

Understanding 4-H Member Recognition in Ohio

This section provides answers to some basic questions about the various levels of member recognition provided for project work, club work, leadership, citizenship, and community service.

Level 1: Member Participation

Q: So, members can be recognized simply for being active in their project and club?

A: Yes they can. Members who regularly attend club meetings, take part in club and project events, provide project demonstrations, community service and the like, typically receive a 4-H Certificate of Achievement, 4-H 900. Advisors can order copies of these certificates through the county Extension office. Member year pins are also available through the National 4-H Supply Catalog.

Level 2: Achievement of Goals

Q: What incentives are there for members to complete the personal and group goals set for their 4-H projects?

A: Members who complete their projects as planned can receive one of Ohio's 4-H Project Achievement Certificates, (4-H 905-908). These are awarded based upon the level of difficulty of the project (beginning, intermediate, advanced,) as specified in the *Family Guide to 4-H*. There is also a special certificate available if members plan and complete a Self-Determined project.

Q: How do members qualify for an Ohio 4-H Project Achievement Certificate?

A: As outlined in the project review section of the project manual, members must take part in an evaluation. This may be done at home with a parent, adult helper or project advisor; or at a time or location agreed upon by the club. This review is designed to assess member achievement of project goals rather than "how well" a project was completed. If all is satisfactory, the club advisor then orders the appropriate level Project Achievement Certificate from the county Extension office.

Q: Are there other types of achievement awards beyond completion of projects?

A: Yes. Your county may offer a special type of award for active and cooperating 4-H members. This "honor member" type of award includes recognition of member involvement in leadership, citizenship and community service activities. It also includes recognition of member participation in 4-H including club and community activities. Consideration for such an award may be done as part of a member's project review, or at a time agreed upon by the club. This may also be the time when a "final grade" is assigned to each member.

Q: When would members receive these types of achievement awards?

A: Awards like these deserve special recognition. Typically, membership and project achievement type awards are presented at a special time agreed upon by the club.

Level 3: Achievement of Standards

Q: How should members prepare themselves if they plan to take part in county level judging?

A: County level judging assesses the "quality" of each individual's project performance. For example, a member who planned and completed four of seven project Interest Areas extremely well, should receive a higher evaluation than a member who planned and completed seven of the seven areas poorly. Typically, grade level ribbons are awarded to reflect member achievements at this level.

Check with your county Extension office for specific items to bring to county level judging. This should include the project manual with completed project planning section as well as a project exhibit. Exhibit items might include such things as a poster or something that you made or produced. You may even be asked to demonstrate a particular skill. This evidence will guide the judge in assessing "how well" you completed what you planned.

Level 4: Competing With Others

Q: How is this level different from the previous three levels?

A: This level focuses on comparing individual performances. This means being assessed against standards of excellence while compared with the achievements of others. For example, completing five of seven project areas extremely well may not be enough. Additional evidence may be needed for consideration as "project winner" including mastery of project knowledge and skills, and significant accomplishments in citizenship, leadership and community service. Maintaining project records is also an essential qualification for achievement at this level. Typically, trophies, rosettes and state fair participant honors are awarded to "winners" at this level.

Q: Where does this level of recognition occur?

A: This level of recognition is an extension of county level judging. It usually takes place once all members have been interviewed for a particular project and grade ribbons have been assigned. It is also provided through the state and county fair, state and county contests and events. Additional opportunities for recognition at this level are provided through county, state and national level award programs. This includes local, state and national 4-H scholarships, events and award trips. Refer to the following summary of awards and opportunities for details.

Saying Thank You

Many 4-H members will receive medals, certificates, scholarships, bonds, trips and other awards in recognition of efforts put forth in the 4-H program. One among many lessons to be learned from receiving awards is the importance of saying "thank you."

Without thank you's from the award winners, many of the donors would decide 4-H'ers weren't grateful for their award. If we don't have donors, we won't have awards. Please be sure to thank your sponsor or donor.