Ravalli County 4-H New Member & Family Welcome Packet

Ravalli County 4-H is the youth development program and of Montana State University Extension.
The Ravalli County 4-H Program is administered through your MSU/Ravalli County Extension Office.
Thank your County Commissioners and Montana Legislators for this wonderful partnership!

Steps for getting involved in Ravalli County 4-H:

Traditional 4-H Club:

- Find a club, contact the Extension Office, 375-6611 to connect with one in your area
- Complete an enrollment form
- Choose your project(s)
- Order publications
- Complete seven activities for your project per year
- Attend club meetings
- Help club with community service project
- Complete a Communication Event at club or county level: Demonstration, Illustrated Talk, etc.
- Help with club's booth at 4-H Carnival
- Help with club's shift at Corner Café at fair
- New members must enroll by March 1 to participate in fair
- Current members must re-enroll by Dec 31 to participate in fair
- Add/drop projects by May 1 to compete at fair

Afterschool 4-H:

- If your afterschool program would like to connect with 4-H, contact the Extension Office, 375-6611

4-H Enrichment Programs

Any youth can attend 4-H programs, such as:

- 4-H Fun Day (Winter)
- 4-H Cloverbud Day (Winter)
- Competition Day (Winter/Spring)
- Winter Teen Camp (February)
- Montana 4-H Rec Lab (March)
- 4-H Summer Camp (July)

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The Montana State University Extension is an ADA/EO/AA/Veteran's Preference Employer and Provider of Educational Outreach.

Welcome to the 4-H program in Ravalli County!

We are so pleased to have you and your family involved in the program! This booklet should be reviewed with you by a 4-H leader or someone from the MSU/Ravalli County Extension Office. In doing so, your questions can be answered as you go through the information.

Here are some tips:

- Make sure to read your monthly 4-H newsletter, it helps provide you with everything going on in 4-H! Each 4-H family chooses how to receive their newsletter. Please be sure to read it over carefully each month. You will find dates, deadlines, registration forms, upcoming activities, committee news, policy and advice in each one.
    - If you receive the newsletter by mail, you can expect it the first week of each month.
    - You can read the newsletter online at: www.msuextension.org/ravalli/4harchive.html
- Ask lots of questions – the more you learn, the more you discover the possibilities of 4-H!
- Jump in and help anywhere you can and be proactive in the program.
- Start your first year by only taking one to two projects. You may add on projects later in the year.
- Parents are encouraged to be involved with their child as they learn together.
- Read the *Project Guidelines and Requirements* – they have deadlines and checklist for how to complete the project. Available for Beef, Dairy, Horse, Goat, Sheep, and Swine projects.
- Connect with your club and county adult and teen leaders - they will be able to answer many of your questions. Teen members with firsthand experience in a project or activity are also a great resource.
- Connect with us on Facebook at Ravalli County 4-H and MSU Ravalli County Extension

Please contact us at our office, 375-6611, if you have any questions or concerns. We look forward to getting to know you and sharing 4-H events and activities with you!

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Portions of this pamphlet adapted from:
A 4-H Club Member's Responsibilities – Clemson Extension
40 Questions you always wanted answered about Ohio 4-H – Ohio Extension

Parent and Guardian Roles

First and foremost, 4-H is a family program – a place where parents and their children can learn and grow together. In 4-H you, as the parent or guardian, are very important. You are always invited and encouraged to participate in all 4-H club activities. We recognize every family's schedule is different and you may not be able to attend every club function, but there are many different ways that you can contribute to your child's 4-H group.

Your 4-H club leader will want to know about your interests and talents, and how you would like to support your child's 4-H group. Because 4-H has so many diverse experiences, we have discovered that every adult can find a parent volunteer role that matches their interests and the club's needs. Some possible helping roles include providing refreshments, supplies, or other resources for a club meeting, helping members with their projects, chaperoning a club field trip, organizing a club service project, or coordinating the club's end-of-the-year recognition program. Your club leader may have other suggestions.

As a parent or guardian, these are the following roles you need to fulfill:

- Provide transportation for your child to and from 4-H events.
- Help your child learn to recite the 4-H pledge.
- Attend 4-H club functions with your child whenever possible. Children 5-8 should always have a parent or guardian attend meetings with them. Horse club members, regardless of age, should always have a parent at each riding practice and horse shows.
- Guide your child as he or she selects a 4-H project and help develop goals that are challenging, but also realistic. Encourage project work by making it a family learning experience.
- If your child serves in a leadership role within the club, help him or her fulfill the duties of the office.
- Read the monthly newsletter so you will know the details of upcoming events.
- If you have online access, visit the county 4-H Web site for the latest information and resources at: www.msuextension.org/ravalli.
- The 4-H staff will provide county-wide training on project, demonstrations, and other important 4-H learning experiences. Try to participate in these classes and workshops. By understanding more about our various 4-H programs, you can help your child excel and take advantage of all that 4-H has to offer.
- Attend your club's end-of-the-year celebration with your child and attend the 4-H Awards Banquet (the county-wide awards program) as a family. Recognition always means more to children when their family is there to share it with them.

4-H Clubs

4-H Clubs are the backbone of the 4-H program. The entire family attends and participates in club meetings and activities.

Attend your monthly club business meetings. This is your opportunity to learn about parliamentary procedure and experience democracy in action. You will complete important paper work at meetings; get updates on club and county level activities and reminders about deadlines. Clubs have varying expectations for members and their parents; be sure you know what those expectations are so you can be successful.

Improve your community. Every club has at least one community service project they complete each year. Members and their families take pride in seeing the results of this project and enjoy the team work required to complete it.

Have fun. Games and activities should be a part of every club meeting; clubs will have special fun events throughout the year.

Meet new friends. You will truly get to know your fellow members that can create life long friendships with entire families.

Youth/Adult Partnerships. Members learn to appreciate your fellow 4-Hers of all ages, working with them as partners on a team.

Family Opportunity. Whole families should be involved in 4-H together. While each member can pursue their own special interests and set their individual goals.

Fundraising. Most clubs have at least one fundraiser per year. Members learn that working together toward a common goal can be fun and fulfilling.

Communication: Many 4-H parents express the benefits of public speaking found in the experiences of engaging with a 4-H club. Members have the opportunity to make motions, voice their opinions and speak in front of a large group of people. Additionally, members should present a Communication piece, such as Illustrated Talk, Demonstration or Prepared Speech, at their club or county competition.

4-H Meeting are held to:

- Get things done
- Bring up new ideas
- Build leadership skills for all members
- Get to know other members
- Learn and have fun

Reminders for Fair Time

- ✓ Preparation will reduce stress
- ✓ Work on your project(s) throughout the year
- ✓ Keep your record book up to date
- ✓ Work on your project books throughout the year
- ✓ Practice with your animals
- ✓ Attend workshops and clinics to get all the information and advice you can
- ✓ Attend project meetings so you understand schedules and policies
- ✓ Fair time should be a positive learning experience that your entire family enjoys and shares

Read the Fair Book

- Copies of the current Ravalli County Fair Book are available after June at the MSU/Ravalli County Extension Office, or you can go online to www.ravallicountyfair.org
- All schedules and rules are in the Fair Book – the 4-H schedule should be referred to for 4-H activities, not the general fair schedule in the front of the book
- Be sure you know the dress codes for animal shows and interview judging
- Be sure to refer to the 4-H Department, not open class for 4-H entry information

Fair Entries

- Entries are due to the fair office, completed by first Friday in August
- Refer to the Fair Book to complete your entries
- Please respect the fair entry deadline, plan ahead if you are busy in August since late entries will not be accepted.

- Read the 4-H section of the fair book for the correct class and lot numbers
- If you want to compete in showmanship, enter it on your fair entries
- The projects listed at the top of the entry form are what you are eligible to enter in, you must write all your entries on the blank lines provided
- Proof read your entries when the fair book comes out in July. If you have ANY changes you must contact the Fairgrounds.

Interviews

- All still entries are judged by interviews. Members must schedule an interview by the Wednesday prior to the scheduled judging day.
- All non-perishable projects will be scheduled for Monday the week before fair. Members bring their exhibits and visit with the judges about how they prepared their projects and what they learned in the project.
- Foods and horticulture are interviewed on Monday of fair week.
- Horse entries must also participate in an interview. Look in newsletter for details.

General Fair Hints

- There is a huge demand for camping spots on the fairgrounds, contact the fair office (363-3411) to get your name on a spot.
- Everyone must purchase day passes or season passes for the fair. The proceeds from this income pay for the premium money awarded to exhibitors. For a reduced rate, purchase your ticket by Tuesday night of fair week.

4-H Corner Cafe

- The Corner Cafe is operated during the fair and is the primary fundraiser for the Ravalli County 4-H Program.
- Each club must take at least one shift during the fair. All members, leaders and parents should work a shift for their club. Larger clubs are asked to take on a full shift and have overflow members help out at another time.
- This is an opportunity for 4-H members to learn about food and customer service.

Record Book Completion Check Sheet

Criteria for Complete 4-H Record Sheets for Members (ages 8-18)

Each member must complete one "My 4-H Year" form, and a "Project Journal and Financial Record" form for each project enrolled in for the year. If the project is an animal, the member must complete the "Animal Project Journal and Financial Record" form for each animal. *Only one "My 4-H Year" has to be completed for the entire year.*

____ Enroll in and complete at least one project for the year
____ Identify and achieve at least 3 goals for the 4-H year (October 1-September 30)
____ Submit your book to 4-H Organizational Leader which includes, as a minimum, the "My 4-H Year" form, "Non-Animal Project Journal and Financial Record" and/or "Animal Project Journal and Financial Record." You may include other things to personalize your book (i.e. photos, articles, ribbons, memorabilia)
____ Complete all sections of the "My 4-H Year" journal form
____ Participate in at least 3 additional learning activities during the 4-H year and record them in your journal (i.e. speeches, demonstrations, judging, public presentations, etc.)
____ List any awards and honors received – both in 4-H and other
____ Complete the "Non-Animal Project Journal and Financial Record" for each non-animal project
____ Complete the "Animal Project Journal and Financial Record" for each animal project.
____ Submit your book to your Org Leader which includes, as a minimum, the *My 4-H Year* form, followed by the *Non-Animal Project Journal & Financial Record* or *Animal Project Journal & Financial Record*. You may include other things to personalize your book, such as photos, articles, ribbons and memorabilia.

Helpful Hints

- Keep a family calendar on which you record ALL activities; use it as a reference when updating your record books.
- Members should update record books once a month at your club meetings.

Ravalli County 4-H Year Time Line

Be sure to read your 4-H newsletter each month for information about all of these events and more! Please call the MSU/Ravalli County Extension Office if you do not receive a newsletter soon after you enroll.

We want YOU to take advantage of all there is to do in 4-H!

October

1 4-H Year begins (4-H age is calculated by this date)

1 Enrollment and re-enrollment begins

- Clubs hold their first official meeting of the year – be sure to attend
- National 4-H Week (always 1st full week in October)

31 Club and Committees Treasurer Reports due to Extension Office

November

- Enrollment continues
- Project materials are ordered and distributed at club meetings
- Award programs in clubs
- 4-H Advisory Council meeting (third Monday of the month)
- Club Officer Training

December

- Enrollment continues

31 Enrollment Deadline for re-enrolling 4-H members to participate in fair

January

15 Volunteer Appreciation Night

- Market Steer and Bred Beef Heifer weigh in, usually first Saturday in January
- 4-H Legislative Breakfast, Helena (Presidents Day, Legislative years only)
- 4-H Advisory Council meeting (third Monday of the month)

February

1 People Partner Grant applications due to Montana 4-H Foundation, funds for service learning projects

- Camp Youth Director and Junior Counselor applications due for Ravalli County 4-H Junior Camp
- Winter Teen Camp (President's Day Weekend)

March

1 New Member Enrollment Deadline for 4-H members to participate in fair

- 4-H Citizenship Seminar, Helena (Legislative years only)
- 4-H Advisory Council meeting (third Monday of the month)
- Competition Day: include Speech & Demo Day, Stir-Ups and Fashion Revue: begin looking in your monthly newsletter for places, dates and times

April

1 Ravalli County 4-H Education Scholarship due

1 State Award Applications due

1 Montana 4-H Foundation Scholarships due

1 Ravalli County Ambassador Application due

- 4-H Carnival
- Ambassador Application due
- Rec Lab

May

1 4-H Project Drop/Add deadline to participate in the Ravalli County Fair

- 4-H Advisory Council meeting (third Monday of the month)

June

- Congress Registration due to Extension Office
- Livestock Showmanship Clinic
- Small Animal Showmanship Clinic

July

- 4-H Congress in Bozeman, Montana
- Ravalli County 4-H Junior Camp
- 4-H Advisory Council meeting (third Monday of the month)

August

- Record books: be sure to show your books to leaders before filing out and sending in Fair entry form
- Fair entries due to the Fair Office, first Friday in August
- 4-H Horse at Fair, Saturday before Fair officially opens
- 4-H Livestock, Dog and Small Animals to Fair, Tuesday before Fair officially opens
- Ravalli County Fair, Wednesday through Saturday of Labor Day weekend

September

- Complete record books
- 4-H Advisory Council meeting (third Monday of the month)

30 Last day of the 4-H year

Top Questions about Ravalli County 4-H

General Information

1. **What is 4-H?** 4-H is an experiential, educational program for youth, regardless of race, color, national origin, gender, religion, age, disability, political beliefs, sexual orientation, and marital and family status.
2. **What does the green clover mean?** 4-H has an official emblem, a green four-leaf clover with a white "H" on each cloverleaf. The name and emblem are copyrighted and may be used only as approved by 4-H professionals.
3. **What do the four H's stand for?** Head, Heart, Hands and Health.
4. **What is the 4-H Pledge?** It states: "I pledge my Head to clearer thinking, My Heart to greater loyalty, My Hands to larger service and My Health to better living for, My Club, My Community, My Country and My World."
5. **How is 4-H funded?** Financial support for 4-H comes from local and county government (through county commissioners), state government (through Montana State University) and federal government (through the United States Department of Agriculture). Private individuals, businesses and foundations also provide financial support for Montana 4-H.
6. **Who is in charge of 4-H?** County and State 4-H Professionals, who are staff members of Montana State University Extension, are responsible for the Montana 4-H program.

4-H Members

7. **Why do boys and girls like 4-H?** They have educational and fun experiences with their friends at meetings, social activities, tours, camps and fairs. They learn by actually doing interesting things, such as taking care of animals, taking pictures and doing community service.
8. **How can a young person get involved in Montana 4-H?** Call your Extension Office, 375-6611, to learn how your child can join 4-H and how you can contribute as a 4-H volunteer.
9. **What is the age requirement for members?** Membership eligibility for the 4-H Cloverbud program begins when a child has reached age 5 October 1 of the current year; membership to the 4-H club program begins when a child is at least age 8 as of October 1 of the current year. If a youth turns 19 years of age prior to October 1 they are not eligible to re-enroll in 4-H unless they are still in high school. Individuals older than 18 years of age who have special needs are eligible to participate in 4-H provided they are still enrolled in high school.

4-H Volunteers

10. **What is a 4-H volunteer?** A 4-H volunteer is anyone who contributes their time, energies or talents to 4-H and is not paid by Montana State University Extension for their contributions.
11. **Are there different kinds of volunteers?** Yes! Montana 4-H works with a variety of individuals, with differing interests, skills and abilities, as 4-H volunteers. There are different types of 4-H volunteers: org leaders, project leaders, teen leaders, and resource leaders.
12. **What does a 4-H leader do?** A leader works with a 4-H community or project club that involves five or more youth who meet regularly to conduct club business, plan the club program and enroll individually or as a group in one or more 4-H projects. A 4-H leader could serve in several roles: An *organizational leader* serves as the primary communication and information liaison between the county 4-H professional and the club members, their parents and other advisors in the club. A *project leader* assists 4-H members with 4-H projects. A *resource leader* works with members in planning and conducting club activities. However, all of these leaders work together as a team in supporting the members of a 4-H club and their parents.
13. **What does a 4-H special emphasis volunteer do?** A special emphasis volunteer works with a short-term 4-H group to offer a series of hands-on activities designed to meet the interests and need of the youth within their community, such as other youth organizations or schools. It can be offered to various numbers of young people in a variety of settings and on a multitude of topics. In many communities, 4-H special emphasis groups meet in schools, community centers or churches. They focus on one or more topics through activities such as after-school programs or day camps. Special emphasis groups can also be organized by individual volunteers as small, informal gatherings that meet in homes or local businesses. These groups typically attract youth from surrounding 4-H clubs or within the community by focusing on a particular area of specialty, such as woodworking, food, photography, robotics, etc.
14. **What does a 4-H committee member do?** A committee member contributes time, energies or talents to any 4-H sponsored committee. Committee members work with 4-H professionals to plan, implement and evaluate programs.
15. **What are 4-H teen leaders?** Teen leaders work under the guidance of an adult and may help with any of the

leadership jobs in the 4-H program, depending on their abilities and experiences.

16. **Where can I learn to be a 4-H volunteer?** Your main source of information is the Extension office. To prepare you for your responsibilities as a 4-H volunteer, you will be invited to special training meetings for 4-H volunteers and receive newsletters and other written materials to help you with your job. Extension agents and other volunteers will provide personal help throughout the year. Ask for the name of an experienced 4-H volunteer who lives near you, to call if you have questions or need help.

4-H Clubs

17. **How do you organize a 4-H club?** After you have completed the volunteer application process through the Extension office, have a meeting with youth who are interested in joining 4-H and adults who are willing to help. Publicize the meeting through schools, churches, community centers or any place where young people and their parents can be reached.
18. **What happens at the first club meeting?** Get acquainted and have fun with a group mixer and/or some refreshments. Show and talk about 4-H projects and activities the group might enjoy. Discuss when, where and how often the group will meet.
19. **What about club officers?** 4-H clubs have officers and committees to conduct business. 4-H has materials available online for club presidents, vice-presidents, secretaries, treasurers, historians, and news reporter. A club may have other officers depending on its needs.
20. **Who names a club?** The members of the club (with guidance from advisors).
21. **How often does a 4-H club meet?** Some clubs meet every week for a month or two and some meet once or twice a month all year long. This depends on the club, what is member want to do and the time leaders have available. The most important thing is to schedule meeting times so members and their families can remember and include them in their schedules.
22. **Are there enrollment deadlines?** Yes. If a current member would like to participate in the Ravalli County Fair, they must enroll by December 31. New 4-H members (those who didn't participate in the previous year) must enroll by March 1 (or first business day in March). There are also other deadlines to participate in a certain program, such as camps, county fair, competition day, etc.
23. **Where do 4-H clubs meet?** Any place large enough and convenient for the members of the group is suitable. Some clubs take turns meeting members' homes. Some meet in central places such as a school, church or community center. Some meet in the leaders' homes.
24. **How large should a club be?** This depends on the age of the members, where they meet and the leadership available. The ideal club is large enough for members to have fun and learn together, but small enough for everybody to feel a part of the group. Most 4-H clubs have ten to twenty members, and two or three leaders.

4-H Meetings

25. **What do 4-H members do at meetings?** 4-H members usually do four general things at club meetings: business, educational, social and service activities.
26. **Do they do all of those things at one meeting?** Sometimes, after a short business meeting, members work on their projects, and then play a game or two. Other times, the meeting will be devoted entirely to one thing; everyone may bring a dog and practice obedience training, help elect officers and plan the club programs, visit a local historic site or plant flowers at a local fire department.
27. **Who plans the club program?** Members of the club plan the program. With small groups, everyone might be involved in program planning at a meeting of the entire group. With large groups, it might be better to get ideas from every member and let a committee put together the club program.
28. **What do leaders and parents do at meetings?** Leaders and parents should be in the background at meetings to advise and provide support for members as they conduct their activities. It is important for advisors to work with club officers ahead of time, so that they and the members (not the leaders) can be "front and center" during the meetings.

4-H Projects

29. **What are 4-H projects?** A project is something a member learns to do with the help of leaders and parents. 4-H projects are specific areas of planned experiences, such as training pets, making clothing, growing plants and building rockets. 4-H projects are in-depth learning experiences for 4-H members. Approximately 200 projects are currently available, with project literature written by professionals.
30. **What are record books?** Record books are the journaling and documentation aspect of a 4-H project. Every year a 4-H member completed *My 4-H Year*, plus a *Project & Financial Journal* for every project area. See Record Keeping in this pamphlet for more information.

31. **How many projects are required?** Every member is required to enroll in and complete a minimum of one project per year.
32. **When is a project complete?** Project books (purchased through the Extension Office or through MSU Publications) usually have 21 activities and members should aim to complete it in three years. Members should aim to complete at least seven activities a year.
33. **What does a 4-H project cost?** There is a small charge for project books. The total cost to complete a 4-H project varies a great deal. A member enrolled in foods might use supplies from around the home (to practice the skills being learned) and have no direct expense. A member who buys and keeps a horse might invest hundreds of dollars. Leaders, parents and members should discuss costs when projects are selected. Costs should be realistic for the family budget.
34. **Are 4-H members expected to do their own project work?** Yes, with help. 4-H is a "learn-by-doing" program. Advisors, key leaders, teen leaders or parents may tell or show a member how, but members are expected to do the work themselves.
35. **What is a self-determined project?** In this project, a member with a special interest designs a project different from existing projects. It may be completely new or an adaptation, specialty or advanced stage of an existing project. Members should discuss such projects with their leaders and submit their project plan for approval.
36. **What is project evaluation?** Members in each project should visit regularly with advisors who help them review the work they have done towards completing the learning experiences in the project book. They should evaluate their results and determine the extent to which they have accomplished project objectives and personal goals, and identify strengths to build upon and weaknesses to overcome in current and future projects.
37. **Do members have to participate in county judging to complete their projects?** No. Members are not required to exhibit their work or participate in competition in order to complete their 4-H project. However, participation in competitive activities and exhibits is encouraged as an educational, recognition and public awareness opportunity. Fair premiums, ribbons and other awards are incentives and symbols of recognition in many counties for those who choose to participate.
38. **Do 4-H members work on projects individually or as a group?** Both. Some projects, such the photography or cooking, are more fun if done as a group. Others, such as making an outfit or creative writing, are best done individually. Look in the newsletter for monthly project meetings. Some projects, like shooting sports, are held weekly for several months.

4-H Record Books

39. **What are record books?** This is a "life skill" opportunity that 4-H teaches. Record keeping is required to advance each year and they are checked by your club's Org Leader.
40. **What record books need to be completed?** A general record, *My 4-H Year*, is kept for each year that gives a member an opportunity to record all of their activities and awards, 4-H and non 4-H. Members also keep separate records for each project, called *Project Journal & Financial Records.*
41. **What Project Journal & Financial record books are needed?** *Project Journal & Financial Records* are required for each project. The *Non-Animal Project Journal & Financial Record* is for non-animal projects. The *Animal Project Journal & Financial Record* is for animal projects. These are completed yearly, just like *My 4-H Year*.
42. **Who checks the record books?** These need to be up to date and shown to your Org Leader before the fair entry form is turned into the Fair Office. Some projects require you to show your current records to the Superintendent. After the fair, record books are to be completed and signed by your Org Leader. If a member does not complete the records, they may re-enroll, but will not get year end awards or move up in project levels.
43. **What will I do with my record books?** The record books are documentation of everything you learned. Many people keep the records and use them as a reference for scholarships and job applications.

4-H Parents

44. **How do you encourage parents to help?** Ask them. Be specific about jobs with which the 4-H group needs help. Think positively. People who expect help will probably get it. Offer a choice of jobs. People have different amounts of available time, interests, skills and abilities. Ask 4-H members to invite their parents to become involved.
45. **How do you explain the role of a 4-H volunteer to parents?** Help parents understand that 4-H volunteers are not being paid. Invite parents to a 4-H meeting so they can see how volunteers work with the 4-H group.

4-H PLEDGE

I pledge,
my head to clearer thinking,
my heart to greater loyalty,
my hands to larger service, and
my health to better living, for
my club, my community,
my country, and my world.