

**Benton County 4-H Constitution  
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## **BENTON COUNTY 4-H CONSTITUTION**

### **ARTICLE 1 – NAME**

This organization shall be known as, Benton County 4-H.

### **ARTICLE 2 – PURPOSE**

The primary purpose of this organization shall be to help develop the young people of the county into better individuals and better citizens. As a means of achieving this purpose, the organization will strive to help improve educational and social opportunities for young people in the community and will carry out a well-planned program of club meetings, club activities, and project work.

### **ARTICLE 3 – COUNTY EXTENSION AGENTS**

The organization, program, and activities of the club shall be under the general direction of the County Extension Agents of the Cooperative Extension Service, University of Arkansas Division of Agriculture.

### **ARTICLE 4 – TYPES OF 4-H CLUBS**

A 4-H club is an organized group of a minimum of eight youth (ages 9 –19) that have a planned meeting calendar that meets a minimum of six times throughout all or most of the year. 4-H clubs are advised by two non-related volunteer leaders. They elect officers, meet in public locations accessible to all potential members and offer opportunities to learn life skills through a variety of project experiences. 4-H clubs also offer opportunities for leadership and citizenship/community service.

- **Community Club** is an organized continuing group with elected officers, adult leaders, and planned programs throughout the year. They are multi-project clubs.
- **Project Club** is an organized group with elected officers, adult leaders, and planned programs. They focus on one project that the entire membership experiences together.
- **Project Group** is a group of youth and leaders interested in learning a specific project. This group does not follow the guidelines of an organized club, but meets regularly to learn specific information in a specific project area. It does not have elected officers.
- **After-School Club** is organized within childcare settings. It has officers and planned activities. It is an organized group of youth led by adult volunteer/staff. Each club participates in community service and project activities. Club meetings include business conducted by officers, education programs, and group building or recreational activities, and may vary by site. All 4-H activities focus upon positive youth development.
- **In-School Club** is a club that meets during school hours. It has officers and planned activities. This club operates much the same as community clubs but a teacher may serve in the role of a club leader.

## **ARTICLE 5 – MEMBERSHIP**

### **Section a – General Requirements**

This organization shall be composed of clubs throughout Benton County. Any boy or girl between the ages of 5 and 19 years, regardless of race, color, national origin, sex, age or handicap who is interested in 4-H and willing to accept supervision of trained adult leaders, may be considered for membership.

Youth less than nine years of age on January 1 will be considered Cloverbud 4-H members for the year. A youth can join anytime after their fifth (5<sup>th</sup>) birthday.

A 4-H member will be a junior 4-H member if the age is 9 –13 on January 1.

A senior 4-H member is ages 14 – 18 on January 1.

Clubs must have a completed and signed enrollment card on file in the Cooperative Extension Service Office for all members. 4-H members with an active enrollment card will be eligible for competitions and participation in club, county, state and national events.

4-H members must declare a “home county” for membership. A 4-H member can not compete for awards in qualifying activities in more than one county. Only one county can report membership for a 4-H member at a time

### **Section b – Active Membership**

Active Membership is defined as current enrollment cards must be on file for University of Arkansas Cooperative Extension Service records, all clubs will be furnished enrollment cards in September to be filled out and returned to the Extension Office by October 30 of each year. Open enrollment will be available for new members and transferring membership. Club members are encouraged to turn in a 4-H Journal each year.

### **Section c – Requirements for Community and Project Clubs**

All community and project club members must meet requirements in sections a & b and adhere to the following attendance requirements.

- New members must attend two (2) consecutive meetings before joining.  
The first to express a desire to join, and the second to join.  
Prospective members may participate in non-competitive 4-H activities.
- Members absent from three (3) consecutive regular club meetings are to be removed from club roll and from active member status with the following exceptions:
  - school activity
  - illness
  - other 4-H activity
  - other: to be brought before the club’s Executive Committee for approval
  - sports excuses should be limited as determined in club by-laws

- In order to receive exemption, the **club member** must contact the club leader **before** the regularly-scheduled club meeting.
- Club main leaders must submit a “drop form” to the Cooperative Extension Service Office to move a 4-H member from active to inactive status.

Clubs must have at least 6 regular club meetings per year and elect officers.

Clubs must be represented at a minimum of three (3) county activities per year.

Community 4-H clubs may expand the county requirements and have additional requirements of the membership. Failure to comply with the county requirements for membership will be reviewed by the Adult Leader’s Executive Committee for determination on membership status.

Clubs must have a recorded copy of the club by-laws or standing rules on file in the Extension office. These by-laws must include new member attendance requirements, attendance policies, requirements for officers, and 4-H Journal requirements.

#### **Section d – Requirements for Benton County Teen Leader Clubs**

Members must be ages 13 –15 for the *Intermediate Group* or ages 16 – 19 for the *Advanced Group* as of January 1 of the year applying.

Selection is based on:

- a. Journal submission for judging during the current year, (no non judged books unless a previous state journal winner)
- b. A completed Teen Leader Application
- c. *Two* recommendations (one from the club 4-H leader they are a member in and one from a teacher or youth group)
- d. An interview with a panel composed of one 4-H alumni, one 4-H Foundation member, one 4-H leader and a non-voting Extension Advisor
- e. 4-H member for at least one full year at time of application.

Members absent from three (3) consecutive regular club meetings are to be removed from club roll and from active member status with the following exceptions:

- school activity
  - illness
  - other 4-H activity
  - other: to be brought before the club’s Executive Committee for approval
  - sports excuses should be limited
- In order to receive exemption, the **club member** must contact the County Extension Agent - 4-H **before** the regularly scheduled club meeting.

### **Section e – Requirements for In-School and After School Clubs**

Clubs must have at least 6 regular club meetings per year and elect officers.

To be eligible for county competitions as a 4-H member they must:

- a. Complete a minimum of 10 hours of 4-H community service
- b. Attendance at least two-thirds (2/3) of club meetings.

In-school and after-school 4-H clubs may expand the county requirements and have additional requirements of the membership. Failure to comply with the county requirements for membership will be reviewed by the Adult Leader's Executive Committee for determination on membership status.

### **Section f – Transferring Club Membership**

Members moving his or her membership to a different club in Benton County, and he/she is a member in good standing, can submit a "transfer form" to the Cooperative Extension Service Office.

4-H members changing clubs, who are not currently a member in good standing, must adhere to the two (2) regular monthly meetings prior to becoming an active 4-H club member.

In order to gain immediate active status, a 4-H'er must submit a recommendation from their previous County Extension Office stating that he/she was an active member in the previous state or county program. It should also contain contact information allowing for local Extension Staff to follow up on the youth's previous 4-H experiences.

### **Section g – Members at Large**

Members at Large are 4-H'ers that have graduated high school with a High School Diploma or equivalent and will be attending college and unable to fulfill local and county attendance requirements.

Members will:

- Enroll in August by submitting the county 4-H enrollment form and proof of college enrollment document.
- Write a one page essay on why they want to stay involved in the 4-H program. This will be turned in with the enrollment form.
- Participate in a community service project during the year.
- Use their leadership abilities by assisting with at least one club, county or state activity during the year.
- Turn in a journal each year.
- Be held to the county and state code of conduct.

## **Section h - Cloverbuds**

4-H Members less than nine years of age as of January 1 of the current year will be considered Cloverbud 4-H members. Cloverbud members may not compete in 4-H organized competitions. All recognition for Cloverbud members will be for participation only. Cloverbud members are not eligible to receive County, District or State awards designating one winner over others. Voting privileges will be determined by individual clubs.

## **ARTICLE 6 – ADULT LEADERSHIP**

### **Section a – Club Leadership**

The adult leadership of the club shall consist of at least two non-related leaders, with as many other leaders as are needed to carry out specific responsibilities. To be an adult leader you must have fulfilled the child protection requirements.

- Each club must have at least (1) main leader. All club leaders shall have specific responsibilities and are to work with or under the direction of the main leader. If a co-leadership team is in place, the leaders will determine their specific responsibilities.
- Main leaders are responsible for providing updates to members and maintaining compliance of the general policies by individual 4-H members in their respective clubs.
- They are responsible for having representation (themselves or another adult leader from their club) at the bi-monthly Adult Leader's Meetings.
  - If a club is not represented at three (3) consecutive leader's meetings, the club charter will be put on probation for the next three (3) consecutive meetings. If a meeting is missed during the probation period the club charter will be reviewed and possibly revoked.
- In the event of a vacancy in an office, the club will follow their club procedure (by-laws) for selection: a) nomination, b) election, c) promote next person in line—based on prior election results.

### **Section b – Leader Definitions**

4-H Certified Adult Volunteer Leader: is defined as a parent or adult who has completed a Volunteer enrollment card, Child Protection packet, provided three (3) letters of recommendations, passed the Child registry form, attends at least three (3) leader trainings and annually renews his/her volunteer enrollment card.

4-H Adult Volunteer Leader: is defined as a parent or adult who has completed a Volunteer enrollment card, Child Protection packet, provided three (3) letters of recommendations, passed the Child registry form and annually renews his/her volunteer enrollment card.

4-H Parent: is defined as a parent of a bona fide 4-H member who attends regular monthly meetings with their youth and assists their child(ren) with project work at home.

### **Section c – Quorum**

A quorum of the adult leaders is defined as two-thirds (2/3) of the clubs represented at the current meeting.

## **ARTICLE 7 – CONDUCT**

**Members** - 4-H members must read and sign the Benton County Code of Conduct annually. Members must also read and sign the Arkansas 4-H Code of Conduct attached to the enrollment form annually. If a member breaks a conduct rule, a written statement detailing the issue must be submitted. Depending on the severity of conduct, a grievance committee or executive committee or a county extension agent will determine consequences.

**Adult Volunteers** - Adult volunteers will adhere to the guidelines of the Arkansas Youth Protection program and read, sign and follow the Behavior guidelines for adult volunteers.

## **ARTICLE 8 – 4-H OFFICERS**

The officers of the clubs shall be: (a) President, (b) Vice President, (c) Secretary, (d) Treasurer, and (e) Reporter.

- a. The president shall preside at all club meetings, appoint committees, call special meetings, assist in planning programs, and other duties of a presiding officer. When more than 50 percent of club members are present, the club can transact business. (Quorum)
- b. The vice president shall be chairman of the program committee and shall preside in the absence of the president.
- c. The secretary shall: 1) keep minutes of regular club's meetings and other club records as outlined in the secretary's book, 2) call or check roll and read the minutes at each regular meeting, 3) serve on the program committee and as chairman of the club's history committee, 4) handle correspondence for the club and 5) preside in the absence of the president and vice president.
- d. The treasurer shall: 1) work with adult leader to complete all financial guidelines required of club, 2) give monthly treasurer's reports, 3) keep track of all monies coming in and out of the club account, and 4) any other duties outlined in the treasurer's book.
- e. The reporter shall prepare news items on the activities of the club, which should be sent either to the County Extension Office or directly to the newspapers. The reporter shall serve on the club's history committee.

Additional officers may be elected or appointed as needed or desired by the club. Other possible offices include: photographer, song leader, and recreation leader. Officers shall be elected annually and serve until their successors are elected and installed. Club officers are to be elected every September and encouraged to attend County Officer's training in October.

## **ARTICLE 9 – COMMITTEES**

Committees shall be appointed to serve for the club's year. Suggested committees include: (a) program, (b) recreation, (c) history, (d) fund-raising, (e) community service, (f) grievance, and (g) executive. Additional committees may be organized as needed.

- Clubs should have regularly-scheduled educational programs as part of the monthly club meeting.
- Clubs should have recreational activities in addition to the recreational activities during club meetings.
- Clubs are encouraged to conduct fund-raising activities to assist in activity costs and to allow for enriched activities for the members.
- Clubs are encouraged to participate in community service activities throughout the year. Clubs are encouraged to submit a community service report for county and district recognition.
- Clubs are encouraged to establish a grievance committee consisting of the club president, main leader, advisory board, and a non-4-H community member.
- Clubs are encouraged to use the Executive committee, which consists of the club officers, to assist in leading the club and in determining exemptions for members.

## **ARTICLE 10 – FINANCES AND ASSETS**

There are no dues for membership in Benton County 4-H.

Fundraising activities by 4-H clubs may be held when authorized by a vote of the club and when the purpose is in agreement with the objectives of the 4-H program. The County Extension Office should be notified of all Club fundraising activities involving soliciting of monies or donations before the fundraising begins. United Way asks that partner agencies take into consideration direct solicitation effort during Sept. 15 – Nov. 15.

Clubs must submit audited financial records annually to the Extension office by the county deadline.

No part of the net earnings of a club shall inure to the benefit of, or be distributable to its members, trustees, officers, or other private persons except that the club shall be authorized to pay reasonable compensation for expenses and to make payments and distributions in furtherance with the objectives of the Benton County 4-H program hereof.

**Dissolution:** In the event of the dissolution or final liquidation of a 4-H Club, after all liabilities and obligations of the club has been paid, satisfied, and discharged, or adequate provision made therefore, all remaining property and assets of the 4-H club shall be distributed, conveyed, assigned, or transferred to the Benton County 4-H Foundation.

## **ARTICLE 11 – COUNTY COUNCIL OFFICERS**

County Council Officers are 4-H Teen Leaders 14 or older that are elected annually to preside at the County O'Rama events and County Achievement Banquet.

- Members may not hold both a County Council office and a Teen Leader office concurrently.

**ARTICLE 12 – SPECIAL EVENTS, TRIPS, AND AWARDS**

**Scholarships** - A current journal is required for seniors applying for a 4-H scholarship.

**Trip Funding** – A youth member may participate in a Regional, National or International event, (events which are financially sponsored by the Benton County 4-H Foundation) only one time per event. The member is not limited to how many times he/she wishes to participate in an event; however, only how many times, they receive partial expenses paid by the 4-H Foundation. A member may only receive partial funding by the Benton County 4-H Foundation for one Regional, National or International trip per year. The Benton County 4-H Foundation will determine if a member is qualified to receive funding assistance for out of county trips.

**ARTICLE 13 – AMENDING BY-LAWS**

These by-laws may be amended with one (1) month notice, at any adult leader meeting when a quorum is present.

Club by-laws may be amended with one (1) month notice, at any regular club meeting when a quorum is present.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Adult Leader President

\_\_\_\_\_  
Adult Leader Secretary

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date Amended