
CLAY COUNTY 4-H POLICIES

GENERAL POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

Youth Membership

1. The official 4-H program year is September 1 through August 31.
2. The minimum age of a 4-H'er is 5 years old and the maximum age for a 4-H'er is 18 years old, or completion of high school, whichever comes first. Youth whose membership age is beyond 18 who have qualified for a National Contest (as a culminating event for their project learning) shall be eligible to participate in the event as long as they qualify as per National Contest policies.

Youth classified as an "exceptional student" and thus determined eligible for a special program by the State Board of Education [Florida Statute 1003.01(3)(a)] shall be eligible to participate in 4-H until the age of 21 years old (National 4-H upper age limit) or completion of high school, whichever comes first.

3. 4-H members age divisions: **Ages 5 - 7:** Cloverbud Division, **Ages 8 - 10:** Junior Division, **Ages 11 - 13:** Intermediate Division, and **Ages 14 - 18:** Senior Division. (Cloverbuds are ineligible to participate in large animal projects and competitive activities at any level.)
4. A youth is consider a member in good standing of Clay County 4-H when they have met the following criteria: attended 70% of their club(s) business meetings, delivered one demonstration/illustrated talk/speech at either the club or county level, and submit at least one project book for that year. **It is the member's responsibility to know their membership status.** If a youth is not a member in good standing this will jeopardize the events, activities and competitions (shows) they can participate in as 4-H members.
5. Once online registration is complete, each member will be asked to pay the Florida 4-H Membership fee of \$20.00. A portion of this fee will cover supplemental insurance coverage through American Income Life Insurance Company.
- 6 a. 4-H members participating in the **horse project** must also submit the following documents by December 31st: **1)** Annual Clay County/Florida 4-H Horse Program Qualification/Application Form, **2)** Equine Activity Sponsor Release, **3)** Clay County Horse Program Code of Conduct and Commitment Form, **4)** 4-H Horse and Pony Lease Agreement Form (if applicable), **5)** Horse Program Dress Code.

- b. 4-H members wishing to enter county, district, and state level competitions and events must be enrolled thirty (30) days prior to beginning the project or by October 1st (whichever comes later) with the proper enrollment forms submitted to the 4-H office (see the member forms listed under #11).
 - c. Livestock exhibitors must be enrolled on or before October 1st to be eligible to show in the upcoming Clay County Fair Youth Livestock Shows. A verification of eligible membership will be sent immediately to the fair office.
7. Club members cannot be required to own specific resources, such as, but not limited to: a horse, steer, or sewing machine, in order to belong to a club.
 8. 4-H encourages enrollment and/or participation in more than one (1) 4-H project when the educational activities help youth achieve their learning goals.
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 - a. Members are required to enroll in 4-H in the county they reside. Considerations may be given, but only when there has been written approval from the 4-H agents in the respective counties. Under no circumstances is a 4-H member permitted to be in the same project in two different counties at the same time.
 - b. Members from another county must comply with the Clay County 4-H Policies, Guidelines, and Procedures in order to remain a member in good standing. Members not complying will be removed from Clay County 4-H Membership, directed to enroll in the county they reside in and a written explanation will be forwarded to that county's 4-H agent.
 10. Members must conform to all Clay County 4-H policies and procedures to be eligible for competitive events, camps, and other 4-H activities. Additional criteria for competitive events can be requested through the 4-H office.
 11. Members can be removed from Clay County 4-H for actions and behaviors not in compliance of the Clay County 4-H Policies, Guidelines, and Procedures.
 12. Youth participating in and representing Clay County 4-H at competitions, judging and educational events should be dressed in dark blue or black jeans, slacks or a fingertip length skirt, and will wear a polo or t-shirt with the 4-H logo on it. However, we do realize that deviations from this policy for certain events is necessary (e.g., horse shows, dairy shows, etc.)

Adult/Volunteer Policies

13. Clubs must complete general enrollment documents by October 1st of the current 4-H year to be considered a bonafide 4-H club in Clay County. Enrollment is completed by executing and submitting the following: **1)** Enroll in 4honline.com, **2)** Publication Request Form, **3)** 4-H Club Organizational Form, **4)** Affirmative Action Report, **5)** Request for Club Charter form, and **6)** A signed copy of the Clay County 4-H Policies.

- 14 a .** Adults who have continuous contact (more than three (3) direct contacts) with youth in 4-H must complete an Application for an Adult to Volunteer with Extension Youth Programs and enroll as a volunteer in 4honline.com and complete the online YCS800 volunteer training. Acceptance as a volunteer is contingent on return of this form to the 4-H office for submission and clearance through appropriate screening processes. This screening process includes reference checks, a personal interview, and criminal background checks.
- b.** Any volunteer who spends 10 or more hours a month with youth must also be screened and fingerprinted. To protect youth and adults involved in UF/IFAS programs, UF/IFAS has established mandatory volunteer background screening and youth registration procedures to meet requirements of the State of Florida via the Department of Children and Families (DCF); and the University of Florida Office of Youth Conference Services (OYCS). During the 2015 legislative session, the Florida Legislature amended section 402.301(6), Florida Statutes, (SB7078 – section 5, chapter 2015-79, Laws of Florida), which requires certain membership organizations, including Florida 4-H, to complete 435 Level 2 background screenings through the online Background Clearinghouse Results Portal for all employees and volunteers.
- 15.** Any adult transporting, chaperoning 4-H'ers to out-of-county events, or accompanying youth on overnight activities must be registered with the 4-H office as a 4-H volunteer, have completed the background screening and finger printing see #14). The adult must register at least thirty days prior to the event.
- 16.** A ratio of one (1) adult chaperone for every ten (10) youth is recommended. For overnight events, this ratio is required. An even lower ratio is recommended if you are working with younger children; for 8–10 year olds, an appropriate ratio would be one (1) adult to eight (8) youth. The preference is also to have the ratio of like gender (e.g., one (1) male chaperone to ten (10) male youth).
- 17.** Leaders are required to attend scheduled leader meetings, to include Leader Kickoff or New Leader Orientation. In the event that a leader cannot attend they are asked to contact the 4-H office and either send a responsible club representative, or schedule a one on one meeting with the 4-H agents. These meetings are held in order to comply and maintain education and safety. If a leader misses the scheduled meetings and does not communicate with the 4-H office, they will be removed from their position in Clay County 4-H.
- 18.** Leaders and volunteers are responsible for explaining, discussing, and enforcing the proper conduct of 4-H members and volunteers. This includes dress code, and any and all behaviors and attitudes regarding race, ethnicity, religion, sex, drugs, alcohol, tobacco products, firearms, and profanity.
- 19.** Leaders and volunteers can be asked to step down from their positions with Clay County 4-H for actions and behaviors not in compliance of the Clay County 4-H Policies, Guidelines, and Procedures.

20. Parents of members are strongly encouraged to enroll as volunteers as there is an expectation that parents will volunteer in the club and with the leader.

Club Policies

21. A 4-H club is an organized group of at a minimum five (5) or more members working under the supervision of the organizational volunteer leader.
22. Clay County 4-H is open to all youth without regard to race, ethnicity, sex, handicap, or economic status. Clay County Extension Service has an obligation to carry out Affirmative Action policies and submit an Affirmative Action Report annually in order to comply with state and federal guidelines. Clubs and leadership of said clubs must adhere to the following statement; failure to do so will result in removal of club charter and standing.

“The Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences (IFAS) is an Equal Opportunity Institution authorized to provide research, educational information and other services only to individuals and institutions that function with non-discrimination with respect to race, creed, color, religion, age, disability, sex, sexual orientation, marital status, national origin, political opinions or affiliations. U.S. Department of Agriculture, Cooperative Extension Service, University of Florida, IFAS, Florida A. & M. University Cooperative Extension Program, and Boards of County Commissioners Cooperating.”
23. Club size is at the discretion of the organizational leader; see Policy # 10. If a leader wishes to change their clubs' *closed* status to *open*, they must leave the club open for thirty (30) days before closing it again.
24. To be considered active and in good standing, clubs must have at least one meeting or activity a month and submit a monthly Club Roster & Activities Form, within three weeks of each meeting.
25. There are no county-wide mandated membership dues or fees. Clubs may charge a reasonable amount of club dues with the understanding that: the club votes on due amounts and a majority rules and the members unable to pay are given special consideration/exception.
26. An attendance record must be kept of all club meetings and financial business. An attendance audit can be conducted at any time at the discretion of the 4-H agent.
27. The completed secretary and treasurer record books are to be submitted to the 4-H office annually at the time project/record books are submitted.
28. In order to lawfully use the 4-H name and emblem, a 4-H club must obtain an official charter through an application process and remain in good standing.
29. All use of the 4-H name and emblem must be in accordance with the guidelines set forth by the United States Department of Agriculture, which can be obtained through the 4-H office.

- 30.** The 4-H name and emblem cannot endorse a product, business, or sponsor.
- 31.** 4-H clubs may have a business or individual sponsor who supports the club with monetary or material contributions. Contributions are to be used only for official 4-H projects or activities. The name and address of all sponsors needs to be of file with 4-H office.
- 32.** All fund raising events must adhere to the guidelines for Clay County 4-H fund raising. In order to raise funds in the name of 4-H, a 4-H club must be chartered and must complete an Application for Approval of Fund Raising Activities/Grant Proposals prior to the event.
- 33.** All 4-H club funds must be handled through the Clay County 4-H Foundation. An account will be established for each club in the Clay County 4-H Foundation. All monies collected must be deposited, within 5 business days, through the 4-H Office and must include a Clay County Deposit Form for Clubs or Activities. Monies cannot be placed in personal bank accounts; this is a direct violation of Clay County 4-H policy and may result in removal of all individuals' involved and possible legal action.
- 34.** A 4-H club wishing to use their clubs funds for educational events, activities, and/or materials or reimbursements must submit a check on a Check Request Form. Included with the request must be a copy of the approved minutes from the club meeting and all original receipts.
- 35.** Check requests are submitted for signature every Thursday. There is a minimum two (2) week window for the 4-H office to process check requests.
- 36.** All Clay County 4-H clubs must participate in at least one county-wide fund raising event selected annually by the Clay County 4-H Foundation.
- 37.** 4-H clubs are encouraged to submit news releases to local media detailing special events the club is participating in. However, in order to assure that 4-H is accurately represented in the news, all releases must first be approved by a 4-H Extension Agent.
- 38.** Club web site design and application is encouraged by the Clay County 4-H office. Correspondence with the 4-H agent prior to development and written approval of the website must be granted by the 4-H office before the site is officially registered.
- 39.** The Clay County 4-H Program will provide each 4-H member with one (1) project book each year. Additional project books can be purchased through the 4-H office. The 4-H member must submit a project report in each of those projects to receive a replacement book the following year.
- 40.** If a club should disband, all properties of said club shall be returned to the 4-H Office and agent. All funds of said club will be transferred to the general Clay County 4-H Foundation account. If the club continues under new leadership, the funds shall be transferred with the club and new leader.

Financial Guidelines

41. All check requests must go through an approval process which may take up to two (2) weeks, so plan ahead! All check requests should be turned in for approval and processing by 12:00pm on Thursdays. Any check requests received after this time will wait until the following Thursday.
42. Any expenses must have been approved in club meeting minutes; a copy of the minutes must be attached to the check request along with the ORIGINAL, ITEMIZED receipts.
43. Regarding Mileage reimbursements –
Please check before you take the trip to ensure it meets the criteria for reimbursement.
 - Communicate with the 4-H office to ensure travel will be approved. This communication should take place at a minimum two (2) weeks prior to the trip.
 - Only approved drivers will receive mileage reimbursement.
 - Mileage will be figured using the official Highway Mileage Chart provided by the Florida Department of Transportation.
 - Reimbursement for mileage must also be approved in club minutes.
 - A check request submitted for mileage should include computer generated directions listing beginning and ending location, and number of miles.
 - All activities do not qualify for automatic mileage reimbursement.
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Monies collected are never paid directly to a leader, club member, parent, vendor, or any volunteer for any reason – all monies must go through the proper procedures set up by the Clay County 4-H Foundation. Monies cannot be placed in personal bank accounts; this is a direct violation of Clay County 4-H policy and may result in removal of all individuals' involved and possible legal action.
45. All fundraisers must be requested on the fundraising application. Details of money raised and how it will be used, including estimated costs and plans for any overage amount must be submitted. This application must be turned in at least one (1) month prior to the fundraiser. A post-fundraising form must be completed and submitted with the deposit form within five (5) business days of the event.
46. Deposits and completed deposit form must be hand delivered to the 4-H office within five (5) days of being collected. In addition to the treasurer and Leader signature there must be one (1) other adult signature on the deposit form verifying the amount that was collected. The money will be counted by an Extension representative in the presence of the depositor and a receipt will be issued.
47. Club treasurers should keep records of club balances. If you need to get an account balance from the office, please make your request one (1) week prior to the meeting.

48. REMEMBER – We are a non-profit, educational organization – every penny raised should have an educational purpose. If you are in doubt, Please call us prior to raising/spending the money so we can guide you.

As a Clay County 4-H leader and volunteer, I have read and will adhere to all policies in this document. If at any time I feel I can no longer comply with and encourage the above policies of Clay County 4-H I will resign from my position, or I may be asked to terminate my position by either the Clay County 4-H Agent or County Extension Director.

Leader/Volunteer Signature

Club Name

Date