

## 4-H Volunteer Leaders' Series

# Working With Committees

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### Why Committees?

Much work a club needs to accomplish is done best by committees working with leaders. Committees give more boys and girls the opportunity to participate and assume responsibility in club decisions. They help to avoid spending too much time on details in the club meeting. With a committee, a few members devote full attention to the subject. Committees also offer training in group leadership.

- With fewer people there is more opportunity for each member to take part. Determine committee size by the task. However, it's wise to keep the group relatively small.
- The informal committee encourages youth to talk and contribute more freely. Therefore, this can be an important way to involve new or less active members.
- When individuals are picked for a job, they are likely to be more interested in the task. Expect some members to enjoy the recreation committee while others prefer program planning.
- Committees narrow the number of decisions that the entire club must deal with. The program committee can present the best program suggestions to the entire club.

### Types of Committees

Standing committees and special committees are two major types of committees.

**Standing committees** handle part of the organization's regular ongoing work. Active throughout the year, these committees have duties that are generally constant over time and clearly stated. Standing committees are organized when the program year begins. The size of a club often determines how many standing committees are needed. Examples of standing 4-H club committees might include the program, membership, and recreation committees.

**Special committees** carry out a specific task for a limited period of time. Some groups tend to put every issue into a committee; other groups spend time deliberating when a committee could resolve the issue more easily. Avoid over- or under-using special committees. The responsibilities of a special committee need to be clearly stated so the group can complete its responsibility. Examples of special committees within a 4-H club might be the fair, parade, banquet, local achievement day or service committee.

Standing and special committees need an adult advisor.



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## Selecting a Committee

Important considerations for selecting members are:

- An interest in the work of the committee.
- A willingness to work with others in the group.
- Cross-section of membership (equal representation of the total club is often important for standing committees).
- Possibility of greater group commitment because of committee participation.
- Knowledge and experience essential to the committee assignment.

## The Chairperson

The chairperson is generally selected first. Ideally, select someone who has had successful experience as a committee member. Choose the chairperson for leadership ability.

## Define Goals

Clearly defined goals increase productivity and personal satisfaction and reduce misunderstandings. In order to ensure that each member has a clear notion of what is to be done, put the assignment in writing.

Give special committees a date for completing the work. For standing committees, indicate dates for progress reports.

Whenever two or more committees do work that might overlap or affect each other, be sure they coordinate their efforts. For example, the program and activity committees need to consult with each other in their planning. Be sure that responsibilities are clear so coordination will happen when it's necessary.

## You, the Leader

As the club leader, you play an important role in advising the young people about a committee structure that will work best for the club. Productive and efficient committees make a big contribution to a successful 4-H club program. They are not an accident.

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