### Planning a 4-H Club Meeting

Effective meetings require advance planning. Successful clubs get ideas from the members, then work to develop an annual club plan for meeting schedules and educational programs for the club year. [Link to Plan of Work]

Usually, club officers do the initial program planning with guidance from organizational leaders and club parents. This plan is then presented to the entire club for review, modification and approval.

The officers elected at the beginning of the 4-H year are responsible for conducting meetings. The club leader(s) will want to work with them to help officers develop leadership skills and assist in developing agendas. Most clubs normally elect a president, vice-president, secretary, treasurer, and reporter/historian. Other officers may be elected, depending on the individual club (i.e. recreation leader, song leader, etc.).

Club meetings are conducted by parliamentary procedure, a method of progressing through the items on a meeting agenda in order to maintain democratic rule, fairness, and the opportunity for debate in order to reach consensus on group decisions. Additional resources can be found at the end of this section.

### Planning a 4-H Project Meeting

As a 4-H project leader, you can share your skills, talents or special interests such as photography, horses, dogs, rabbits, sewing, computers or woodworking. In this role, you may be called upon to offer a number of sessions at an afterschool program, or assist a club leader by sharing your expertise and working with club members. Many of the same questions and techniques can go into getting ready for a project meeting as planning for a club meeting.

**Review project materials**

* Contact your 4-H club leader or your county Extension office to get project material. There is usually something for both leaders and members.
* Review the material to learn what the project is all about and what the leaders are expected to do.
* Think about additional ideas you have or things you'd like to do or try, and make a note of them.

**Set up a 4-H file**

You need a place to store your 4-H materials to keep them together and in some kind of order. A cardboard box makes a handy file. Use it to store:

* + Leader guides
  + Member guides
  + Your notes
  + A folder for your project plans
  + A folder for information on members and their families (names,  
     addresses, phone numbers, ages, etc.). Even skilled family members can

share with your project group.

* + Resources you find in newspapers, magazines, folders, brochures, or  
     other Extension written materials.

**Plan to make 4-H fun**

* Think about how members will perceive and experience the project.
* Think about the things that will make the 4-H project fun for members.
* Look around your home and community for resources to make 4-H fun.
* When 4-H is fun and members are involved in doing and discovering, they'll learn.

**Involve parents**

* + Plan to involve parents and other members of the 4-H families.
  + Obtain a list of names and addresses of 4-H’ers enrolled in the project from the 4-H club leader or your local UMaine Extension office.

**Involve teens as leaders**

* Include teen 4-H’ers in activities that can help develop leadership and citizenship skills.
* Provide opportunities to practice responsibility.
* Treat teens as adults and involve them in all aspects of the club program, including planning.
* Ask instead of tell.

More information about working with teens and providing leadership opportunities within your club structure is available in this resource from Montana State University [www.montana.edu/www4h/mt4h5267.pdf](http://www.montana.edu/www4h/mt4h5267.pdf).

### Project Meetings FAQ’s and Planning Resources

**How many meetings should I have?**

A minimum of eight meetings per year is required, although most leaders hold ten to twelve meetings a year. The schedule might look something like this:

* First Meeting – involve the members in planning. Have them help select things to do. Younger members may select from among choices you identify.
* Meetings Two through Eight – can be things like: exploring, making, trying, discovering, touring, interacting, growing, grooming, preparing, telling, showing, sharing, and maybe some listening and recording.)
* Meeting Nine – preparing for the fair and completing project records
* Meeting Ten – reflect on what was done and learned this year, as well as what you want to do next year.

**How often should we meet?**

Once or twice a month is about right, but for some projects it may be seasonal (10 meetings in ten weeks). You will want to plan with your group. A lot will depend on the project and when members are available.

**Where should we meet?**

We recommend that you try and meet in a convenient public place such as a school, church, business, library or community center. If you can't meet in a public place you can meet at a home. If you meet at home, it is important that you have up to date homeowners insurance. Call the local UMaine Extension office for a list of potential public meeting places.

**When should we meet?**

* School days: try from 4:00-6:00 p.m. or 4:00-5:30 p.m. Another option is early evening from 7:00- 8:00 or 9:00 p.m. Weekends: try 10:00am - noon.
* In summer, schedule meetings when leaders and members are available.

**How long should the meetings be?**

About 1-2 hours depending on the activity, the project, and member age. Remember, younger members have a shorter attention span for listening, watching or doing one thing.

**YOUR FIRST PROJECT MEETING**

What to Do (Not How to Do It)

* Help members get to know you and each other.
* Help members know what the project is all about.
* Review project materials. Discuss ideas for things to do in the project at meetings and at home. Use project material, your ideas, member ideas and parent ideas.
* List ideas for project meetings and involve members in choosing from the list. For younger members, list fewer options. Decide on a year's plan.
* Help members know the kinds of help you will give them at meetings, by phone, or at home (your home or their home).
* Help members think of things to do and learn that are realistic for their age and circumstance.
* Help members set realistic goals for doing and learning.
* Include a short project related activity that involves members in doing (and/or demonstration by you or the teen leader).
* Help members know how the teen leader will help with project work.
* Discuss things members can do at home before the next meeting.
* Remind members of the time, place, and things to bring to the next meeting.
* Say goodbye and thank the members for coming! Members are more likely to return if they believe they are welcomed.

**PLAN YOUR 4-H MEETINGS**

Planning Helps Ensure Success

Planning helps make 4-H leaders successful. You will want to develop a planning sheet that works for you. Here are some ideas to include in your plan. Other examples are included in the Appendix. [link in pdf]

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **When and where is the next meeting?** | Date: |
| Time:  Place: |
| **Opening and roll call** | What: Pledge of Allegiance, 4-H Pledge, etc.  Led by:  Roll call topic: |
| **Topic or Purpose** | Members will be able to: |
| **Equipment** /  **Supplies needed** |  |
| **Who will bring**  **what?** | Refreshments:  Other: |
| **Things the club leader(s) will do** |  |
| **Things the teen**  **leader(s) will do** |  |
| **Things members**  **will do** | Recreation:  Led by: |
| **Things members**  **will do in advance** |  |
| **Next meeting:** | Date: |
| Time: |
| Topic: |
| Members bring: |
| **Thank you and safe travels home** | Time meeting adjourned:  Notes: |