State Awards Program

Senior members may enter up to two projects in the state awards program. A county may enter only five books per project area at the state level. A 4-H member can receive the top award in a project only once at the state level.

To be eligible for the state awards program a 4-H member must be 14 years of age and not passed their 19th birthday by January 1 of the current year.

The state awards program by project area can change from year to year. Currently state projects are dropped when the three-year average of record books entered at the state level drops below five. It is important that you check with the county office in January each year to get an updated listing of state project areas.

Those projects which drop below the 5 entry average will be moved into a category, All Other Projects. This category is divided into four areas: Health and Wellness; Natural Resources; Science and Technology; and Family Strengths.

Once in the All Other Projects area, when the book’s 3 year average again reaches five, the project will move out as a separate project the following year.

It is important that all senior 4-H members schedule one-on-one conferences with the Extension Educators. This will allow each member to develop a reporting system appropriate for their individual program.

Oklahoma 4-H Report Form

The Oklahoma 4-H Report Form, commonly referred to as the state record book form, has an educational framework. Each project has educational objective around which 4-H members work. These objectives must be considered when preparing the form.

Objectives for each program area are stated in the Oklahoma 4-H Awards Handbook and can be obtained from the Extension office or Oklahoma 4-H Website.

The format of the Report Form centers around the following major items: size, scope and growth in a project or activity; significant awards; demonstrations; talks; exhibits; news articles written; workshops and other knowledge and skills learned; volunteer leadership; citizenship/community service.

The Report Form is a summary of work done, thus you must be accurate and concise in recording of key educational experiences. Additional pages may not be added so you must summarize, condense and evaluate the information to be included. Sections IV and V must fit on one page and not extend over to a second page or on the back of a page.

Project work develops life skills and desirable character traits in addition to project skills.

Basic Information

Four-H record keeping starts at the beginning of the 4-H year, which begins July 1 and ends June 30 of the following calendar year.

The 4-H'er should begin by setting personal goals for his or her 4-H project/s or activity/ies. A well-developed 4-H record should be an outgrowth of stated personal goals for the project or activity. It should include a report on the accomplishment of these goals and report on accomplishments in project work, leadership, community service and personal development.

A successful 4-H project or activity takes advanced planning and accurate, continual record keeping. Generally, if a 4-H member will devote 2-3 days per month to quality 4-H project work, research, leadership and community service activities, they will have a quality program.
Where 4-H Projects Come Up Short

The following are common problems with 4-H Project Work and record keeping.

1. **LACK OF GOOD, SOLID PROJECT WORK!!!**
2. Failure to show personal growth and application of project skills (especially in the story). Leadership - there needs to be a balance between “project leadership” and “other leadership”. Both are important.
3. Citizenship - most project work really lacks true citizenship. For the past 10 years, this has been the biggest, single criticism of the project work reported. Increasingly, judging committees are looking for projects and activities that really make a difference in the community or in the life of an individual. In other words, taking cookies to the nursing home and caroling at Christmas no longer meet the criteria. (These are important activities for younger 4-H members, but older members are capable of more.)
4. Project work, in general, shows a lack of focus. This is due to lack of planning.
5. Record books have too much repetition.

Ten Steps to a Quality Program

1. Realize that it will take time and commitment to accomplish goals - good things rarely come without hard work.
2. Plan to devote as much time to 4-H as you do to other extra-curricular activities. (A football team that practiced one day a month would not expect to win many games. Why do we expect attending one 4-H meeting a month to make an outstanding 4-H member?)
3. As a volunteer, if the 4-H member you are working with is your own child, seek an objective, outside resource person to help. It is common knowledge that children perceive their parents to be more and more ignorant as adolescence progresses.
4. Encourage group projects and activities. Teens have high social needs and individual project work, by itself, is no longer satisfying to them. 4-H should supply opportunities to combine social experience and project work to retain interest.
5. Beware of burnout. When planning a program, pace the work to avoid burn out and unnecessary stress for the family.
6. Plan around known conflicts. If basketball controls the household November-February, then accept the fact that the child will not get much project work done during those months. If he/she wants to be competitive, more work must be done in the other eight months of the year.
7. Be creative! Think big! Look for opportunities! Reach out and include others!
8. Ask some serious questions: Is the activity important enough to justify the time it takes? Who will benefit from what I am planning? Do my community service activities deal with real needs and issues? What are my motives?
9. Expect setbacks. They are part of any growth process. Have a plan to deal with projects that don’t work out.
10. Encourage **personal growth** - one goal of the 4-H program is to create opportunities for members to mature, develop empathy for others and develop self-awareness. The story often reflects these qualities (or absence of them) in the way it is written.

“A 4-H Member that Fails to Plan, Plans to Fail”

Record Keeping requires focus and planning to avoid repetition.
Photo Pointers

1. Select a photo that shows the 4-H'er in action (active, doing and leading) with the 4-H'er prominent.
2. Use high quality photos - exposure, focus, composition. Color reproductions or copies of photos may also be used.
3. Show major points using as few photos as possible.
4. Photo record should show member and project growth, as well as document citizenship and leadership with emphasis on the major project. Picture of ribbons, plaques, etc. are usually boring.
5. Use a logical sequence on each page.
6. Use space effectively - white space is often helpful. Don’t crowd.
7. Organize page vertically, so book does not have to be turned sideways. In general, subjects in pictures should face toward center of page.
8. For best results, use a photo mounting adhesive for mounting pictures. Select natural or subdued complementary colors for your picture pages. Avoid white or brilliant colors.
9. Captions explain your pictures. Make them neat, concise, and legible. Make sure spelling, punctuation and grammar are correct.
10. A caption may accompany each picture or captions can be grouped on the page.

Examples of Photo Captions

Foods and Nutrition GOOD Captions

Teaching project group of 6-10 year olds baking techniques. 20xx
Teaching sports nutrition to the 4-H Little League team. 20xx
Conducting a day camp in basic food and nutrition for 75 low income youth. 20xx
Using creative techniques to encourage senior citizens to limit fats, sugar and salt in their diet. 20xx
Home safety display in county library. 20xx
Providing refreshments for holiday travelers on Labor Day weekend. 20xx

Foods and Nutrition Poor Captions

Making cookies
Physical fitness activities
Organizing a day camp activity
Puppet show
Safety exhibit
Coffee break

Safety GOOD Captions

Model pesticide storage cabinet used in six community exhibits. 20xx
Teaching lawn mower safety course at the county fair. 20xx

Safety Poor Captions

Pesticide safety
Lawn mower safety

Forestry GOOD Captions

Collecting and identifying leaves of 24 different species of trees. 20xx
Building some of the 100 Bluebird boxes I built to control the bag worm infestation. 20xx
Fire wood sales: ten 11 year olds sold 160 cords for at gross income of $4800. 20xx
Visiting with International Paper Company to discuss careers in Forestry. 20xx

Forestry Poor Captions

Here I am with my collection.
Bugs that drive me up a tree.
Selling fire wood
A visit to International Company
Clerical Hints

**Neatness.** Neatness is important. Keep pages clean and smudge-free. Show pride in work.

**Accuracy is essential!** Do not guess. If totals look excessively large, explain them.

**Correct spelling and grammar are essential.** Give special attention to punctuation, spelling, grammar and capitalization.

**Reporting Records.** May be handwritten, typed or put on computer. If a computer is used keep the headings consistent with the forms.

**Holes.** Take care when punching holes in paper. If possible, use a three-hole punch, making sure all pages are lined up.

**Font Size.** Computer Printing should not be smaller than 12 characters per inch (12 pt. font) or six lines per inch. Fonts and spacing should be uniform throughout the form.

**Paper.** Paper used for the story, for pictures and for dividing sections should be standard 8 1/2 by 11 inch. Margins on the pages must be 1 1/2 inches to the left and top, and one inch at the right and bottom. The story must be double spaced.

**Picture Section.** Suggested number of pictures per page is three or four. Do not shingle pictures. Do not use more than three pages of pictures. Do not cover pictures or any other pages with plastic. Use rubber cement or photo adhesive to mount pictures. You may have color copies of pictures done at a copy shop or printed electronically in place of actual photographs glued to a page.

**Photographs.** Photographs are important because they document the project, show growth and, most importantly, “seeing is believing.”

### Definitions

**Speech/Illustrated Presentation** - An organized talk with an introduction, body and conclusion. Rituals, prayers, and/or presiding over meetings do not qualify as speeches.

**Demonstration** - To give instructions for making a finished product and show how it is done. If demonstration shows how to make two or three small items to complete one big item, it is still just one demonstration.

**Workshop** - To give participants actual hands-on experience. A workshop takes more time than a demonstration.

**Short Course** - Lengthy demonstration or program (may be a lecture). Participants listen; no hands-on experience.

**Other Appearance or Presentations** - Share the Fun, style shows, rituals, etc.

**Committee Appointment** - Should be reported only when 4-H'er is an active, contributing member of the committee.

**Educational Exhibit** - A competitive exhibit demonstrating a project, e.g., Foods-Nutrition exhibit.

**Working Display** - Display that 4-H'ers operate to answer questions or give information to public on request.

**Year in School** - The grade the 4-H member enters in the fall, following application.

**Tabbing** - Makes it easier for the judge to find major sections of the record book. Tabs should be uniform in length. Tabs should not extend beyond the edge of the cover.

Helpful Hints

- Information should be factual, concise, yet fully representative of the 4-H’ers accomplishments.
- Content is more important than a fancy format.
- Don’t repeat information just to fill available space.
- Correct grammar and spelling is a MUST.
- Be creative and interesting in your story; remember “cutesy” stories do not impress the reader.
- Show the human interest side of your project.
- Be specific. What do you mean by “great,” “wonderful,” etc.?
- Avoid slang -- remember you are writing for adult readers. Make sure any special terms are understood or defined clearly.
- Have someone else read for mistakes, clarity, etc.
- The 4-H record is an organized presentation of what you have learned and accomplished. The final product should be neat, complete and organized in logical sequence with no repetition.
What is Leadership?

There are various levels and kinds of leadership:

1. Helping an individual (4-H member or other) on a one-to-one basis.
2. Helping several individuals with a project in a group situation (presenting workshops, demonstrations, speeches and other oral presentations).
3. Helping individuals learn about a project through a promotion (displays, distribution of literature, etc.).
4. Planning, organizing, implementing and evaluating a program or activity.
5. Serving as leader for a project club or regular club.

6. Serving as a committee chairman or officer.

Examples:
- Presenting workshops, short courses, etc.
- Helping others learn about project through promotional activities.
- Planning, organizing, implementing and evaluating a program or activity.
- Serving as a leader for a project club or group.
- Serving as an officer or committee chair.

**USE ACTION VERBS TO DESCRIBE LEADERSHIP**

If you taught a class, use:
- Tutored
- Instructed
- Informed
- Directed
- Conducted
- Educated

If you started something new, use:
- Introduced
- Organized
- Developed
- Enlisted
- Designed
- Planned
- Initiated
- Prepared

If you were part of a group, or helped an adult or older member, instead of assisted or helped with, use:
- Supervised
- Distributed

There are various levels and kinds of leadership:

1. Helping an individual (4-H member or other) on a one-to-one basis.
2. Helping several individuals with a project in a group situation (presenting workshops, demonstrations, speeches and other oral presentations).
3. Helping individuals learn about a project through a promotion (displays, distribution of literature, etc.).
4. Planning, organizing, implementing and evaluating a program or activity.
5. Serving as leader for a project club or regular club.

What is Citizenship

Citizenship is the relationship between you and others, as demonstrated by the following:

1. The way you think, feel and act toward your family, other 4-H’ers, your school and church groups and other people in your community.
2. Activities which help foster greater understanding of the role of a community citizen.
3. Activities which contribute to the welfare of your local 4-H club, individuals in your community or the community as a whole.
4. The 4-H’er shows good citizenship by working with people to carry out the duties and responsibilities of a good citizen. Citizenship activities can include helping an individual or a group carrying out a project individually.
5. Positive role model for younger members.
6. Doing the right thing for the right reason.

Examples:
- Helping those less fortunate.
- Being a positive role model for young people.
- Representing 4-H while working with others to deal with significant community issues.

**EXAMPLES OF PROGRESSIVE LEADERSHIP AND CITIZENSHIP:**

7th-9th grade
- help an older member conduct a workshop
- be part of community improvement activity

10th grade
- plan and conduct one or more workshops in chosen project
- chair a committee to deal with a local issue related to program
- start a project club

11th grade
- plan and conduct a series of continuing classes for a specific number of members
- continue project club work
- promote enrollment and/or participation in project
- look for new audiences - especially disadvantaged or those with special needs
- begin to look for a member to take leadership role with project club
- further develop citizenship opportunities
- conduct a research project

12th grade
- begin to train a member to take over project club
- develop a new activity or event in the project
- continue teaching workshops and short courses
- continue research project
- plan a major community service project related to main project
- work at finding new audiences, groups, etc.

Use descriptive terms to convey feelings and emphasize points

If you liked something, use:
- Appreciate
- Enjoy
- Admire
- Prefer

If something is pretty, use:
- Beautiful
- Cute
- Lovely
- Attractive

State Awards Handbook
at http://www.clover.okstate.edu/fourth/
4-H Story

Your 4-H story is a very important part of your 4-H record. While it should focus on the program in which you are submitting your record, your 4-H story should also convey to your readers what you have done and learned by participating in 4-H and how this has contributed to your self-respect and concern for others and influenced you in school, your use of leisure time and your career plans.

Your story is limited to six (6) pages double-spaced and should include:
- a brief introduction of yourself and why you joined 4-H;
- the program in which you are submitting your record and how 4-H helped you learn things about this subject;
- how your project grew in size and some things you tried successfully or unsuccessfully;
- highlight other 4-H projects and activities;
- explain how 4-H has helped you become a leader and citizen;
- how 4-H has increased your interest and participation in community affairs and;
- describe how 4-H participation has influenced your school and career goals.

Develop Sound 4-H Project Work

The following things will help develop a sound 4-H project.

Project Manual - Use 4-H project manual or find a good resource for sound information.

Goals - Set goals and plan for project work.

Commitment - Work your plan all year long. **Good 4-H project work takes dedication and commitment.** By setting the simple goal to accomplish 2-3 things per month you will have 18-27 projects completed each year. Projects would include: speeches, displays, participating in a county activity, reading a book, attending a workshop, using your project manual (available at the extension office), completing a project listed for your project area, participating in a citizenship activity, teaching someone else, etc.

Evaluation - **Evaluate each step** by having the 4-Her note (in writing or verbally to an adult/teen leader) what they learned (positive and negative) from the experience. Challenge the young person to continue expanding and growing through each step of their plan. Assist the 4-H member in mastering each skill by having them evaluate their project against the established standard. (Not all projects have a written standard.) Guide them in making the necessary changes to bring the project up to standard.

Participation - **Participate in county activities** to evaluate your skills. Each county activity relates to all project areas.

Participate in a Record Keeping Workshop.

For guidance with your project **schedule a visit** with the Extension Educator or Club Leader early in the year.

What Record Keeping Is Not

A record book or medal form is not for reporting all the things you did in school and other extra curricular activities. The reports highlight what you did as a committed and dedicated 4-H member.
Consistent Problems in Senior Record Books

Report Form

FACTS IN A NUTSHELL - Everything in the report form should be concise information. You can not use any more space than what has been provided on the printed form. Avoid repetition!

EASY ON THE EYES - Information should be very easy to read. Set up in charts, tables and outline form. Be sure there is white space. This doesn’t mean leave empty pages.

“4-H REPORT FORM” - A 4-H report form is an account of your 4-H project work, leadership and citizenship. Watch the use of church, school and participation in other organization as “4-H project work”. It is really obvious to the reader when you are filling in with non-4-H related material. There is a section for school, church and other activities. This is the only place this information is appropriate.

PLAN FOR THE FUTURE - Take a very critical look at your project and see if you have the following things:
- Depth of project work - are you learning and doing new things each year. This includes educational displays, talks and demonstrations on the local and county level, attending programs related to your project and reading books/ magazines etc. on the subject matter.
- Expanding your leadership and citizenship experiences (you can’t continue to do the same things year after year). Don’t wait for others to initiate your leadership and citizenship opportunities. Plan your own.
- Jump at the opportunity to take advantage of the diverse experiences offered through teen leaders, local clubs and county programming.
- Participate in county activities and events. Each activity or event relates to every project in some way.

Story

HEART - The story is the heart of the record book. It should have feeling and details about the facts listed in the report form.

LENGTH - The story can be no more than 6 pages double-spaced. Many do not take advantage of the six pages! Use this space to describe your 4-H experiences.

“My 4-H Story” - A record book should be an account of your 4-H project work, leadership and citizenship. Watch the use of church, school and participation in other organizations as “4-H project work”. It is really obvious to the reader when you are filling in with non-4-H related material.

EXPLANATIONS - Don’t make general, vague statements that anybody can make. Describe what you learned or experienced, whether it was positive or negative. For example - Being a camp counselor is fun, challenging and rewarding. As a camper I always looked forward to being a counselor. Little did I know how much work and how rewarding it would be. This leadership experience has taught me it takes many hours of preparation to learn about being a counselor, selecting programs and preparing workshops, recreational activities and cabin decorations.

The challenges come from having to be a leader and not one of the kids. As a leader, I must be sure they follow rules, clean cabins, get to activities and most importantly have fun and get involved. Sometimes all of this is really hard when you are tired from lack of sleep and hot temperatures.

“I”KES - Watch the use of “I”. It makes for very difficult reading and makes the story sound very self-centered. Work with someone to make the sentences active/present tense.

GRAMMAR AND PUNCTUATION - Have someone proficient in English read the story for grammar, tense and punctuation.

Picture Pages

“MORE IS NOT ALWAYS BETTER” - Be very selective with your photographs. Too many pictures and little description doesn’t necessarily do you justice.

A GOOD PORTRAIT - Each of the three pages should have a focus: 1) Project Work, 2) Leadership and 3) Citizenship. The pages should have pictures of you throughout the years showing how you have grown in the size and scope of your project work.

“BE PREPARED” - Carry a camera with you during the year. Good photos have you working in the trenches doing leadership and citizenship activities.

CHOP-CHOP - It is OK to crop your pictures. This helps the viewer focus on the center of attention in the photo. Be sure that they are cropped straight. Neatness is very important.