



United States
Department of
Agriculture

National Institute
of Food
and Agriculture

4-H National
Headquarters

4-H CHARTERS

Per 7 CFR 8, 4-H clubs and groups that have been officially recognized are authorized to use the 4-H Name and Emblem. Official 4-H Charters are the only documentation that officially recognize clubs and groups as 4-H. State and local charters that do not include a USDA signatory, are not considered official 4-H Charters.

Chartered 4-H clubs and affiliates are authorized to use the 4-H Name and Emblem:

- For their own educational and or informational purposes
- On materials that are originated, requested, purchased, distributed, or sold by them within their local area (cannot cross state borders without national authorization)

The 4-H Charter, a template provided to state 4-H offices by the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) and signed by the Secretary of Agriculture's designated representative, is the only document that officially recognizes a 4-H Club and authorizes that club to use the 4-H Name and Emblem.

State 4-H offices are expected to maintain documentation on the issuance of 4-H Charters to 4-H clubs within their respective states. Charters should be issued when establishing a 4-H club. For those 4-H clubs that have been long established and verification of a valid Charter is not available, issuance of a new 4-H Charter is necessary. Expirations dates of the 4-H Charter, if used, are determined by the State 4-H office issuing the Charter.

4-H Charters represent agreements within the context of the overall 4-H Program. 4-H Charters have a two-fold purpose –

- 1) it is an agreement by the club with USDA on the proper use of the 4-H Name and Emblem; and

2) it is an agreement by the club with the land-grant institutions' state or local 4-H extension office to follow and abide by all state and local 4-H policies, procedures, and other requirements.

A 4-H Charter is required for any 4-H club to use the 4-H Name and Emblem. 4-H Charters do not qualify a 4-H club as a legal entity according to state government or business policies and definitions. Moreover, 4-H Charters do not allow a recognized 4-H club to share their rights and privileges, like the use of the 4-H Name and Emblem, with any other person, group, or business.

State and local 4-H offices are to ensure that all uses of the 4-H Name and Emblem adhere to the federal guidelines. 4-H offices are to notify NIFA's Division of Youth and 4-H of any improper use that falls outside of their local and state jurisdiction. The authorizing entity retains the right to revoke 4-H Name and Emblem authorization at any time prior to the expiration of the authorization.

Affiliated organizations (such as foundations, councils, camps, etc.) obtain their official recognition and authorization to use the 4-H Name and Emblem through a memorandum of understanding/partnership agreement or other appropriate document between the organization and the land-grant institutions' state or local 4-H extension office.
