



# 4-H Member's Project Goals



## Goal Setting

Would you go out to eat without first deciding what you want to eat? Or would you plan a trip without first deciding where you want to go? Would you pack for that trip without thinking about what type of clothes you will need to take? Your answer is probably, "Of course not!" It would be hard to do for any of them!

Setting goals for your 4-H projects and experiences is just as important and very much the same as deciding what and where you are going to eat, where you want to go to for a trip, and what you need to pack for that trip. Although there are lots of fun and educational activities planned by your 4-H club, you are the one who needs to know what you want from your 4-H experience—you need to be in the "driver's seat"!

To get the most from your 4-H project experience, you need to be actively involved with choosing your 4-H projects, setting your 4-H project goals, and making decisions about when and what you will do to accomplish those goals. 4-H project leaders serve as guides and can assist you with each of your 4-H project adventures.

Just like planning for your trip, it is important to plan what you want to learn and do and accomplish with a 4-H project. The following questions will help you begin to set goals for your 4-H project:

- What are some things I really like to do?
- How good am I already at these things?
- How much do I know about this already?
- Is there one thing that I'd like to learn more about or learn to do better?
- Are there completely new things that I want to learn to do?

## A goal is:

- the point you strive to reach
- completed by a designated time
- short term or long term
- an ideal to strive toward, sometimes so far up, it is impossible to reach from where you are now; but by trying and working hard, you can obtain that goal.

## A good goal can be measured or checked and has three parts:

1. Action—how you will do something
2. Result(s)—what you are going to do
3. Timetable—when you are going to do it

## Here is an example:

"I want to learn how to cook two different items for dinner by New Year's Eve."

*I want to learn* is the action part of the goal. What you intend to do is the result—I want to learn how *to cook two different items for dinner*. When is the amount of time it will take to complete the goal? I want to learn how to cook two different items for dinner *by New Year's Eve*.

See the table below for more examples.

	ACTION	RESULT	TIMETABLE
I want	to learn	how to cook two different items for dinner	by New Year's Eve
I want	to give	two demonstrations for my project club	by August 1
I want	to train	my dog to sit and stay	before the county fair

When you write down your goals and plans, you have already made a step toward reaching your goals. Your written goals will help you stay on track to where you are going and how you are going to get there. You will be able to see your progress as you “check off” your accomplishments!

If you are not sure that you can accomplish your goal easily, you can conduct a “control test” for that goal. Do you have control over what you want to do? Does the action part of your goal tell what you will do? You have control over a goal such as, “I will learn to identify 10 types of trees and shrubs on my family’s property this spring.” However, if the action mentioned in the goal is what someone else will do, it does not pass the control test. The goal statement, “I will win first place in the halter class at the district 4-H horse show,” does not pass the control test because the judge provides the action that decides who will win first place in the halter class at the district 4-H horse show. Do your goals pass the control test?

There are different categories of goals that will help you succeed in your 4-H project area. These are:

- Knowledge—things you want to learn
- Skills—things you want to do or make
- Safety—safety practices you need to learn and develop
- Leadership—things you want plan, organize, and implement while helping and/or teaching others
- Citizenship—things you want to do for others
- Economic—what you will learn and do to save money
- Environmental stewardship—what you will do to save our natural resources
- Career—things you do to learn about a career in that project area

As you identify your goals, think about your 4-H goal calendar to help you decide when you will do each task. You may need to break things down into smaller tasks. It is often recommended to plan “backward” based on the timetable you have established to reach your goal.

Once you have identified your goals and your calendar, share your goals with someone else. Talk about your goals with another 4-H member. Share them with your leader and your family. When we talk about our goals to others, it helps us to get a better idea of what we are going to do, so don’t worry if you need to change your plan.

To help you remember your 4-H project experience, keep a record. You can keep your record by hand in a journal or notebook or electronically on your smartphone, iPad, or computer. Or just jot down notes on a calendar—it doesn’t matter how you do it; just remember to record your accomplishments.

Once you begin making progress—or when you’ve reached your goal—you should celebrate and be proud of what you have accomplished! Sometimes goals are hard to stick to—it often takes a long time to see results. So as you complete a step and meet a deadline, you need to give yourself a boost or energizer. This can be anything you like, such as going to a movie with a friend, or sharing your accomplishment with family and friends, especially at a 4-H club meeting.

When you have spent an entire year on your 4-H project, you will have learned many new things and developed new skills. Take time to reflect back and review the accomplishments you have recorded. Write one or two main things you feel good about within that project. Evaluating helps you feel good about what you accomplished and helps you to set your direction for the future.

You might think of these questions: Looking back over the past year, which of your goals were you able to accomplish? Is there anything about your project that you would change? What changes did you make on your project as you went along? How do you feel about what you have learned? What is something you learned about yourself? What ideas would you like to build on for next year?

It will soon be time to start the cycle over again with a new plan for the new year!

For each of your 4-H projects, use the following pages to write down your goals as you start a new 4-H year.

## References

- 2000 4-H Goal Setting – Member’s Packet S:\goal setting fact sheet.wpd. University of New Hampshire Cooperative Extension Service.
- 4-H Club Management Designing 4-H Project Experiences: Setting Project Goals, Wisconsin 4-H Community Clubs, University of Wisconsin-Extension.
- 4-H Goal Writing Worksheet, Iowa State University Cooperative Extension.

4-H member: \_\_\_\_\_

Age \_\_\_\_\_

4-H project name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date project started: \_\_\_\_\_ Date project completed: \_\_\_\_\_

4-H volunteer leader: \_\_\_\_\_

**Knowledge goals**—things you want to learn in this project area

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**Skill goals**—things you want to do or make in this project area

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**Safety goals**—safety practices you need to learn and develop in this project area

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**Leadership goals**—things you want to plan, organize, implement, and teach others in this project area

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**Economic goals**—what you will learn and do regarding economics and/or finance (money) in this project area

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**Environmental stewardship goals**—what you will do to save our natural resources as it relates to this project area

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**Career goals**—what you will do to learn about possible careers within this project area

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**Other goals**—anything that you might plan to participate within this project area, such as visual presentations, contests, exhibits, tours, workshops, etc.

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