



# A Guide to the Florida 4-H Council



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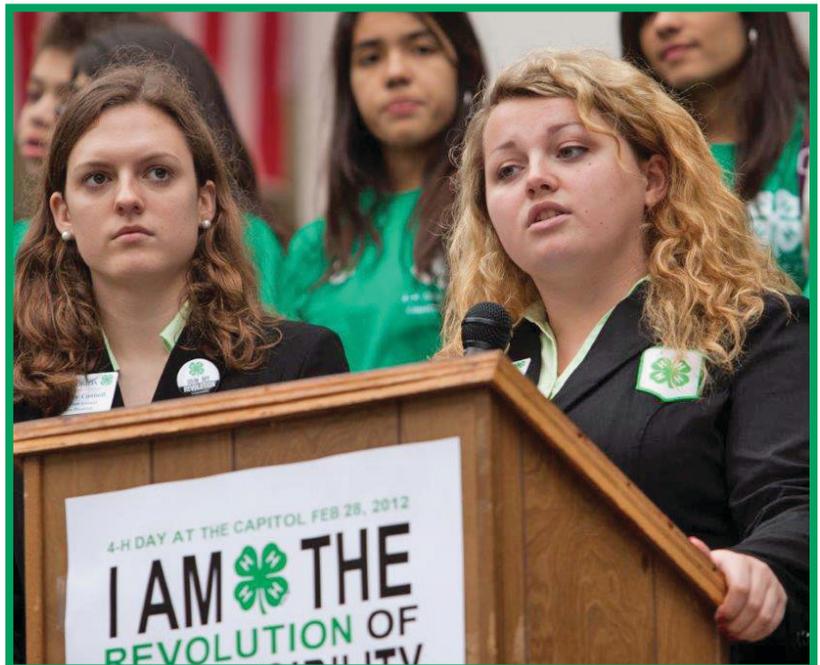
# County, District, and State Youth Councils

The 4-H Program utilizes many tools or methods to provide educational experiences for youth. The 4-H Council (or other relevant named group) at county, district, and state levels is one of these tools. A Council is an elected representative group of 4-H members who meet, discuss, plan, and assist in carrying out 4-H programs and activities in the interest of the total membership. The Council provides a link between local clubs or groups and County 4-H Programs, between County Programs and District 4-H Programs, and between District Programs and State 4-H Programs.

## Why a 4-H Council?

As in all Extension programs, the purpose of the 4-H Program is to meet the needs of local people. Through the Council's activities, the interests and concerns of young people can be voiced and incorporated into the Program's goals.

Participation in a 4-H Council provides the means for the personal growth of 4-H members through citizenship and leadership activities. Teens are looking for leadership roles and are interested in returning something to 4-H. Council participation gives 4-H'ers the opportunity to exercise their leadership knowledge and be of valuable assistance to 4-H Programs.



# 4-H Council Levels

In Florida 4-H, there are three levels of the council system: County, District, and State. The District level of 4-H councils, as with many 4-H events and activities, use the thirteen 4-H Districts, rather than the five Extension Administrative Districts.

## County Council

The County Council is the voice of the 4-H'ers in the county. It includes representatives from the 4-H Clubs and groups in the county.

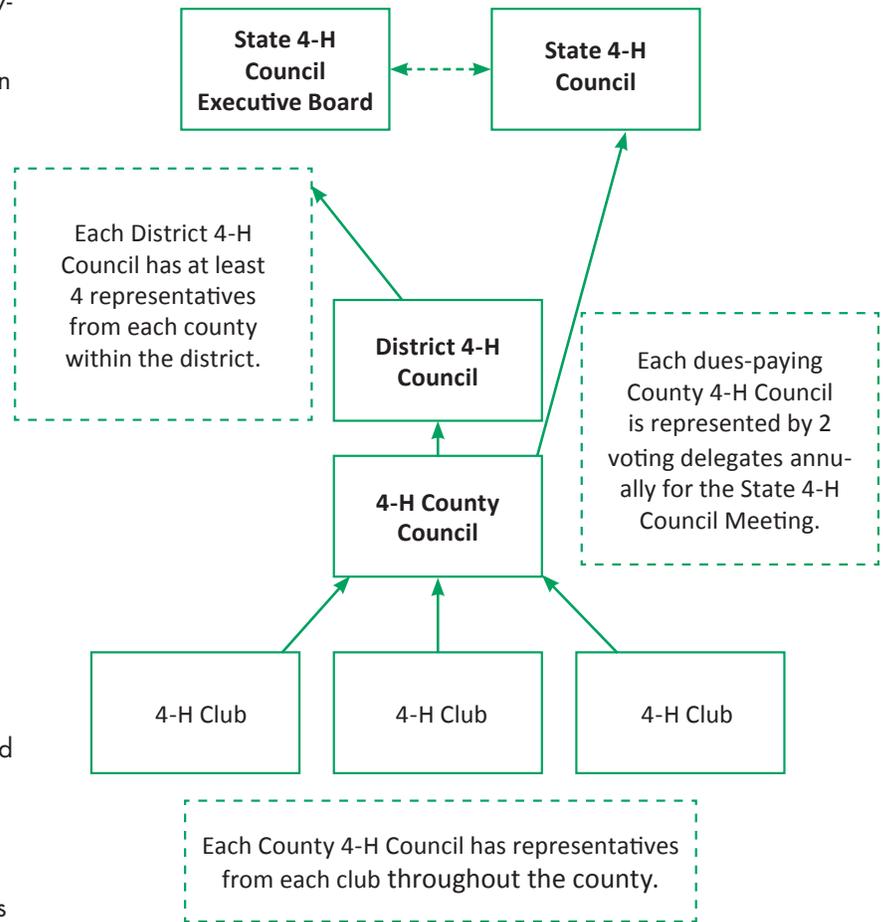
## District Council

District 4-H Councils are composed of youth representatives from each of the county councils within their geographic 4-H District.

## State Council

The Florida 4-H Council is composed of two voting delegates from each county that has joined by paying dues and the eight State Officers. The Annual Meeting of the 4-H Council is held at the Florida 4-H University event. At this time the business of the Council is conducted and new officers are elected.

Florida 4-H Council System



# Organizing a County 4-H Council

## Purpose and Structure

The County Council is the voice of all the 4-H'ers in the county. It should include representatives from the 4-H Clubs and all other 4-H groups in the county. The County Council may be organized in various ways, each designed to fit the needs and interests of the local 4-H Program.

## Membership

The Council is a tool to provide a representative youth voice to the 4-H Program by involving representatives of all the 4-H membership in the county. Therefore, consideration should be given to representation of all age groups, delivery types, and geographic areas. Involving junior 4-H members, when appropriate, may help generate their interest in senior programs and help increase their knowledge about 4-H on a broad scale.

The method of selecting delegates to the County Council is to be determined by the county. The most common methods designate

- the President and a selected County Council delegate from each club or group, or
- County Council delegates selected from each club or group.

While 4-H clubs are the primary source for members, there should be some means to include youth representing other delivery methods. If your county has special interests groups, afterschool programs, camps, or military groups, think about ways to engage these youth in being involved in council meetings. Think about when you meet and how you meet and use technology or other means to get all the youth voices into county program decisions.

## Youth Leadership and Governance

Organization of the County Council should be useful, flexible, and efficient. Youth should be involved, as they are in clubs, with determining the rules for self-governance. These may take the form of County Council bylaws and if necessary, a Constitution, for a bigger picture document. A County Council Bylaws and Constitution patterned after the state bylaws and constitution serve as the organizational base in many counties (see "Florida 4-H Constitution and Bylaws" in this guide). If you have a county 4-H council, become acquainted with the current bylaws and constitution.

The following leadership roles are suggested:

President	Reporter	Recreation or Social Chair
Vice-President	Parliamentarian	
Secretary	Sergeant-at-Arms	
Treasurer	Historian	

Responsibilities of the officers are discussed in the *Officers' Training Handbook* [4H GCO 14].

## Annual Goals and Educational Programs at Council Meetings

The potential involvement of the County Council in the 4-H Program is limitless. Suggestions are provided here to encourage ideas for additional involvement. One possibility is to assist in the planning and implementation of county 4-H programs. These programs might include:

- County events
- National 4-H Week Observance and other marketing efforts
- Community Service, State Council Project, or the 4-H Community Pride Program
- Summer Camps
- Achievement and Recognition Programs
- 4-H Day at the Fair



County Council members can be involved in spreading the 4-H word to:

- Civic groups and stakeholders
- Potential 4-H members/volunteer leaders
- Mass media, including newspaper, radio, and television.

## County Representatives to District and State Council

One of the roles of the council system is to provide representative youth voices in the district and state programming levels. Therefore the county council has the opportunity to select and have representative youth participate in the District Council and the State 4-H Council.

## County Representatives to the District 4-H Council

Each District 4-H Council is made up of youth representatives from each of the counties within the geographic 4-H District. Refer to a copy of the appropriate District 4-H Council Constitution for the number of representatives each county should select for participation.

The delegates to the District have certain responsibilities, for example:

- Taking notes at the district meeting.
- Listening to all the business discussions.
- Preparing an accurate reporting of the business and giving it to the Extension 4-H Agent and County Council members.
- Voting according to the desires of the county's 4-H members.

## County 4-H Voting Delegates to State 4-H Council

Each county selects two senior 4-H'ers to represent their county as voting delegates for the State 4-H Council. The State Council routinely meets once each year in an annual business meeting at the Florida 4-H Congress. For county elected delegates to be seated on the State 4-H Council, the county must pay its annual dues at the beginning of each 4-H program year to the Florida 4-H Council. An additional fee is assessed to counties paying dues after December 1.

## District 4-H Council



You can gain valuable leadership skills as you represent your county and participate in the District 4-H Youth Council.

### Purpose

The purposes of a District 4-H Council include the following:

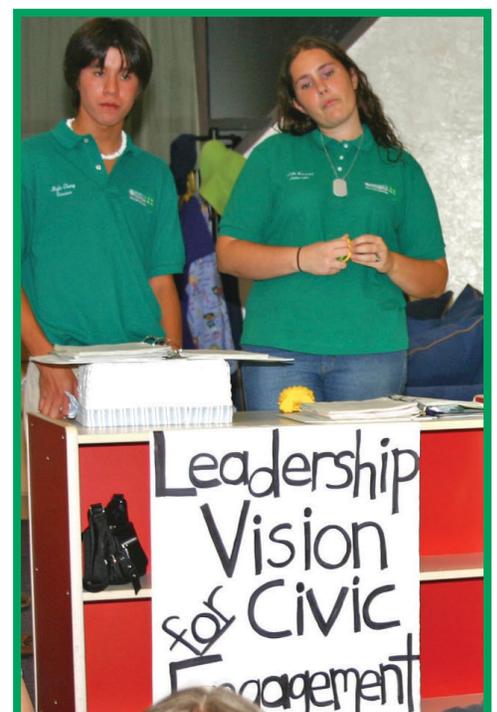
- Assisting with organizing and conducting district activities and events
- Facilitating the distribution of information from the district and state councils to the county councils

### Membership

A District 4-H Council is composed of two to four council delegates from each of the counties in the 4-H District. Most district councils may require that youth representatives be Intermediate- or Senior-level 4-H members.

### Leadership and Governance

The organization of the District 4-H Council is stipulated in the Constitution specific to each District. As with county councils, the organization should be useful, flexible, and efficient.



## Annual Goals and Educational Programs at Council Meetings

A primary role of the District Council is to voice youth issues and concerns as well to assist in the planning and implementation of District 4-H programs. These programs might include

- district level events and activities,
- National 4-H Week Observance, and
- membership, media, and marketing campaigns to benefit all counties.

## Role of a County Representative to District Council

You have been elected to represent your county on the District 4-H Council. This is a leadership position that carries certain responsibilities. Your duties as County Representative are the following:

- Attending meetings of the District 4-H Council.
- Communicating with the county regarding the activities and actions of the District 4-H Council. This may be a written meeting report for the County 4-H newsletter.
- Soliciting the opinions of the 4-H'ers in the county for input into District wide program decisions.
- Assuming responsibilities as delegated and agreed upon.
- Working with your 4-H Agents and Council Advisors to keep them informed of your district council involvement.
- Representing the entire county, not just your club.
- Learning about other County Councils within your 4-H District.
- Participating in District 4-H activities.
- Compiling county reports to submit as requested by the District President/Reporter.



## Elected District Representatives to State 4-H Executive Board

From within its membership, the District Council elects four youth who serve as District Representatives to the Executive Board of the Florida 4-H Council. (Do not confuse this with the State 4-H Council delegates who represent the counties directly on the State 4-H Council annual business meeting.)

## How the State 4-H Council Works



The Florida 4-H State Council is a group of 4-H members from across the state to represent their county in electing the youth leadership officers for the state. The Florida 4-H Council is composed of two voting delegates from each dues-paying county and the eight State Council Officers. The Annual Meeting of the 4-H Council is held at the Florida 4-H University, generally the only meeting during the 4-H year. At this time, the business of the Council is conducted and new officers are elected. The State 4-H Council Officers then represent the voice of youth on various statewide advisory boards, committees, and planning teams throughout the year.

## State 4-H Council Constitution

One of the key outcomes of the 4-H youth development program is empowering youth to learn self-governance. This begins with youth engaged in forming local clubs, planning educational programs, contributing to their community through service, and establishing their own rules and bylaws. Likewise, the Constitution of the Florida 4-H Council and Bylaws serve as the base for the organization and work of the State 4-H Council. It is established and reviewed annually by the youth membership. The updated State Council Constitution and Bylaws can be found at [http://florida4h.org/youth/files/Florida\\_4H\\_Bylaws.pdf](http://florida4h.org/youth/files/Florida_4H_Bylaws.pdf).



## County Dues and Membership

The State 4-H Council consists of two county youth representatives, commonly referred to as “voting delegates” from each county. Each county to “seat” two voting delegates within the annual business meeting of the Council must pay annual dues. If the county does not pay the dues, they give up the right to vote on elected officers and any changes to the State Council Bylaws and Constitution. Dues are used to help support the State Council programs, which includes Executive Board. The Florida 4-H State Council Executive Board (EB) is a positive youth development opportunity for teen 4-H members to lead other 4-H youth members in their county, district, and state youth programs. The counties are invoiced for their annual dues at the beginning of each 4-H program year.

## State 4-H Officers

State Council Officers consist of the President, Vice President, Secretary, Treasurer, Reporter, Parliamentarian, Sergeant-at-Arms, and Historian. The first five are elected by the State Council at its annual meeting during the Florida 4-H University and the last three officers are appointed by the five elected State Officers.

The appointed officer candidates’ applications are reviewed and interviews are conducted for each of these offices immediately following the election of the five new officers. The five newly elected officers, with State Council Advisors, make the final selection of the remaining three appointed officers during the Florida 4-H University and the new slate of officers are presented to the youth delegation before the close of the event. The new officers assume their responsibilities at the end of the Florida 4-H University.

## Executive Board

The Executive Board of the Florida 4-H Council is the working group of youth leaders representing the District Councils. The Executive Board is composed of eight state officers, district representatives, and presidential appointees. Youth from each county/district may apply for a Presidential Appointee position to serve on Executive Board.

The Executive Board of the Florida 4-H Council meets three times per year at various Florida 4-H camps and has three functions:

1. Representing 4-H with other agencies and organizations and at various 4-H events and activities
2. Serving as a sounding board of 4-H membership



3. Assisting with plans and implementation of 4-H Program events and activities including:

- Florida 4-H University
- Florida 4-H Legislature
- L.A.W. (Leadership Adventure Weekend)
- Intermediate State
- Florida 4-H Day at the Capitol

The Executive Board of the Florida 4-H Council has standing committees that make recommendations for:

- Constitutional and Resolutions
- Ways & Means and State Fundraising Projects
- State Service Project
- Communication and Council Support

## Role of a District Representative to the State Council Executive Board

You have been elected to represent your 4-H District on the Florida 4-H Executive Board. This is a leadership position that carries certain responsibilities. Your duties as District Representative are the following:

- Attending meetings of the Executive Board of the 4-H Council.
- Communicating with the counties in your 4-H District regarding the activities and actions of the State 4-H Council Executive Board.
- Soliciting the opinions of the 4-H'ers in the counties in your 4-H District.
- Assuming responsibilities as delegated and agreed upon.
- Working with your 4-H Agents and Council Advisors to keep them informed of your Executive Board involvement.
- Clearing all appearances and travel as a representative of Florida 4-H through the State 4-H Office.
- Representing the entire 4-H District, not just your county.
- Visiting County Councils within your 4-H District.
- Participating in District/State 4-H activities.
- Compiling District/State Reports to submit as requested by the State President/Reporter.
- Keeping a current list of District Council Delegates from your 4-H District.

## Council Delegates and Council Success

The success of 4-H Councils depends largely on how well council delegates perform their jobs. To be chosen as a delegate is an honor and, like all honors, it carries certain responsibilities. As a delegate, your fellow 4-H'ers have expressed their confidence in you when they elected you to the position. It is your responsibility to know your duties as a delegate.

### Will You Be a Good Council Delegate?

- Good delegates are honest, sincere, friendly, and loyal. They give everyone a chance to help and let the members of the local clubs or other county 4-H groups help decide what the council will do.
- Good delegates get things done right and on time. They are proud of their jobs and always try to do their best. They work with their 4-H Leaders to plan and carry out the council programs.
- Delegates to the 4-H Council are representatives, not only of the local club, but also of the entire 4-H orga-



nization. Their skills and abilities, standards and ideals, grooming, speech, and even their smiles represent the best in 4-H'ers and their club programs.

- Council delegates represent 4-H to the people in the community, at school, and at public events like 4-H festivals, Talent Days, and fairs. This representation is one of your most important responsibilities, because to other people you are a 4-H'er all of the time—not just while you are in a 4-H meeting.
- Serving as a 4-H Council delegate gives you a real opportunity to develop leadership abilities that will be useful in any organization when you become an adult.

## Responsibilities of Council Delegates

To be successful, 4-H Council delegates, committees, and members, working under the supervision of leaders, perform many duties. Some important duties are:

- **Secure** new members and organize local councils.
- **Plan** the program for the year.
- **Arrange** for a meeting place and for the proper care of it.
- **Conduct** and take part in the meetings.
- **Keep** the council records and give them to the leaders as required.
- **Maintain** a good spirit and interest in the council and a good relationship with all individuals and groups.
- **Help** every 4-H'er find a place in the council and an opportunity to contribute.
- **Maintain** contact with the county Extension Office.
- **Attend** the 4-H Council training session when it is held in the county.

## Qualities of Good 4-H Council Delegates

4-H needs council delegates who will:

- **Serve** the council best during the year and not ride on successes of the past.
- **Work** with all 4-H'ers and give everyone an opportunity to participate.
- **Share** leadership with many and thereby give others an opportunity to grow.
- **Represent** the best interests of the council to others.
- **Be** dependable.
- **Help** plan a program that the membership can support wholeheartedly.
- **Work** with the officers, executive committee members, and leaders.
- **Try** their best to make the meetings worthwhile and interesting.

## Additional Resources to Support Organizing and Managing 4-H Councils

- *Unlock Your Leadership Potential*, UF/IFAS Extension

*Unlock Your Leadership Potential* is a 4-H Leadership curriculum designed to help 12–18 year old youth learn and practice leadership skills. The Florida 4-H Leadership curriculum has eight major focus areas: (1) What Is Leadership? (2) Understanding Self; (3) Communication; (4) Getting Along with Others; (5) Learning to Learn; (6) Making Decisions; (7) Managing; and (8) Working with Groups. This curriculum can be purchased at <http://www.ifasbooks.ufl.edu>.

- *Leadership Skills You Never Outgrow*, Cooperative Extension Service, College of Agricultural, Consumer and Environmental Sciences, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign

This series of four project books is designed to help adolescents learn the basics of leadership. Starting with *Individual Skills for Younger Members* to *Skills Leading Groups* for older members, the books are filled with leader led activities for a group setting. The curriculum focuses on seven main topics: (1) Understanding Self; (2) Communicating; (3) Getting Along

with Others; (4) Learning to Learn; (5) Making Decisions; (6) Managing; and (7) Working with Groups. For more details, refer to <http://www.eric.ed.gov/ERICWebPortal/detail?accno=ED355051>.

- *Step Up to Leadership*, National 4-H Cooperative Curriculum Systems, Inc.

Using this project series, you will share in the fun as you learn about the dynamic process of leadership! Mentor guides include background information, interactive exercises, and real-life experiences in relationship building, communication, group process, planning and organizing. All activities offer a cross-cultural perspective. This curriculum can be purchased by following the links at <http://4hmall.com>.

- *Youth-Adult Partnerships: A Training Manual*, created in partnership with The Innovation Center for Community and Youth Development, National 4-H Council, National Network for Youth, and Youth Leadership Institute

This manual provides activities and resources that guide experienced trainers and practitioners of all ages through the process of engaging youth and adults equally to create community change.

- *Creating Youth-Adult Partnerships*, created in partnership with The Innovation Center for Community and Youth Development and National 4-H Council

This curriculum leads youth and adults new to group facilitation and youth-adult partnerships to build their capacity to work together in true collaboration. This step-by-step curriculum includes detailed scripts, activities, and evaluation material.

Both above materials can be printed from online files from the Innovation Center at <http://www.theinnovationcenter.org/catalog/toolkits/resources>.

## Annual 4-H Council Calendar

A calendar of council activities will assist Extension 4-H Faculty in planning and integrating these roles and responsibilities into their county 4-H calendars. Dates for Council activities are found at [http://florida4h.org/youth\\_/council/](http://florida4h.org/youth_/council/). Below is a sample calendar.

<b>August</b>	New State Officers' Orientation, Training, and Planning Meeting
<b>September</b>	1st Meeting of Executive Board of the Florida 4-H Council Annual Dues Invoice Sent to Counties (due by December 1)
<b>December</b>	2nd Meeting of Executive Board of the Florida 4-H Council
<b>March/April</b> (or prior to District Events)	3rd Meeting of Executive Board of the Florida 4-H Council Election of County Delegates to 4-H District Council
<b>April or May</b> (usually coincides with District Events Day)	Election of District Representatives to State 4-H Council Executive Board Report two State Council Voting Delegates to State Office
<b>June</b>	State Council Officer Applications Due June 1 Report District Executive Board Delegates to State 4-H Office
<b>July</b>	Annual Meeting of Florida 4-H Council at State 4-H Congress Election of State 4-H Council Officers Presidential Appointee Applications for Executive deadline

## Advisors and Supervision

The State 4-H Council is responsible to the designated State 4-H Council Advisor. The State Advisor is a state staff member, designated by the Associate Dean of 4-H. These advisors work in partnership with the State 4-H Council and Executive Board members to foster youth engagement and representative youth-adult partnerships throughout the Florida 4-H Youth Development Program.

## Head

*I pledge...*

## Heart

*my Head  
to clearer thinking*

## Hands

*my Heart  
to greater loyalty*

## Health

*my Hands  
to larger service  
and my Health*



*to better living  
for my club  
my community  
my country  
and my world.*

## The 4-H Pledge

The **HEAD** represents:

1. Thinking, planning and reasoning.
2. Gaining new and valuable knowledge.
3. Understanding the whys.

The **HEART** represents:

1. Being concerned about the welfare of others.
2. Accepting the responsibilities of citizenship.
3. Determining the values and attitudes by which to live.
4. Learning how to live and work with others.
5. Developing positive attitudes.

The **HANDS** represent:

1. Learning new skills.
2. Improving skills already known.
3. Being useful, helpful, and skillful.
4. Developing respect for work and pride in accomplishment.

The **HEALTH** represents:

1. Practicing healthful living.
2. Enjoying life.
3. Using leisure time wisely.
4. Protecting the well being of self and others.



### Publication History:

This document is 4H315/4H GCM 12, one of a series of the 4-H Youth Development Department, UF/IFAS Extension. Original publication date August 1996. Revised January 2011 and October 2014. Visit the EDIS website at <http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/>.

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