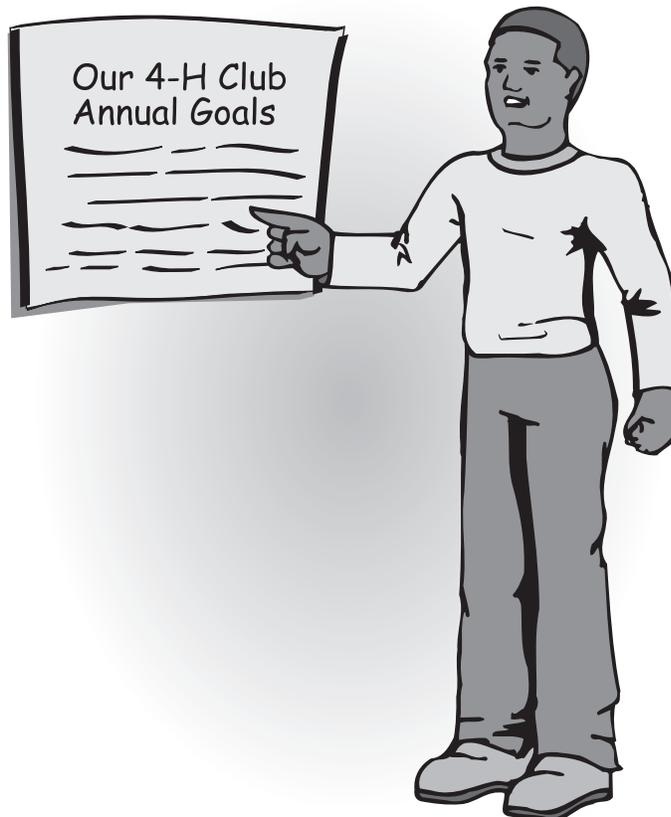




Virginia 4-H Club Annual Goals and Program Plan

Joseph R. Hunnings, Extension Specialist, 4-H Youth Development, Virginia Tech.

This guide will help 4-H members and adult leaders plan, deliver, and evaluate a successful 4-H club program for the year. Most members and leaders involved in 4-H are very busy people. Setting goals and developing an annual club program plan helps everyone integrate 4-H activities with the rest of their personal commitments. Plus, an Annual Club Program Plan is required to maintain a 4-H Club Charter. Evaluating the outcomes of club goals and plans at the end of the year helps us to “Make the Best Better.”



Why Do We Set Club Goals?

Goals serve an individual or a group in much the same way that a map guides a traveler. A goal is like a destination, something to reach for or accomplish. A goal should provide a challenge but be realistically attainable. Goal setting involves making decisions and setting priorities. Through setting goals, and planning and evaluating progress towards those goals, club officers and leaders can influence what the club and its members learn and achieve.

Who Should Develop Club Goals and Plans?

Youth and adults should work together to develop yearly club goals and plans. For 4-H clubs with few members, the entire membership may meet with leaders and parents to decide on club goals and plans. In larger clubs, the club officers and the volunteer leaders may be the appropriate group for this task. Obviously younger members will need more guidance in this process than older members. Older members should be encouraged to have an increasingly greater role in the goal setting and program planning process.

What Should Club Goals and Plans Include?

An effective annual club program should be well balanced. Some of the things it should include are:

- Personal and club goal setting
- Leadership, citizenship, and character development
- Hands-on learning activities through 4-H projects
- Development of specific life skills
- Opportunities for performance through competitions



- Presentations, demonstrations, or public speaking
- 4-H project record keeping
- Opportunities for community service
- Recreational and team-building activities
- Participation in unit, district, and state 4-H events

How Do You Start the Process?

Most clubs set goals and develop their annual program plan in September and October. The first step is to think about the club's purpose as stated in the club's constitution. The stated purpose should provide a guide to what the club will emphasize during the year.

Next, think about why the individual members are involved with the club. What are they interested in learning? What kind of service activities would motivate them? Do they like to take trips? Are they interested in competitions?

How Do We Set Goals?

Goals must include three parts.

1. Result – What is to be accomplished?
2. Action – How will it be accomplished?
3. Time frame – When will it be accomplished?

For example, one of the wishes of club members might be to increase the number of youth who are members of the club. The goal might state: "Increase the membership of the Happy Hooves Club by six members through a campaign in which every member invites one friend to a club meeting during the first three months of the 4-H year."

1. Result – "Increase the membership of Happy Hooves Club by six members ..."
2. Action – "... every member invites one friend to a club meeting ..."
3. Time frame – "... during the first three months of the 4-H year."

Goals should:

- Be realistic – does the club have the necessary resources to accomplish the goal?
- Meet the needs and interests of the members – meeting member needs and interests will motivate members to be involved
- Promote club and individual achievement – achieving both group and member accomplishments builds teamwork skills and self-confidence

The following worksheet will assist you in setting club goals. It has four steps.

1. State the goal
2. Break the goal into action steps
3. Determine what resources are necessary to accomplish the goal
4. Determine who is responsible for each step
5. Set deadlines for each step

Annual 4-H Club Goal-Setting Work Sheet

Year: _____

Goal	Action Steps	Necessary Resources	Who	Timeline
GOAL # 1. EXAMPLE Increase the membership of Happy Hooves 4-H Club by six members through a campaign in which every member invites one friend to a club meeting during the first three months of the 4-H year.	1. Develop packet to market 4-H	1. Marketing materials from 4-H office	1. Club Leader and Executive Committee	1. Packet developed by end of September
	2. Each member identifies three potential members	2. List of potential members	2. Each member develops list	2. Potential members provided by mid Sept.
	3. Deliver packets to potential members	3. Completed packet	3. Each member delivers packet	3. Packets delivered by mid-October
	4. Make follow-up call to parents	4. Phone numbers of potential members	4. Mrs. Smith	4. Follow-up call made by end of October
	5. Hold special club meeting for potential members and parents	5. Displays from 4-H office 6. Member project displays 7. Refreshments	5. 4-H agent will provide 4-H displays 6. Each member will prepare project display 7. Club parents will bring refreshments	5. Special meeting held in November
GOAL # 2. EXAMPLE Every club member will give a presentation at the 4-H County Contest.	1. Members are trained on how to give a 4-H presentation	1. Presentation training materials, example presentations, handouts	1. Club Leader reviews training materials with the 4-H agent; Jr. Leaders give example presentations	1. Training review in December; club training at January meetings
	2. Members select presentation topics	2. Project books, library books, etc.	2. Parents and volunteer leaders will help members	2. Select topics during January
	3. Members practice presentations	3. Easels, multimedia projector, laptop	3. Parents help with practice at home; Leader to secure resources from the unit office	3. February Meeting
	4. Members compete	4. Provide transportation	4. Volunteer to drive van	4. Second Saturday of March

Goal	Action Steps	Necessary Resources	Who	Timeline
GOAL #				

When the goals have been determined, they should be shared and approved by the entire club membership. The club may set up committees to be responsible for each goal. However, as much as possible, ALL club members should be involved in completing the action steps for your club goals. For our first example, the Membership Committee could take the leadership for the membership drive, but all members are responsible for recruitment. Providing opportunities for members to develop and achieve goals is an excellent way for youth to learn decision-making, problem-solving, resource-management, and teamwork skills.

Developing Your Annual 4-H Club Program Plan

As soon as your club has developed its goals, you should develop an Annual Club Program Plan. Most of the activities in the plan will come from the action steps of your goals.

The Annual Club Program Plan should also include countywide, district, and state 4-H events. The local Extension office often produces a 4-H newsletter, which provides dates and information about trainings, contests, fairs, etc. The state 4-H website also has a calendar of events. The *4-H Leader's Handbook*, Virginia Cooperative Extension publication 382-180, has a suggested annual 4-H Club Program Plan. Use the following worksheet to develop your Annual 4-H Club Program Plan.

Consider having each member bring a calendar from home with space to write down important dates from the Club Program Plan. Or make copies of a club master calendar for members and their parents.

Review the Club's Progress

During the year, circumstances may change and the goals the club set may no longer be appropriate or possible. It is important to periodically review the club goals and action steps to see if changes to the annual program plan may be necessary.

The need to modify the club's goals and program plans is not a sign of failure. Remember, goals are like a destination you are trying to reach on a trip. Sometimes there is a change in the destination of the trip. What is just as important with 4-H club work is the trip. In other words, the process of youth learning to work towards goals is as important as reaching the goal. It would be failure to not adjust goals and plans if there was a need to do so. The process of evaluating progress and making adjustments is a very useful skill that should be considered a teachable moment for club officers and leaders.

Evaluating the Club's Accomplishments

At the end of the club year, it is important to look back on what was accomplished. This is an important exercise, particularly for club officers, committees, and adult leaders, but all members can benefit from an evaluation exercise.

Review each of the club goals. Think about the outcomes and the process.

Were the results that were hoped for, achieved? If they were, what steps were most critical to the success? If the goal was not achieved or only partially so, why? What steps should be changed?

Thinking about and discussing the answers to these questions should help the club and its members be more successful and "Make the Best Better."

