

# Guide To 4-H Project Recognition

Record keeping and Project Reporting are valuable skills taught to members of the 4-H program. Members are encouraged to keep a permanent record of all 4-H and non-4-H experiences and are encouraged to summarize their experiences on the 4-H Project Report Form for project recognition.

## Purpose/Objective of 4-H Records and Reports

- To learn how to set goals, how to make plans for action, and how to decide how well you did (evaluation).
- To learn the skills of record keeping and organization to use now and in the future. Examples: finances, taxes, health, immunizations, careers, scheduling, etc.
- To learn to communicate, prioritize, and summarize your project mastery and experiences.
- To practice responsibility by completing a task.
- To allow 4-H members to tell how they have grown, what they have learned, where they came up short, and to do it within outlined parameters.
- To provide an opportunity for competition at the County, Regional, and State level.

## Record Keeping & Project Reports

### General Guidelines

The project report should represent the work and thoughts of the 4-H member and should not be completed by the parent or other adult volunteer.

### Age Divisions

Junior Ages 8-10, on or before September 1 of the previous year.

Intermediate Ages 11-13, on or before September 1 of the previous year.

Senior Ages 14-18, on or before September 1 of the previous year.

### Grammar & Punctuation

For all age divisions, members are encouraged to write using proper grammar and punctuation that is age-appropriate for the individual member.

### Handwriting

4-H members in the Junior division (4-H age 8-10) are encouraged to fill out their record by hand, or at minimum, an adult can help type verbatim what the youth has recorded.

Handwriting at any age and in any part of the Project Report is acceptable. When doing so, make sure to write legibly.

## **Accessing Project Report Forms**

Please note that both a paper and a typed form will be evaluated in the same manner, with no advantage being given to either method. Information included in either method will be the same.

## **Important Definitions**

### **Recordkeeping**

Maintaining a history of one's activities such as financial dealings or life events by entering data in ledgers, journals, calendars or putting items into a file system; an essential life skill.

### **4-H Project Award Form**

Age and Eligibility Summarization of a given year's 4-H work within a certain project, including, but not limited to: goals, learning experiences, finances, leadership, service, and exhibits. 4-H members assemble their project report into a specified document and submit those for evaluation.

### **Age and Eligibility**

Once young people join 4-H, they are encouraged to keep their permanent record throughout the year and fill out at least one annual project report. You may do a project report for every project you are enrolled in.

## **Recordkeeping Process**

### **Goal Setting - Getting Started**

Prior to or at the beginning of the 4-H year, a member should begin identifying, setting and recording personal goals for themselves in each project area. Parents, club leaders, adult volunteers, and local Extension Staff play an important role in helping guide young people through this process. Members should record their personal goals and then begin work toward achieving those goals. It is important to record anything the member would like to learn or do.

### **Journaling - As Things Happen**

Record keeping is going to be an important part of a member's life. Members will keep records in high school, in college, and at work whether they own their own business or work for someone else. Now is the time to learn how to keep good records. The most important thing about 4-H recordkeeping is to know what records you need to keep and to find a comfortable way to collect information. Some of the most common ways of keeping up with 4-H records include a calendar, smartphone, computer, an index box, or a notebook. These are further defined below.

- Calendar Method – Keep a calendar in a handy location (such as on the refrigerator) and every time the member does something related to 4-H, school, church or other organizations, write it down. Then, at the end of each month place the calendar in a safe place until it is time to assemble the Record Book.
- Smart Device – If an electronic smart device is available, utilize to record activities, trainings, clinics, leadership roles, service activities, project experiences, etc.
- Index Box Method – Get a 3-inch by 5-inch box, index cards and some dividers. Label each of the dividers as one of the sections in the report form discussed later in this guide. Then each time the member does something, write it down on an index card, then file the card in the section marked by the divider. For example: If the 4-H member were to go to the nursing home for recreation with the residents, then have him/her write it down and put the card behind the community service divider. After maintaining the “4-H File Box” for a year, pull the cards out and select the most important activities for the 4-H Record Book. Do not forget to date each card.
- Member Record Book, Binder, Folder, or Spiral Notebook Method – Grab a binder, file folder or notebook and organize each activity by type or by date. This is an easy first step to start out until the member gets the hang of recordkeeping. Keep any programs, receipts, notes or documents from your activities.

## Reflecting – Looking Back

Below are some questions to help a member start reflecting on his/her project experiences as he or she prepares to complete a Project Report.

- What did you learn from your project(s)? How did you grow in your project? Did you master any skills?
- Did you meet any of your goals? If so, what helped you attain those? If not, what were some obstacles that might have prevented you from reaching your goals?
- How did your project change or grow within the year or from previous years?
- Did you serve in any type of leadership capacity?
- What impact did your involvement have on you, your club, or community?
- How have your project experiences influenced your future? Examples: career, leisure time, or other.

## What Makes Up A 4-H Record Book?

A 4-H Record Book contains all parts: (all three age divisions: Junior, Intermediate, and Senior) \*Required to Win Top Record Book

- Record Check sheet
- Personal Information Page\*

- Membership Pin\*
- Project Award Form(s) - (one report per project)\*
- Permanent Record\*
- Illinois 4-H Experience Award\*

Do NOT use plastic page sleeves. Dividers with tabs may be used to organize a record book, but are not required. The 4-H member may include information for the current year only. Previous years' Project Records should be kept for personal use, but not submitted for evaluation.

## **Specific Guidelines for Order of Assembly**

- Check Sheet
  - A single page found at the front of the Record Book; used to verify that all information is included and complete for each level of competition. This information page is not judged.
- Personal Information Page
  - A single page that contains personal contact information; used to verify the appropriate age division, category entered, and that information contained within the Record Book reflects the work of the individual submitting the records for evaluation. This information page is not judged.
- Project Award Form (Fillable PDF Option A or Handwritten Option B)
  - The Project Award Form is the main reporting form for the 4-H Record Book. The Project Award Form is used to report the most significant learning and experiences that a member has in a given project in the current 4-H year. Keep in mind that 4-H teaches growth, so show as much growth as possible when filling out the record. The maximum number of entries and pages will vary between section and age division.
- **CLARIFICATION ON LEARNING ACTIVITIES THAT TAKE PLACE OUTSIDE OF 4-H CLUBS AND PROJECT GROUPS**
  - Very often 4-H members can enhance their 4-H project learning experiences by participating in activities beyond the 4-H club/project. Example, a youth may participate in a showmanship clinic sponsored by a cattle breed association. The learning that takes place and the practice of showing enhances their 4-H project and thus should be reported in the Award Form. Another example may be in the Theatre and Performance Arts category where many learning experiences may take place within a community theatre or through school theatre. The knowledge, skills and practice associated can be reported as learning experiences within the Report Form.

- The 4-H Permanent Record
  - The 4-H Permanent Record is a complete compilation of a 4-H member's activities, both 4-H and non-4-H. This record grows with the 4-H member, as you add on to it year after year. An up-to-date Permanent Record can be helpful with many award and scholarship applications.

## Breakdown Of Project Report Forms

- Project Goals
  - Successful 4-H projects begin with written goals that provide a plan for the year. A project record that shows excellence will begin with goals designed to provide learning, technical skills, leadership and citizenship experiences for the individual. What new skills would you like to gain? Who is going to help you along the way? Setting measurable goals will help guide you through positive 4-H project learning experiences.
- Project Presentations
  - In this section, 4-H members are asked to record any and all forms of communication related to their 4-H project. Examples may include but are not limited to: Project Talks, Demonstrations, Public Speaking, newspaper articles, blog entries, social media, and other digital media.
- Project Learning Experiences
  - This section is where you report what you have learned and done within your 4-H project this year. Your experiences and/or learning should be age-appropriate and detailed enough to evaluate your progress. List all of the new and fun things you have done and learned that are related to your 4-H project. This is the member's opportunity to tell the world: "Look at the cool stuff I have been doing!" Include activities such as, but not limited to project meetings, workshops, clinics, contests, tours, field trips, research, computer learning programs, completed curriculum activities, interviews, job shadows, etc. These learning activities may be completed in a project setting or may be the result of an independently conducted project.
- Levels of Participation
  - Levels of participation demonstrate project growth, involvement, and depth. Please use the following abbreviations to indicate where the learning took place.
    - L Learning activity or experiences at Local 4-H Club level
    - C/U Learning activity or experience at your County or Unit level

- R Learning activity or experience at Regional level (more than one county/unit)
  - S Learning activity or experience at the State level
  - M Learning activity or experience at a Multi-State level
  - N Learning activity or experience at the National level
  - I Learning activity or experience at the International level
- Project Exhibits
  - Record project-related exhibits, entries, and displays. May include 4-H events and non-4-H events such as school or community showcases.
- Project Leadership Experiences
  - Record your leadership experiences within the project. Be as specific as possible. Leadership is teaching another person or a group, skills or information, also includes organizing or coordinating an activity, event, or meeting; selecting and preparing materials, and selecting presenters. When appropriate, include quantities or frequencies, and your level of involvement (were you a member, an officer, or chairperson?). Include elected, appointed and volunteer leadership. Do NOT include leadership that occurred as part of performing a community service activity. Providing primary leadership to a community service effort should be reported in Citizenship.
- Project Citizenship
  - Record your Citizenship experiences within the project. Be as specific as possible. Citizenship means helping out in your community and serving others without compensation. List civic engagement, community service or service-learning projects that might include: clean-ups, collections, repairs, construction, care packets, visitations, education, and donations.
- Project Financial Journal
  - This section is where you will record all project-related finances, both income and expense. The focus in this section is on accuracy and being thorough, not on total profit or loss. All project areas will incur some type of expense and most will provide an opportunity for income. Please be as detailed and specific as possible.
- Project Reflection
  - Age 8-10 report - There are questions to answer as a reflection of the project during the year. There is also a question for a parent/guardian to answer as well.

- Ages 11 and up reports - Your Project Reflection should focus on the project learning and experiences in one project from the current 4-H year. However, it may also include information or references from prior years when appropriate to demonstrate growth and variety.
- It is acceptable to include general information about other projects later in the story, only if they tie into the project featured in the record. The Project Reflection should not just be a repetition of what is in the project report. Include new information, expand on the entries to ‘tell the story’ of your 4-H project work.
- Organize your writing by including an introduction, body and conclusion. Your introduction should capture the reader’s attention. It’s a way to get the reader interested in what you have to say. Journalists call it a “lead.” The idea is to make it fun, interesting, surprising or informative. Let your personality shine! The body of the Project Reflection should focus on activities and learning in the specific project area. Expand upon the entries in the record, sharing your experiences, growth, frustrations, challenges, highlights and future project plans. The conclusion ties it all together, summarizing your project reflection, including career goals and acknowledging who helped you along the way.
- The reflection narrative could include information such as:
  - Introduction
    - Information about yourself, your family, and your community
    - Why you enrolled in the project
  - Body
    - Expand upon your project goals and what you wanted to accomplish
    - Knowledge gain, improved skills, etc.
    - Lessons learned from failure. What went wrong or didn’t go according to plan?
    - How the project has helped you become a better leader and citizen? What have you learned through your citizenship and leadership activities?
    - Other projects that you have taken that tie into this one. (Example?)
  - Conclusion
    - Project summary
    - How the project has influenced your future plans or career goals

- Who helped you along the way? What have others done for you and with you in your 4-H project?
- Photos
  - Insert photos that demonstrate learning, leadership, and citizenship within the project. Please note that landscape-oriented photos work better in the form. Include captions in the spaces provided. The photos used are very important and should reflect growth, development, and involvement within the 4-H project. Use photos that show the member doing things, learning and teaching others, and especially having FUN in their 4-H project work.

## Evaluation of Project Reports

What will judges look for? Project Reports submitted for competition will be evaluated primarily on content. Please refer to the score sheet for judging criteria. Emphasis will be placed on the quality of the member's experiences, growth and scope of project work, accuracy and thoroughness.

## Awards Evaluation Rubric

- Project Goals-Maximum 5 points
  - Goals should reflect – Action=How; Result=What; Timetable=When
  - Project learning/personal development goals include details, are age-appropriate, challenging yet realistic
  - Reflect growth in project mastery through leadership/citizenship, communications and/or contest goals.
- Project Communications/Presentations-Maximum 10 points
  - Shared learning with others, i.e. demonstrations, talks, articles written, web pages, slide shows, digital media, social media, etc.
- Project Learning Experiences-Maximum 20 points
  - Size/Growth/Development of Project
  - Knowledge and Skills Gained
  - Project Learning Experiences
  - Project Meetings, Clinics, Schools, Tours attended
  - Contests – Judging, Quiz Bowls, Skill-A-Thons
- Project Exhibits & Showcase Opportunities-Maximum 5 points
  - Fairs, Shows, Exhibits, Displays, Public showcases
- Project Leadership-Maximum 15 points
  - Leadership Exhibited – elected, appointed, or requested
  - Leadership Exhibited – independent, self-initiated

- *Leadership is teaching another person or a group, skills or information, also includes organizing or coordinating an activity, event, or meeting; selecting and preparing materials, and selecting presenters.*
- Project Citizenship- Maximum 15 points
  - Community Service/Citizenship Related to Project
  - *Citizenship means helping out in your community and serving others without compensation.*
- Project Finances-Maximum 10 points
  - Accuracy, completeness
  - *Profit or loss is not evaluated, i.e. large profit does not equal high score*
- Project Reflection-Maximum 15 points
  - Reflects/identifies knowledge gained in project area
  - Reflects/describes leadership/citizenship skills developed/used in project area
  - Reflects/describes impact of 4-H within family/personal life/community
  - Reflects/describes impact of 4-H on future plans
  - Ability to communicate ideas effectively (organization & word usage)
  - Reflects application of project knowledge and skills to non-4-H settings
  - Presentation - neatness, spelling, punctuation, grammar
- Project Photos-Maximum 5 points
  - Project photos reflect action & growth
  - Leadership photos reflect organizing/coordinating activities, and/or teaching others
  - Citizenship photos reflect helping in your community and serving others without compensation
- 100 Total Points Possible



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