everyone is still enjoying the activity.
- Let other members help conduct recreation.

Needed: 4-H Committees

Committees help share the responsibilities of leadership and get everyone actively involved. You may have standing committees or special committees.

Ideas for Better Committees

- Your work begins when you are appointed to a committee.
- The chairman sets a meeting time that is convenient to all or most of the members.
- The first meeting may be a short one to discuss the problems and make specific assignments to committee members. Such assignments might include gathering more facts about the problem, exploring different ways to solve it, determining costs, and having discussions with the 4-H club volunteer leader.
- These ideas and facts can be discussed at the second meeting. After this discussion, the committee may be able to make a decision or recommendation to report at the next club meeting.

This process offers a special challenge to the committee chairman. This person must do less talking and try to pull together all the ideas of the group.

Everyone must have a chance to think and share ideas. The committee's report to the club should include these things:

- A statement of the committee's task as originally stated by the president.
- As much information as needed so that all club members understand the situation.

- A brief statement about the different solutions to the problems discussed by the committee.
- Recommendations of the committee. Include reasons for choosing this solution. Include a statement regarding further action required.
- A move to adopt the report at the conclusion of the report. The person making it can say, "I move that we adopt this report."

The club can then act on it. If the committee has done a thorough job of studying the situation and preparing and presenting its report, all members can vote intelligently.

Standing Committees

Standing committees are appointed each year to serve for the complete 4-H year. Your club may want the following standing committees:

Program

After the club has made its program plans for the year, the program committee will see that the program is carried out. This means helping members responsible for the individual meetings locate speakers, films, demonstration materials, and other aids for the program.

Finance

The finance committee will plan and coordinate fundraising activities as directed by the club.

Recreation

A club may decide to have a committee to plan and conduct recreation for the club. The recreation leader is a standing member of this committee.

Membership

Every club should be a growing one. This committee will make sure other youth in the area know how to join your club, or they may help organize a new club.

Publicity

This committee will work with the reporter, who serves as chairman, and will be sure the club's activities receive good publicity.

Special Committees

Special committees are appointed by the president to study problems and recommend ways of solving them. Here are some examples of what special committees might do:

- Plan a parent-leader recreational activity.
- Find out what your club can do to make the community better.
- Plan a special health activity.
- Plan a special safety activity.

All About Meetings

4-H club meetings usually have four main parts: opening, business, education, and recreation. The amount of time devoted to each part will vary. For example, one meeting may be planned to be entirely recreational; another may be for an educational tour.

Here is what you should do during a club meeting (from M683 Mississippi 4-H Clubs Program):

Opening

- Call to order when the meeting opens
- Recite the 4-H Pledge and Pledge of Allegiance, and sing songs or conduct devotionals
- Roll call

Business

- Reading of the minutes of the last meeting
- Reports of officers

- Reports of committees
- Unfinished business left over from the last meeting
- New business
- Adjournment of business

Education

The vice-president should introduce the member responsible for the program. Here, members should plan a variety of activities, using guest speakers, tours, exhibits, talks, and visual presentations by other members, and several “learning by doing” experiences. Use the suggested ideas in Publication 862 Focus on Leadership: Making the Most of Meetings.

Recreation

This is an important part of the meeting. Recreational leaders and committee members can plan recreational activities to end the meeting on a fun note.

Sample 4-H Club Meeting

President: Will the meeting please come to order? John Jones will lead us in the Pledge of Allegiance, and Maria Martin will lead us in the 4-H Pledge.

Member John Jones: Let’s all stand and say the Pledge of Allegiance.

Members: I pledge allegiance . . .

Member Maria Martin: Let’s all say the 4-H Pledge.

Members: I pledge my head . . .

President: The secretary will call the roll.

Secretary: Today we will answer the roll by telling what we did on our projects last week.

Member Dick Washington: I taught my dog to heel.

Member Dick Lee: I set out some tomato plants in my garden.

Other members: (Tell what they did.)

President: Will the secretary read the minutes of the last meeting?

Secretary: The meeting was called to order by . . .

President: Are there any corrections or additions to the minutes? (He or she waits.) If not, they stand approved as read.

President: We will now have reports from the officers and committee chairmen.

President—reports on upcoming 4-H events, etc.

Vice-President—reports on her activities.

Secretary—reads letters.

Treasurer—reports on money received, money paid out, and the amount of money on hand.

Committee Chairmen—report on activities of committees since the last meeting.

After each report, the president asks if there are any questions. If there are no questions, the president says, “The report is accepted as presented.” If there are any questions and if the report needs something done about it, the president asks for a motion and a request that something be done.

President: Is there any unfinished business? (Business left over from the last meeting can be discussed at this time.)

President: Is there any new business? (Club members discuss new business—future plans for club activities, things to be done before the next meeting.)

President: Are there any announcements? (Club member or leaders make announcements.)

President: Since there is no further business, our vice-president will introduce our program.

Parliamentary Procedure

Making and Voting On Motions

A member who wants the club to vote on something makes a motion. He raises his hand or stands and waits to be recognized. When the president calls on him, he says, "I move that _____." Another member says, "I second the motion." This means she thinks the club should consider it. (If the motion is not seconded, it is dropped.)

The president then asks for discussion. When it stops, she asks the members, "Are you ready for the question?" If no one wants more discussion, the club is ready to vote.

The president states the motion so everyone can hear it. The members vote when she says, "All in favor, say 'Aye'" and, "All opposed, say 'No.'"

The motion is passed if more members vote "Aye" than "No." If the president is in doubt about the vote, she should ask for a show of hands or a standing vote.

The president then says, "The motion is carried" or, "The motion is lost," according to the vote.

Nominations and Election

There are two ways to nominate officers. One is to have members suggest someone for an office during an election meeting. The member says, "I nominate _____ for _____." A nomination does not need a second, although a second can be made to show support.

The other way is for the president to appoint a nominating committee. The committee chooses candidates for each office and asks them to run. It presents its nominations as a report at the meeting. Other nominations can then be made from the floor.

When there are no more nominations, a member says, "I move to close the nominations." If the motion is carried, the members then vote on the candidates.

Voting for officers is usually by ballot. It takes a majority (one more than half of the members) to be elected. If you have seventeen members, a majority is nine.

Nominations and elections are important club business. Tell the members about the election ahead of time. Then they can be thinking about the kinds of officers they want to have. Make sure everyone knows the duties of each office, too.

Discussion Groups

Rules for meetings are fine, especially for electing officers. But many clubs like to work and plan together without using these rules. Votes, especially if the vote is close, can leave a lot of members with the feeling that they didn't have any part in the plan.

Discussion groups let all the members feel they helped in shaping the decision. The group talks about something until everyone or nearly everyone agrees on what to do.

Circle Response

This is one way to start a discussion. The discussion leader or president says, "I'll call on each one in turn for his or her best suggestion on our plan. If you do not have a quick idea, you can say 'pass.' Will the secretary please write all the ideas on the chalkboard (or this sheet of paper)?"

Buzz Groups

If your club has ten or more members, you can use small groups to decide on a plan of action. After all the ideas are up on the board, divide into groups of five or six members each. Divide the ideas on the board into two or more sections, one section for each group. After buzzing for four or five minutes, each group reports back on its best idea.

Group Discussion

Next, have a group discussion of the two, three, or four best ideas.

Decision

The president asks, "Does this group agree that this is what we should do?" If the members say "yes," the next step is to ask for volunteers to carry out each part of the plan. All the members have some of their own ideas in the plan, so it is easier for them to do their part. After all, it is their plan.

How Was Your Meeting?

- Were your club meetings planned?
- Did members help make the plans?
- Did the president and other officers get together to plan the order of business for each meeting?
- Were materials and equipment ready?
- Did the meeting start on time?
- Were the officers prepared and able to make the meeting go smoothly?
- Were committee chairmen ready with their reports?
- Did the president help make members take part in the discussion?
- Did you follow the order for a business meeting?
- Did you follow parliamentary procedure for electing officers?
- Did you use circle response or buzz groups to work out ideas?
- Did each member carry out his or her part of the plans?
- Did meetings close on time?

For Better Meetings

Why not ask your leader or county Extension agent for a communitywide or countywide officer training school? You will enjoy knowing officers from other clubs, and you will learn even more about planning and holding meetings.

4-H Pledge

I Pledge

My Head to clearer thinking

My Heart to greater loyalty

My Hands to larger service

My Health to better living

**for my club, my community, my
country, and my world.**

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EXTENSION

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