

4-H Community Club Membership Across County Lines

Policy

Youth are expected to affiliate with the 4-H program in their county of residence.

However, in some circumstances, it is appropriate for a youth to participate in 4-H in a county other than their county of residence, which can be done with the approval of the 4-H professionals in both the county of residence and the county of request.

Once granted, the permission for membership across county lines is expected to be permanent and stable, for the duration of the youth's 4-H membership. However, once granted, the 4-H family can request changes again, using the same process. This privilege is extended only for those youth who maintain membership in good standing.

Procedures

Ohio State University Extension administers the Ohio 4-H Youth Development program whose mission is to develop youth to reach their fullest potential as capable, competent, caring, and contributing citizens. Each county in Ohio conducts the 4-H youth development program to accomplish this goal.

In order to affirm Ohio State University Extension's position concerning cross county (and/or cross state line) 4-H membership and to establish guidelines in this area to fulfill the above mission, the following philosophy and process statements are provided.

- (1) 4-H membership in two counties simultaneously is not permitted.
- (2) Cross state line membership will be considered the same as for cross county membership.
- (3) In situations where the county of residence does not have a 4-H program (due to financial or other reasons), youth may not join 4-H in another county; previously approved cross county or cross state membership will be revoked.
- (4) In situations where membership in a county other than the county of residence is desired, the Educators in both counties must be in agreement regarding the application. The agreement will be based upon their professional judgment in accord with the mission of the organization and is not to supersede #3.
- (5) Consideration for membership may not be motivated by perceived competitive or sale advantage in another county, any change due to controversial issues, or other similar motivations.
- (6) Should families own multiple residences in more than one county, the permanent county of residence will be determined by the public school system in which the youth would be enrolled.
- (7) Parents, guardians, and/or youth should become familiar with all policies, procedures, and guidelines for the county in which they wish to be members. Some Ohio counties may limit participation in the county Junior Fair to those that reside in the county.
- (8) Any consideration for membership in a county other than the county of residence, within the limits of this policy and not addressed by the above statements should be brought to the attention of the County Extension Director by the County Extension 4 H Educator. This team will work with the Assistant Director, 4-H Youth Development or Associate State 4-H Leader to identify a course of action in these special situations.
- (9) The decision to allow or deny Cross County Line Membership will be made by the county 4-H professionals in the County of Request and the County of Residence, and fully supported by the State.



Why request 4-H membership in another county?

Ohio youth are expected to affiliate with the 4-H program in their county of residence. OSU Extension programs are typically supported at the local level by taxes, and so it makes good sense that a child would participate in the county program into which their parents or guardians are supporting with taxes. However, there can be circumstances in which membership in a county other than where they live may be a practical and reasonable request.

Common situations or conditions **found acceptable** for asking such a transfer of membership include the following:

- The school district in which the child attends is located across two counties. The child's school friends may therefore be members in a county other than where the child resides.
- The county of residence does not offer the 4-H program being sought, typically shooting sports or special interests program. In those cases, a youth can request membership across county line to participate in a program not available in the county of residence.
- The parents of the child are no longer married to each other and live in two different counties. The request for membership in the county in which the 4-H project work will be completed is reasonable.
- The request is being made before each county's membership enrollment deadline, and the youth in question is a member in good standing.

Reasons that are **not appropriate** for granting a transfer of membership include:

- The Junior Fair Livestock auction prices are typically higher in the other county
- The Parents and/or grandparents of the 4-H member were members of the club in the other county, and so it is hoped the youth can have membership in the same family legacy.
- The camp or county fair schedule in the other county fits the family's vacation plans better.
- The county fair schedule in the other county fits better with the youth's school schedule.
- If animal projects are involved, the animal will be housed on someone else's property in the other county. If this is in fact the case, the 4-H member is encouraged to select a different project entirely.
- The 4-H membership has been banned or suspended for rule infraction in the county of their membership. Suspended membership is the suspension of Ohio 4-H membership, and thus the suspended member is not eligible to transfer membership to another county to avoid enforcement of consequences for rules infractions.

How to request Cross County Line Membership:

Parents seeking 4-H membership for their child in a county in which they do not reside, should complete the appropriate request form (insert the URL where this is found), and submit it to the County Extension 4-H Professional in the County of Request. That professional will contact the professional in the county of residence, discuss, and decide. Allow 30 days for the communications and decisions to be made and for the parents to receive notification. All requests must be submitted by April 1st of the current year.

The decision to allow or deny Cross County Line Membership will be made by the county 4-H professionals in the County of Request and the County of Residence, and will be fully supported by the State 4-H Office.

Once granted, the Cross County Line Membership is typically expected to be continuous in that county. In most counties, families will not be required to request continued Cross County Line Membership each year. However, the 4-H professional in the county maintains the right to request annual renewal.

Request for 4-H Membership Across County Lines

Note: This form is to be submitted by all youth who wish to be 4-H members in any county other than the county where they live.

Steps to follow:

1. Provide all requested information. Do not leave anything blank.
2. Send completed form to the county Extension office in which 4-H membership is being requested (County of Request).
3. The 4-H Educators in your County of Residence and the County of Request will review the request. Ohio 4-H policy/procedure states that any request motivated by perceived competitive or sale advantage, any change due to controversial issues, or other similar motivations will automatically be rejected. There must be a 4-H program in both counties (i.e. requests can not be made as a result of a failed levy or as a result of the Extension office closing in a county due to lack of funding).
4. The 4-H Educator in the County of Request will respond to you with the joint decision.

Date of Request: _____ Phone Number: _____

Name: _____ Age: _____

Address: _____ Zip: _____

School District Attending: _____

County of Request: _____ County of Residence: _____

PREVIOUS MEMBERS ONLY

Years in 4-H: _____ What Counties: _____ Projects: _____

Are you a 4-H member in good standing in your county: _____

ALL APPLICANTS

Will market animals, other livestock, horses, or dogs be taken as 4-H projects? YES NO

If yes, please identify which projects specifically:

Why are you seeking 4-H membership outside of your county of residence?

Signature of Applicant: _____ Date: _____

Signature of Parent/Guardian: _____ Date: _____

I understand that it is my responsibility as a parent/guardian to review and understand all 4-H rules, policies, and guidelines of the county we wish to join and to ask questions if I do not understand.

For Office Use Only	
<input type="checkbox"/> Approved with restrictions as follows: Membership for _____ County only.	
<input type="checkbox"/> Not approved	
Signature of 4-H Educator: _____	Date: _____
Signature of 4-H Educator: _____	Date: _____