

Alabama 4-H 101 – Information for Staff and Volunteers

Guidelines for 4-H Club Fundraising

Fundraising is one of the major ways to help 4-H clubs financially support their activities. By raising funds as a group, a club can help to make sure its activities are affordable to all club members. There are several things to keep in mind as your club plans a fundraiser.

The 4-H Youth Development Program is a non-profit educational organization. Therefore, your club should be concerned with money only to the extent that it is needed to provide supplies or cover expenses incurred in running an active group for youth. Unless the club has a special long-term goal, each year it should only raise enough money to provide funds to support that year's activities. Fundraising is a means to having a successful club, and should neither become the club's primary activity nor a measure of a club's success.

Fundraising should be done to meet a specific goal. Such goals might be to help members go on a club field trip, purchase a 4-H/American flag set for the club, sponsor a club recognition banner, or to fund a community service project. Whenever possible, club members should "pay their own way." In other words, reserve club fundraisers for club needs and not individual member needs. Whatever the goals for the fundraising event, the club should approve the goal and the fundraising event. The young people themselves should work to carry out the club's goals with the leaders assistance.

Make sure your fundraiser provides a learning experience and can be easily accomplished by the club. Start small and build on small successes. Fund raising can be a good way for members to learn organizational skills. It can also be fun. Consider whether to do fundraising as individuals (such as selling calendars to friends or family) or as a total club (bake sale, car wash, etc.). Consider doing a fundraiser that does not require a great investment in advance. The less money your club must invest, the less money it can lose if the fundraiser isn't successful. Good examples are bake sales, car washes, and service auctions (where members sell their services to clean garages, mow lawns, etc.) In any case, organize and publicize your event well.

- **To ensure safety for 4-H'ers and leaders, no one should solicit door-to-door. Individual solicitation should be done from family and friends, and only under the direct supervision of adults.**

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Make sure the fundraising activities meet the legal requirements of the local municipality, county, and state. Certain fundraisers such as raffles, games of chance, yard sales, etc. may require permits or may not be legal in certain municipalities. Before you spend too much time planning an event, you should check with the municipal office

of the location where the fundraiser is to be held to make sure you are following proper procedures.

It is important to have fundraising coordinated on a county level. This will help to make sure there are not too many clubs approaching the same donors. The leader should inform local 4-H county staff of what club fundraisers are planned by completing the *4-H Fundraising Proposal*. The county office can then check to make sure that the club's plans do not overlap with those of another club. (For example, if a club decides to sell candy and another club in the same area has already planned to do the same thing, it could overlap and affect the success of both clubs' sales. The county 4-H staff can also confirm that your event is truly a 4-H fundraiser if someone from the public calls to ask. (An individual not associated with 4-H could illegally raise money in the name of 4-H – if such cases are reported, they can be stopped.) The county 4-H staff can also help by providing ideas and publicizing the event.

All funds raised become a part of the club's treasury. It is important to keep accurate records of the funds raised, as the club's treasury may be audited.

Accurate records and notes will also help the club evaluate the success of the fundraiser and help planning for future events.

In accordance with laws governing non-profit organizations, if your club disbands, all money in the club treasury and any other club property can only be given to another non-profit organization-not individuals. Alabama 4-H policy states that 4-H club funds attained in the name of 4-H must be given to your county wide 4-H organization (such as 4-H Association, Leaders' Association, etc.) or the county 4-H office to be used for 4-H program purposes. To arrange this, contact your county 4-H office.