



Alaska 4-H Clubs

What is a 4-H Club?

A 4-H Club is a group of five or more kids, guided by an adult volunteer, which has lots of fun, learning new things along the way. The club is the basic unit and foundation of 4-H. An organized club meets regularly under the guidance of one or more volunteer leaders, elects its own officers, plans its own program and participates in a variety of activities.

4-H clubs are open to all youth, ages 5-19, with a special Cloverbud program geared towards youth ages 5-8. Many opportunities are available to 4-H members at a local, district, state, and even national level. Competitions, leadership conferences, overnight camping, and other events contribute to the overall 4-H experience and allow 4-H members to meet other 4-H youth throughout the state of Alaska and beyond. All of this is possible with the help of adult volunteer leaders who assist youth in guiding their club experiences.

4-H clubs stand apart from other 4-H offerings primarily because of the sense of belonging a member feels to a club. Members develop bonds of friendship, concern for each other and a feeling of belonging to something worthwhile and important.

A 4-H Club can be focused around one specific area of interest (working on electric projects, or gardening) or youth can select projects and programs that interest them as they go along. All 4-H clubs build youth leadership skills by electing officers and conducting their own business meetings, working together to conduct service activities, as well as making new friends and having a lot of Fun!

Clubs are as varied as the people of which they are made:

- A *community club* usually includes a larger number of members of various ages who work on a variety of projects. They may all work together on citizenship and service projects, then select different individual project areas. Such a club usually has an organizational leader and several project and activity leaders.
- In a *project or special interest club*, all members work on the same project area together. This type of club may meet for a defined period of time or be on-going.
- *Families* may organize as a 4-H club with parents and others as leaders. They may be involved in one or more projects and in community service activities.
- 4-H clubs can be *organized within other groups* such as Boys and Girls Clubs, YMCA, YWCA, community centers, schools and afterschool programs.



What happens in 4-H clubs?

Youth that participate in 4-H clubs develop into responsible, self-directed, productive citizens of the world through the use of research-based “learn-by-doing” educational activities and experiences. 4-H has such a wide variety of programs and activities available that every youth can do well. There are options from sewing to woodworking, from environmental studies to entomology, to encourage youth to explore, experiment, and think independently. Youth learn leadership, citizenship, and life skills through more than 1,000 available projects. In addition to established programs, the option of doing an individual project and creating one’s own ‘curriculum’ is also possible. Fairs and festivals offer youth an opportunity to demonstrate their skills and earn recognition for their best work, all a part of the 4-H experience.