

## 2026 Brown County 4-H Policies and Guidelines

1. **Membership** -- Ohio 4-H membership is based on a child's age and grade as of January 1 of the current project year. Eligibility for Cloverbud participation begins when a child is enrolled in kindergarten and is five years old. Eligibility for participation in 4-H projects and competitive events begins when a child is age 8 and in the 3rd grade. Any youth age 9 or above is eligible for project membership, regardless of grade level. Membership requires enrollment in an authorized Ohio 4-H club or group under the direction of an OSU Extension professional or an approved adult volunteer. A youth's 4-H eligibility ends December 31 the year he or she turns 19. Joining Ohio 4-H is a privilege and responsibility for individuals and is subject to the Ohio 4-H Code of Conduct and applicable policies of The Ohio State University.
2. **Enrollment Deadline** – Enrollments will be accepted anytime throughout the program year, but members must be enrolled by April 1<sup>st</sup> in order to exhibit their 4-H projects in the current year's Brown County Fair, to exhibit projects or participate in junior shows in the current year's Ohio State Fair, represent the Brown County 4-H program at state events, or be eligible for year-end awards or yearly member certificates and pins. Members who join after April 1<sup>st</sup> may participate in club meetings and activities, community service events, and county clinics. Enrollment begins when a completed and signed enrollment form is submitted to the Extension Office by a club advisor.
3. **4-H Membership Across County Lines** - Youth are expected to affiliate with the 4-H program in their county of residence. However, in some circumstances, it is acceptable for a youth to participate in a county other than their county of residence. This can be done with the approval of the 4-H professionals in both the county of residence and the county of request. Once granted, the permission for membership across county lines shall be permanent and stable for the duration of the youth's 4-H membership. If the youth's circumstances change (e.g., residence, school, or custody), the cross county lines membership can be reevaluated. (Full policy may be found on the state 4-H website ohio4h.org). Applications must be submitted 30 days prior to enrollment deadline.
4. **Fundraising** – 4-H members are required to pay the county wide assessment fee.
  - a. Members must participate in the county fundraiser or pay a per individual/family assessment (amount determined annually). Clubs do not receive a percentage of any assessments paid.
  - b. Assessments and/or funds raised through the fundraiser must be turned in by the deadline determined annually or they will not be clubs in good standing and members will not be eligible for any of the privileges of a 4-H member. Refunds of assessments will not be made to clubs after the deadline.
  - c. Clubs or committees seeking to raise additional funds must complete the Club Fundraiser form and submit it to the Brown County 4-H Advisory Committee for approval. No fundraisers are to be held without prior approval. The form can be found on the OSU Extension Brown County website: brown.osu.edu
    1. Non-compliance is subject to disciplinary action.
  - d. Clubs may not raise additional funds through a raffle or other games of chance. Refer to <https://nifa.usda.gov/sites/default/files/resource/Raffles%20Lotteries%20Gaming%20and%204-H%202011.pdf>



5. **Meeting Requirements** – A member must attend 6 business meetings in order to be a member in good standing and exhibit at the Brown County Junior Fair and be recognized for completion of the 4-H project year. Individual clubs may have stricter attendance policies as outlined in their club by-laws.
  - a. **A business meeting should be conducted by the officer team.** An agenda should be used, roll should be taken, minutes from the previous meeting read and a treasurer's report given.
  - b. Special interest events such as but not limited to clinics, Quality Assurance, Shooting Sports events/discipline meetings, and community service do not count as a meeting unless held in conjunction with a business meeting as defined in 5a.
  - c. Any special events held in conjunction with a meeting counts as one meeting. Ex. A business meeting is held prior to the clubs bowling party. This is one meeting.
  - d. Members should contact an advisor to be excused from any meetings they are not attending.
6. **Volunteers** – Volunteers are required to complete all annual requirements set forth by OSU Extension and Ohio 4-H to be recognized as a volunteer. Volunteer status must be approved annually before volunteers may act in a role as a volunteer. This includes:
  - a. Completing the annual 4-H Online Enrollment
  - b. Attending any required training.
  - c. Obtaining a background check every 4 years.
  - d. Sign and abide by the Standards of Behavior.
  - e. Volunteers are expected to attend and participate in 4-H Club meetings and events. A minimum of three meetings are required to remain a volunteer in good standing. Volunteers should notify the head advisor if they cannot attend a meeting. This helps ensure that safe volunteer to member ratio is maintained for risk management. Volunteers not participating in club meetings and events may be removed as a volunteer.
7. **Dual Club Membership** – Members may only enroll in dual clubs when taking different projects in both clubs. If a member is in dual clubs, they must meet each club's attendance requirements.
  - a. If a member fails to meet the requirements of a club, they will be ineligible for all projects enrolled through that club.
8. **Code of Conduct** – All members are to have a signed code of conduct on file. This is completed through the 4-H Online enrollment process. Members are expected to adhere to the 4-H Code of Conduct at all 4-H and Junior Fair events and any time they are representing 4-H.
9. **Project Completion** – All youth who are project members are required to enroll in a minimum of one project. Members must complete at least one project each year in order to receive recognition for completing the 4-H year, be eligible for exhibition, awards, and receive your fair pass.
  - a. Members must be enrolled by April 1 in all projects. Projects may not be added after the enrollment deadline.
  - b. Members must meet all requirements set forth by OSU Extension, their club(s) and county committee(s) as explained in individual project guidelines and requirements published annually to be eligible for exhibition. Example: Pre-Fair project judging, or Skillathon and project book record checks.

- c. Project record books must be completed as outlined in project guidelines and the requirements book. Also refer to your project books for age specific recommendations/requirements.
  - d. All project requirements as outlined in the Brown County Fair Book must be adhered to for exhibition at the fair in addition to 4-H rules.
  - e. Members must complete project judging or be judged by an advisor.
    - 1. Projects that are judged for completion by an advisor are department specific, therefore may not be eligible for awards or exhibition.
  - f. Project exhibits must be created specifically for 4-H. They may not be items or displays created for school, science fairs, Scouts, or other programs or events.
  - g. Members must have all animal projects in their possession and continual care by the respective weigh-in or identification deadlines. All required identification forms, registration forms, and lease agreements must be turned in by deadlines set annually.
  - h. Members must complete Quality Assurance by July 1 if applicable. Members wishing to exhibit at the Ohio State Fair must complete Quality Assurance prior to June 1.
10. **Chartered 4-H Clubs** – All clubs must adhere to the Ohio 4-H Club Chartering Guidelines.
- a. Clubs must also submit required paperwork and records, including member and advisor enrollments, projected meeting schedule, annual financial summary, and so forth by applicable deadlines.
  - b. Participate in the annual 4-H Committee fundraiser or collect assessments and submit funds by enrollment or fund-raising deadlines.
  - c. Submit paperwork as requested for audit.
  - d. Clubs that routinely fail to comply with one or more of the Brown County 4-H Club requirements or the Ohio “Chartering 4-H Clubs” requirements may lose their charter, their authority to operate as a Brown County 4-H Club, or their authorization for members or advisors to participate in the Brown County Fair; or be subject to additional penalties.
11. **Junior Fair Participation** – Members need to be in good standing with Brown County 4-H and meet all 4-H club and county requirements as outlined in the Brown County 4-H Policies and Guidelines or published Requirements in order to be eligible to participate in the Junior Fair portions of the Brown County Fair.
12. **Member Responsibility** – Members are responsible for meeting all deadlines and requirements for participation. Failure to meet a deadline or requirement may result in the status of member not in good standing and/or ineligibility for junior fair participation, awards or recognition. OSU Extension and Brown County 4-H are not responsible for missed deadlines. All information will be published in advance. If you are uncertain of a deadline or requirement members should contact the Extension Office.
- a. Families are also responsible for updating any contact information with the Extension Office. If your email, phone number or mailing address changes, contact the Extension Office immediately to update information.
13. **SPIN Clubs** are special interest club that are designated by the Extension Office and led by an approved volunteer. Members are not required to enroll in an Ohio 4-H Project but will be recognized as a 4-H member.
- a. SPIN Clubs must meet state guidelines for time and content.

- b. SPIN Clubs will not handle money or elect officers. Any fees will be paid directly to OSU Extension. Fees will be determined on a case-by-case basis.
- c. SPIN clubs may form any time between October 1<sup>st</sup> and September 30.
- d. SPIN Club members who successfully complete the guidelines of the club are eligible for 4-H committee sponsored events and awards.
- e. Members may enter a display in the 4-H SPIN Club area during the Brown County Fair. This is exhibition only and not eligible for awards.
- f. Youth who are SPIN Club members in good standing and enter a display will be eligible for a junior fair pass.
- g. Youth may participate in multiple SPIN Clubs in a program year. Community Club members may and are encouraged to participate in SPIN Clubs.

Approved Dec. 3, 2025