



NAMING 4-H CLUBS, UNITS, PROGRAMS, EVENTS AND WEBSITES

Naming 4-H clubs, units, programs, events, and/or websites is an important matter within the 4-H program as the name selected for an individual 4-H entity is the public face that showcases 4-H to the greater community. The 4-H system nationwide strives to maintain and enhance a positive public image of 4-H. The 4-H Name and Emblem are protected under federal statute Title 18, U.S. Code 707. This provides the 4-H Name and Emblem with the same level of protection afforded other federal marks, such as the Seal of the President of the United States. As a result, use of the 4-H Name and Emblem is subject to regulations and policies determined by National 4-H Headquarters, CSREES at USDA, and the approval of the appropriate State 4-H Program Office.

Once a 4-H activity is approved, youth members, adult volunteer leaders, and others may work together to select a name for a new 4-H entity. This name should reflect the unique individual character of the group while presenting a positive image of 4-H to the greater community. It is essential that any additional logo or images used in conjunction with the 4-H Name and Emblem on club materials, such as signs, jackets, t-shirts, stationary, etc., as well as web pages, also reflect this positive image of 4-H and are also subject to the guidance contained within this Fact Sheet.

All applicable policies and regulations of the 4-H program impact the guidance for naming 4-H clubs and entities including but not limited to Title IX and Civil Rights.

GUIDANCE

Names must be Specific - The selected name should be specific to the individual 4-H club or entity either through a unique name like “Show-n-Grow 4-H Club” or by identifying the community or county location like “Johnson County 4-H Teen Club.”

Names should not imply Exclusivity - The selected name should not imply that its membership is limited or exclusive to any group. For example, names such as 4-H Lads or 4-H Lassies would be inappropriate.

Names should not be Overtly Religious - The selected name cannot be overtly religious or represent the beliefs of one denomination over another. 4-H clubs with names like “God’s Children,” or “4-H’ers for Jesus” or “Park Synagogue 4-H” would be inappropriate. NOTE: Some communities have a historically religious name which through the passage of time has lost the religious connotation. Therefore a 4-H Club might be called the “San Francisco All Stars” and be in compliance with 4-H naming standards.

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Names should not be Offensive - The selected name should showcase 4-H as a positive, safe and open environment for young people. Names which are offensive or generally seen as demeaning to any group or set of individuals protected by equal opportunity regulations are to be avoided. “4-H Mafia” or the “White Knights 4-H Club” would be examples of inappropriate choices.

Names should foster the Character-Building Purpose of 4-H -The selected name should reflect the positive character-building purposes of the 4-H Program. Consequently, a club or event named after questionable or notorious historical figures such as “Billy the Kid 4-H” or “Jack the Ripper 4-H” would be inappropriate.

Names should be Sustainable over Time - Once a club is chartered or an event named, it’s unlikely that the name will be changed. Therefore, it is important that the selected name be able to withstand the test of time avoiding being too trendy (e.g., The Bell Bottom Belles) or too juvenile (e.g., Little Clover Kittens).

Names should comply with Copyright Regulations - Avoid using the names of TV shows, public figures, singing groups, popular products, etc., that may not only enjoy a short-lived popularity, but may also be a copyright violation of a commercial name.

Virtual groups such as Facebook or MySpace are subject to the same 4-H Name and Emblem regulations as other 4-H methodologies and resources.

Ultimately, chartering and the approval of names for state and local 4-H clubs, program, events, units and web pages is at the discretion of each State 4-H Office as designated by National 4-H Headquarters, CSREES at USDA. Chartering and the approval of names for regional and national 4-H programs, events, units, and web pages is at the discretion of National 4-H Headquarters.

For questions concerning 4-H Clubs or Affiliated 4-H Organizations, please contact the National 4-H Headquarters—USDA at (202) 720-2908 or at 4hhq@csrees.usda.gov.

For additional Fact Sheets, or other materials related to 4-H programming, please visit <http://www.national4-headquarters.gov/>.

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