



# ***Getting Started*** **with McLean County 4-H**



Welcome! If you are reading this, then you are most likely new to 4-H in McLean County. We are so excited you are here and cannot wait to see the amazing things you do!

This guide is a great resource to get you started in McLean County 4-H. For more information check out the 4-H Family Handbook.

We look forward to getting to know you more!

*Your McLean County 4-H Team*



**Illinois Extension**

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# Meet the McLean County 4-H Team



**Katie Buckley**  
*Extension 4-H Youth  
Development Educator*



**Skylar Holland**  
*Extension Program Coordinator  
4-H Show and Programs*



**Michelle Vincent**  
*Extension Program Coordinator  
4-H Clubs and Volunteers*

# 4-H FAQ's

## What is 4-H?

The 4-H program is the largest informal youth-serving organization in the country.

The 4-H program is organized into clubs throughout the county, based on where members live or specific interests. SPIN (SPecial INterest) Clubs such as Shooting Sports and Robotics offer youth the opportunity to focus on a specific theme. Volunteer adult leaders help to lead the clubs and provide organization and adult supervision for the various club activities. They also help to advise the youth about educational opportunities, leadership, and citizenship development.

## Who can be part of 4-H?

All youth ages 8 through 18 may enroll in a 4-H club.

This age is determined by how old youth are on or before September 1 of the current year.

Youth 5 through 7 years of age on or before September 1 of the current year may enroll in 4-H Cloverbud groups.

## When can I join 4-H?

Today! While the new 4-H year begins on September 1, new members are welcome anytime. *Deadlines included are event participation specific.*

We encourage returning members to enroll by October 31 so they are able to stay up to date with 4-H news and information.

# Where to Start?

**The very basic first steps to joining are:**

## 1. **Decide on a club**

- There are 4-H clubs all throughout McLean county. You can select a club because it is close to you, you know a friend who is a member, or they focus on a special interest you have.

## 2. **Enroll on our enrollment website**

- <https://4h.zsuite.org/>
- Need help? Reach out to one of our staff members!

# Membership Policies

## New Members

By May 1st:

- Must be enrolled in all of their projects
- Pay the \$20 program fee

\*\*In order to show for premiums at the local 4-H Show.

## Returning Members

- To be considered active in 4-H member it is encouraged that you enroll by October 31st. This allows you to stay up to date on 4-H news and information.
- By May 1st, pay the \$20 program fee and have projects selected

\*\*Enrollment allows members to be covered by University of Illinois' insurance policy.

## **4-H Program Fee Policy for McLean County**

- Members must pay a 4-H Program Fee of \$20/year. This fee includes community club members, independent members, SPIN club members and Cloverbuds. \$7 is forwarded to the state and \$13 will stay in the county.
- No child will be denied participation in 4-H due to the inability to pay.
- Contact the Extension office for fee waiver information.
- Some clubs choose to do fundraising or collect donations to offset 4-H Program Fees for their members.
- Families with more than three members will receive a fee waiver for each additional child.
- If a member drops out of 4-H after enrolling, a refund will not be issued.

# 4-H Project Selection

## Do I have to select a project?

- All 4-H members are required to select at least one project each year. Often, 4-H members will select more than one project to work on throughout the 4-H year.
- Just because you select a project does not mean you have to show that project at the 4-H Show.

## How do I select projects?

- The simplest answer is to select projects in areas you are interested in! We also offer additional resources to help you make project selections.
  - Illinois Project Resource Guide
  - 4-H Project Selection Descriptions
  - McLean County 4-H Show Book
    - All of the above documents can be found linked on our website under "Fairs & Shows"

## What about project books?

- Project books are used to learn more about a project area.
- Project books are purchased by the member's family through the Illinois 4-H Shop on shop4-H.org.
- Some project areas require the project book for the project and some do not. To learn what areas need the project, you can review the 4-H Show Book or reach out the the Extension office. If the project area does not require the book, the member does not have to purchase it.
- If families need assistance with purchasing the books, fee waivers are available.

# Helpful 4-H Websites

## McLean County 4-H Website

- [go.illinois.edu/McLean4H](http://go.illinois.edu/McLean4H)

## ZSuite - Enrollment Website

- <https://4h.zsuite.org/>

## Illinois 4-H

- <https://4h.extension.illinois.edu>

## 4-H Supply Catalog

- <https://shop4-h.org/>

## McLean County 4-H - Facebook Page

- Find us on Facebook at [McLeanCountyExt4H](#)

**For questions, please contact  
McLean County 4-H staff at 309-663-8306 or  
visit [go.illinois.edu/McLean4H](http://go.illinois.edu/McLean4H).**



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