

4-H Volunteer Leaders' Series

The 4-H System

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A System

Your 4-H club is part of a much larger system. The system offers support from many levels for the things your club will plan to do. There are many 4-H clubs in your county and in the state of Arkansas. 4-H is found in every state of the United States and in Puerto Rico, the Virgin Islands and Guam. Similar clubs have been formed in more than 80 countries around the world.

Community Helpers

Your community will provide support for your club in many ways. Many persons will be eager to share their interests, vocation or hobbies with your 4-H members. The media will carry announcements of 4-H events and help to interpret 4-H activities to the community. Other youth agencies may wish to work with you in areas of common concern such as camping or bicycle safety. Your public school may allow you to recruit members through elementary classrooms or may sponsor 4-H short-term interest groups during or after school. Local businessmen may help advertise 4-H by providing display space or may help to finance awards or special programs. As a leader you will want to utilize this support and help maintain the good image of 4-H in your community.



Your County Extension Service

The county Extension faculty will be the primary source of help for your 4-H club. The county will supply materials for enrollment, project books and leaders' manuals and will keep you informed of 4-H happenings through letters and meetings.

Your county Extension agent works with the county 4-H members council and the county adult volunteer leadership structure in much the same way that you work with your 4-H club leadership team. Your agent coordinates the overall planning for 4-H in your county and maintains relationships with groups such as the Extension advisory committee and the county fair board. Your agents work with you and your team as you plan for your club.

Other Volunteers

Experienced 4-H leaders in your county offer support to new leaders. Adult volunteer leaders believe in 4-H and give many years of service to the 4-H youth of their community. They spend hours sharing and helping each other. Ask your agent for the name of a person whom you could call when "bits of know-how" are needed.

A Cooperative Effort

4-H is the youth development program of the University of Arkansas

Division of Agriculture Cooperative Extension Service. It is a cooperative effort of your county Extension Service, the University of Arkansas, the United States Department of Agriculture and National 4-H Council.

Arkansas 4-H

Every state has at least one land-grant university whose mission derives from federal legislation passed in 1862. The University of Arkansas is the land-grant university charged by the federal government with the mission of taking the knowledge of the university to the people of Arkansas through the Cooperative Extension System, partnering with county governments and USDA. 4-H is the major youth development program of this system. The state Extension faculty and staff with support of professors on faculty in the University of Arkansas System provide 4-H youth development program support, coordinate events attended by 4-H youth, organize training for Extension agents and volunteers and develop curriculum.

Arkansas 4-H Officers – Each year, seven state 4-H officers are elected. They represent the 4-H members on the state level.

Arkansas 4-H Adult Leaders Association – This organization is open to all adult 4-H volunteer leaders in the state of Arkansas regardless of race, color, sex, national origin or disability. An adult 4-H leader may become a member of the association by payment of the state dues.

The purpose of the association is to support and strengthen the Arkansas 4-H program by motivating and assisting 4-H members, state 4-H officers and the faculty of the Cooperative Extension Service; to support the recruiting, training and use of adult volunteers in the state; and to promote, publicize and endeavor to strengthen and broaden the image of 4-H.

The association membership elects members to serve on their board of directors and as officers.

The association plans and conducts a state leader retreat each year. The organization provides scholarships for members to attend regional and national training forums, honors an “Agent of the Year” and a “Leader of the Year” and provides financial support for various 4-H programs and activities.

National 4-H

4-H is supported nationally by the staff of the National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA), a part of the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA). This is the national headquarters of 4-H where policy decisions are made. The 4-H staff of NIFA at USDA works with 4-H program development, 4-H staff development and coordinates national 4-H program initiatives.

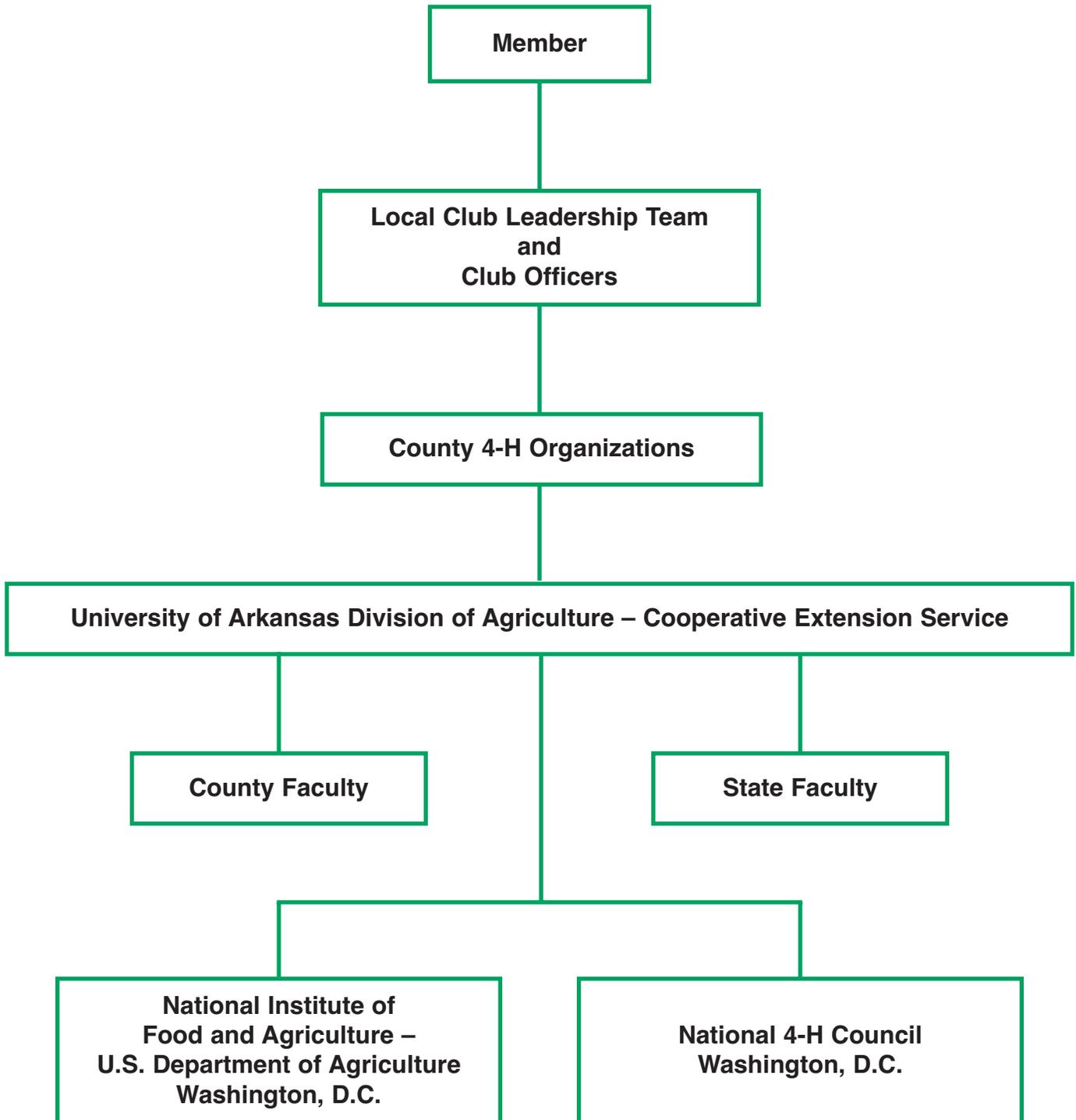
The National 4-H Council is the national, private-sector nonprofit partner of 4-H and the Cooperative Extension System. National 4-H Council manages the National 4-H Conference Center, a full-service conference facility in Chevy Chase, Maryland, and the National 4-H Supply Service, the authorized agent for items bearing the 4-H name and emblem. National 4-H Council partners with 4-H at all levels – national, state and local – providing training and support, curriculum development, fostering innovative programming, and facilitating meetings and connections within the 4-H partnership. Council is governed by its own Board of Trustees, made up of youth, representatives from 4-H/Extension/land-grant universities, corporate executives and other private citizens from a wide array of backgrounds.

Does the 4-H System Work for You?

“YES” – if you:

- Use the resources available in your local community.
- Use printed project manuals and leader materials.
- Attend leader training meetings and forums.
- Ask your agent for help when needed.
- Have a representative of your club on the county 4-H council.
- Have 4-H'ers and leaders participate in county and state 4-H activities.
- Order 4-H supplies for your club members.
- Attend a regional or national leader forum.
- Spend your family vacation in Washington, D.C., at the National 4-H Center.

The 4-H System Chart



The above chart shows how various organizations cooperate in making 4-H available to the boys and girls of your community.

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