



United States  
Department  
of Agriculture

Research,  
Education, and  
Economics

National Institute  
of Food and  
Agriculture

1400 Independence  
Avenue SW  
Washington, DC 20250

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Dear State 4-H Extension Leaders,

Please use this version of the 4-H charter for club charters issued (or reissued) during the upcoming year.

4-H Charters, issued by the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) and signed by the Secretary of Agriculture's designated representative are the only documents that officially recognize a 4-H Club and authorizes its use of the 4-H Name and Emblem for the conduct of 4-H Youth Development programs. The official 4-H Charter, issued by USDA, is obtained from the Division of Youth and 4-H at USDA NIFA. State and local charters that do not include a USDA signatory, are not considered official 4-H Charters.

State 4-H offices are expected to maintain documentation on the issuance of 4-H Charters to 4-H Clubs within their respective states. Charters should be issued when establishing a 4-H Club. For those 4-H Clubs that have been long established, and verification of a valid Charter is not available, issuance of a new 4-H Charter is necessary.

A 4-H Charter is an agreement by the club with USDA on the proper use of the 4-H Name and Emblem. And it is an agreement by the club with the Land Grant Institutions' State or Local 4-H Extension Office to follow and abide by all state and local 4-H policies, procedures, and other requirements.

4-H Charters are agreements within the context of the overall 4-H Program. 4-H Charters do not qualify a 4-H Club as a legal entity according to state government and business policies and definitions. 4-H Charters do not allow a recognized 4-H Club to share their rights and privileges, like the use of the 4-H Name and Emblem, with any other person, group, or business. A 4-H Charter is required for any 4-H Club to use the 4-H Name and Emblem.

The USDA 4-H Charter, once issued, will be valid for as long as the 4-H entity receiving the 4-H Charter exists. If the 4-H entity disbands, separates into multiple entities, or changes its name, a new charter will need to be issued. The USDA does not mandate the use of an expiration date. Additionally, even with a change in the USDA designated representative, the USDA 4-H Charters remain valid. However, 4-H Charters may be revoked at any time by the Land Grant Institutions' State or Local 4-H Extension Office for failure by the club to meet any aspect of the agreement.

State 4-H Offices may obtain copies of the USDA 4-H Charter, in the official formats, through the Division of Youth and 4-H at the USDA National Institute of Food and Agriculture. For charters, or questions regarding charters, contact Youth and 4-H Program Specialist, Christopher Petty at [christopher.petty@usda.gov](mailto:christopher.petty@usda.gov).

Sincerely,

Suzanne Stluka, PhD, RDN, LN  
Division Director of Youth and 4-H  
Institute of Youth, Family &  
Community USDA NIFA