



# MICHIGAN 4-H YOUTH DEVELOPMENT

## Responsibilities of Michigan 4-H Advisory Groups

The county 4-H Council is the overall governing body of the county 4-H program. It is typically made up of representatives (adult and youth) from across the county and/or other 4-H boards and committees that exist in the county. Under the direction and oversight of MSUE staff, councils provide leadership for the overall 4-H program and provide oversight to project committees. County 4-H boards and committees have many of the same responsibilities as a county Council, however, their responsibilities typically relate to a specific program or project area.

Responsibilities of Overall 4-H Councils	Responsibilities of Project Based 4-H Boards and Committees
Development of a total county 4-H program based on the needs of young people and families in <b>the community</b> .	Development of a total county 4-H program based on the needs of young people and families in <b>the county enrolled in the targeted project</b> .
Carry out the planned programs and activities.	Carry out the planned programs and activities <b>related to the project objectives</b> .
Assist staff in evaluating the <b>total county 4-H program</b> on a continuing basis.	Assist staff in evaluating the <b>targeted county 4-H project</b> on a continuing basis.
Recommend policies for the county 4-H program that conform to district, state and national regulations.	Recommend <b>project specific</b> policies for the county 4-H program that conform to district, state and national regulations.
Assist in identifying, recruiting and training <b>volunteers</b> .	Assist in identifying, recruiting and training <b>project volunteers</b> .
Inform other leaders about decisions at <b>council meetings</b> .	Inform other leaders about decisions at <b>county board and committee meetings</b> .
Support the county's participation in events and activities outside the county.	Support the county's participation in <b>project related</b> events and activities outside the county.
Raise and manage funds to underwrite the <b>planned program and ensure financial guidelines for clubs and committees are followed</b> .	Raise and manage funds to underwrite the <b>planned project related activities according to guidelines established by MSU Extension and the county 4-H Council</b> .
Sponsor and support county recognition for 4-H members and leaders.	Sponsor and support county <b>project-specific</b> recognition for 4-H members and leaders.
Review and approve the plans and guidelines of county programming committees whose responsibilities lie in a specific aspect of the county 4-H program.	
Confer and cooperate with the Extension staff.	
Develop and maintain an active membership that believes their responsibility is to enhance and support the county 4-H program through MSU Extension.	
Publicize the objectives and philosophy of 4-H work and serve in an advocacy role when necessary.	
Encourage youth leadership in all aspects of the program.	

## Best Practices for Michigan 4-H Advisory Groups



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## **Introduction**

Local volunteer advisory councils and committees have been used since the inception of the Cooperative Extension Service to guide the direction of Extension programs, help with program planning, guide policy, and represent local citizen needs (Oberle, 1970). Michigan 4-H programs are no exception. Volunteer advisory groups have been used to provide general direction for the entire 4-H program at a county level, or based on a specific project area.

Michigan 4-H utilizes seven guiding principles to shape the work of our programming. These guiding principles put a high value in involving youth in their own development and decision making. By involving youth in 4-H advisory groups, we are equipping them with skills for their future, helping them establish relationships with adults, and giving them a voice in programming created with youth in mind.

## **In cooperation with 4-H Staff:**

- Support the mission and policies of 4-H programs at state, national, and local levels.
- Have a stated purpose and defined responsibilities.
- Be comprised of at least equal membership of youth and adults, emphasizing youth in decision making roles.
- Identify needs to enhance county programming.
- Set goals for the county program.
- Raise and allocate resources for the support of programming objectives.
- Publicize and advocate for Michigan State University Extension and 4-H.
- Represent the local community by seeking participation of people of various ages, genders, ethnicities, etc.

## **Practical Implementation:**

- Establish bylaws outlining the structure and purpose of the advisory group.
- Develop job descriptions for roles of members, officers, and committee members.
- Provide an orientation to the purpose of the advisory group annually or when new members are brought on board.
- Implement term limits to encourage the introduction of new members and ideas.
- Train members in youth-adult partnerships to maximize youth voice.
- Include members without first-hand experience in 4-H in order to better connect to the broader community and bring in new ideas.
- Advisory boards, councils, and committees play an important role in advising staff and supporting local 4-H programs. Final decisions regarding 4-H programming are at the discretion of 4-H staff.

## **Requirements for Advisory Groups**



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## Follow the mission & vision of MSU Extension and 4-H

- The mission of Michigan State University Extension is to help people improve their lives through an educational process that applies knowledge to critical issues, needs and opportunities.
- Michigan 4-H Youth Development mobilizes volunteers and communities to meet the needs of youth. The mission of Michigan 4-H is to create non-formal, educational opportunities to help youth thrive in a complex and changing world. <http://4h.msue.msu.edu/uploads/resources/DefiningMI4-H.pdf>

## Follow the Michigan 4-H Guiding Principles

- Youth develop positive relationships with adults and peers.
- Youth are physically and emotionally safe.
- Youth are actively engaged in their own development.
- Youth are considered participants rather than recipients in the learning process.
- Youth develop skills that help them succeed.
- Youth recognize, understand and appreciate multiculturalism.
- Youth grow and contribute as active citizens through service and leadership.

Learn more about the Guiding Principles: [http://4h.msue.msu.edu/resources/guiding\\_principles](http://4h.msue.msu.edu/resources/guiding_principles)

## All advisory groups must be chartered

- All 4-H entities (such as clubs, councils, boards and committees) must go through a three-part authorization process in order to operate under the name of 4-H and receive tax-exempt, nonprofit status from the Internal Revenue Service. Step 1 is to obtain an Employer Identification Number (EIN) from the IRS. Step 2 is applying for and receiving a 4-H charter. Step 3 is having Michigan State University certify to the IRS that the club or group is a 4-H entity. More information is available at [http://4h.msue.msu.edu/resources/becoming\\_authorized\\_4h\\_group](http://4h.msue.msu.edu/resources/becoming_authorized_4h_group)

## Follow MSUE 4-H Financial Guidelines

- Under the federal legislation governing the use of the 4-H name and emblem, new IRS reporting requirements for groups operating as tax-exempt nonprofits and in response to the Michigan State University Extension Financial Accountability Policy implemented in 2003, the county MSU Extension office is required to keep track of all transactions pertaining to financial management practices of MSU Extension-sponsored groups. 4-H clubs and groups are considered MSUE-sponsored groups. Because of this legislation and the MSU Extension policy, it's extremely important that all 4-H clubs be able to document the source of monies raised and how it is disbursed. Any 4-H club or group that disbands with money left in its account must turn over those funds to the county 4-H council or county MSU Extension office.



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- More information is available at [http://4h.msue.msu.edu/resources/4h\\_financial\\_guidelines](http://4h.msue.msu.edu/resources/4h_financial_guidelines)

## **MSUE and 4-H brand**

- Advisory Groups are sanctioned by Michigan 4-H and Michigan State University Extension to provide guidance and support to local 4-H programs. Efforts to publicize the connection between Advisory Groups and Michigan 4-H are vital when Michigan 4-H Advisory Groups provide leadership for, or participate in, local programs, events, or activities.

## **Must follow MSUE Civil Rights procedures**

- MSU is an affirmative-action, equal-opportunity employer. Michigan State University Extension programs and materials are open to all without regard to race, color, national origin, gender, gender identity, religion, age, height, weight, disability, political beliefs, sexual orientation, marital status, family status or veteran status. Accommodations for persons with disabilities must be provided to ensure equal and full participation in MSU Extension sponsored programs and events.

## **Advisory Council Members must complete the MSU Extension Volunteer Selection Process**

- Members of councils, boards and committees are representatives of MSUE and 4-H as volunteers in their community and are required to complete the Michigan State University Volunteer Selection Process and abide by all MSU Extension policies regarding volunteer selection, screening, and training. More information on this process is available at [http://4h.msue.msu.edu/resources/msue\\_vol\\_selection\\_process](http://4h.msue.msu.edu/resources/msue_vol_selection_process)

## **Establish a stated purpose, developed in agreement with MSUE/4-H staff**

- Every board, committee or commission needs to have a clear purpose or objective to be able to conduct business in an efficient manner. Having a clear purpose helps the group stay on target when daily operations or different personalities and agendas steer them in a different direction.

Best practice is to have this purpose clearly outlined in the by-laws as the first and second article. For example Article I. Name Article II: Purpose.

## **What Advisory Groups Are Not.....**

- The final decision-making authority for 4-H youth development programs.



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- The disciplinary arm of 4-H.
- Able to dismiss volunteers or members from 4-H club, county, or group activities.
- The authoritarian over Extension Staff

## Michigan 4-H Advisory Group Resource Team

Michigan State University Extension staff work closely with Michigan 4-H Advisory Groups in communities around the state. County-based 4-H Program Coordinators are often the staff that work most closely with county or community based 4-H Advisory Groups. In addition to the support offered by 4-H Program Coordinators, a team of MSU Extension Educators are available to assist 4-H Advisory Groups located anywhere in Michigan.

Please contact the Michigan 4-H Advisory Group Resource Team at [4-HLeadership@anr.msu.edu](mailto:4-HLeadership@anr.msu.edu) to learn more about the services offered by the team.



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