



Welcome to the Alaska 4-H Program. We're glad to have you and your child involved in 4-H. Through 4-H we hope your family will find rich opportunities for personal growth, fun and education. You may have some questions about 4-H now, or as you and your child progress through the 4-H program. Please feel free to visit with your 4-H leader or extension agent any time.

## What Is 4-H?

The Alaska 4-H Program is an educational program of the University of Alaska Fairbanks and the U.S. Department of Agriculture. The purpose of 4-H is to develop youth through the involvement of parents, other adults and volunteers, who organize and conduct learning experiences for youth in a community setting. Your son or daughter can grow in knowledge, skills, citizenship, leadership and cultural understanding in 4-H. Some experiences your child will have are:

- Working with a caring adult volunteer leader to make new friends through 4-H meetings and activities.
- Feeling a sense of accomplishment and developing self-esteem through hands-on "learn by doing" experience.
- Developing leadership and the ability to speak before a group.
- Experiencing recognition for growth and achievement in areas of interest.
- Exploring projects that may lead to future careers and leisure-time skills.
- Participating in healthy and fun activities which contribute to greater understanding of self, other individuals and cultures.

## What Will My Child Do?

As a 4-H member your child has, or will choose, his or her project or area of interest.

Your child will plan the project activities he or she wants to do with your assistance, the involvement of the volunteer leader and project materials. The activities may include making an article for exhibit at a local display or fair, or giving a demonstration to the 4-H club or other group. During the year, your child will attend 4-H meetings and may want to participate in other local, district, state and national activities such as camps, fairs, conferences and community service. Members have an opportunity to evaluate and reflect upon what they've done through their records.



## What Will It Cost?

The project your son or daughter chooses and the resources you have at home will determine the cost to the family. Some projects require very little investment, others require some materials to get started, such as fabric to make a clothing item or supplies for an arts and crafts project. Other projects require a substantial amount of support, as in raising a large animal or owning a horse.

4-H projects need not be expensive. Read over your child's project materials and talk with the 4-H leader or Extension agent to estimate the financial needs related to different projects.

A small membership fee is assessed to help defray materials, some awards and mailings. Fund-raising projects are sometimes initiated to provide financial support for activities of the club.

## Who Supports 4-H?

The 4-H program is the effort of many people. Staff members of the University of Alaska Fairbanks, in both district and state Extension offices, give professional leadership to the program. 4-H leaders from the community voluntarily share their time and talent, and you as a parent support it with your abilities and enthusiasm.

Financial support comes from state government through the University of Alaska Fairbanks and the federal government through the U.S. Department of Agriculture. Private businesses, individuals and foundations also provide support for 4-H.

## What Can I Do?

Successful 4-H members have the interest and support of their parents. If you are wondering how you can help, here are some suggestions:

- Learn about 4-H, what it stands for and how it operates.
- Assist your son or daughter in selecting 4-H projects.
- Show your interest and enthusiasm for the projects selected. Find out what is suggested for the members to do and learn.
- Help guide your child, but don't do the job for him or her.
- See that a project is carried through to completion.

- Encourage your child when he or she succeeds, but even more so when things are not going well. Help your child see progress, not just the end result.
- Be an example! Help your child be a good sport and appreciate success of others.
- Provide transportation to local meetings and district activities in which your child and others of the club are interested. Or provide refreshments for meetings and special 4-H functions. Don't wait to be asked — *volunteer to help!*
- Attend 4-H meetings and other special activities.
- Help your child find a way to participate in special activities that interest him or her — such as district contests, camps, fairs or displays.
- Keep informed about 4-H through information that comes to members of your family. Be a 4-H booster in your community.
- Support your local 4-H leaders. Get acquainted with them. Let them know you appreciate their efforts.
- Offer your services to assist the leader. You have knowledge and skills needed in 4-H.
- If the need arises, help find local leaders for your 4-H club. Several kinds of leaders are needed: organizational, project, resource and activity. Consider helping in one of these ways yourself.

## What Are the Basics of a 4-H Club?

- Enrolls at least five members from at least three families.
- Conducts a minimum of six club meetings each year supplemented by project meetings, camps, fairs and other 4-H learning activities.
- Typically elects youth officers or leaders to provide leadership to the club.
- Meets in any location, including homes, a community center, military base, library, public housing site, place of worship and many other places.
- Includes opportunities to learn and apply skills such as leadership, citizenship, community service and public speaking.
- Provides individual project experiences to develop in-depth knowledge about science, citizenship and healthy living.
- Encourages active involvement and participation by youth and adults.
- Provides safe and healthy physical and emotional environments.
- Provides members and volunteers access to resources of UAF, and local, state and national 4-H opportunities.

[www.uaf.edu/ces](http://www.uaf.edu/ces) or 1-877-520-5211

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# Congratulations — You Have Become A 4-H Parent