

Kentucky 4-H Membership Policy and Participation across County Lines

Kentucky 4-H membership policy: A young person is to become a 4-H member within the county where he/she is a resident or attends school.

Participation close to home usually allows a young person and his/her family to become more fully engaged in 4-H and more actively involved in the community. As the term “cooperative” implies, Extension relies on families, volunteers, local government, and community partners to make 4-H a reality within each of the 120 counties.

When an agent becomes aware that a young person wants to participate in a project in another county, there are generally three options considered—1) the family and agent may work toward establishing the project in the county, 2) two counties may decide to cooperate in order to create the opportunity, or 3) membership may be transferred to another county. (When counties share resources, membership is not transferred.)

If attempts to establish the project in the county or to cooperate with another county do not progress, then transfer of membership for a specific project may be considered...

- ...if a program or project in which the 4-H'er is interested is **not** available in the county of residence or in the county where the 4-H'er goes to school.
- ...if a family situation exists that makes it very unlikely that a young person can be involved locally.

These options provide flexibility for 4-H agents to work together to conduct the highest quality 4-H experiences for Kentucky youth but it also allows the counties to decline. This policy protects the right of counties to place limits on how many youth they choose to allow to cross county lines. It is the 4-H agent's and 4-H Council's right in a given county to say they do NOT wish to participate in cross county lines agreements, and that right is to be respected by the petitioning families, agents and county 4-H councils in the involved counties.

When competition is involved, where a young person is a 4-H member may become an issue. Kentucky 4-H supports fair and ethical competition. **To compete as part of any other county's 4-H program, a transfer of membership must be clearly established through a request by the member, approval by the agents and councils involved and appropriate documentation.**

Guidelines Governing Transfer of 4-H Membership in a Specific Project

1. Agreements are to be processed at the **beginning** of the project experience for the year. This allows youth an adequate opportunity to participate in educational experiences in the county accepting them.
2. Transfer of membership is NOT to be done (a) with the intent of gaining competitive or financial edge, (b) because another county has a better program, or (c) because the member or family members are unable to get along with others.
3. Youth crossing into another county must meet all related deadlines (registration, ownership, and otherwise) for the county by which they wish to be accepted.
4. Members who transfer to participate in a project not offered in their county of residence/where they attend school will maintain 4-H membership and participation for **all other** 4-H projects, events, and activities in their county of residence or the county where they go to school.
5. When membership is transferred for a specific project, youth compete through the county which has accepted them. Members cannot compete in the same project in more than one county.
6. **Since this situation is often subject to scrutiny by others, transferred members are to carry a copy of the approved request (Form A) to each competitive event to verify county membership.**
7. Once an agreement is finalized, it will remain in place until August 31, the end of the program year. To continue as a transfer for additional years, some counties may require that a request be filed each year.

To request 4-H participation in another county:

1. Complete a “Request for Participation across County Lines” Form (Form A).
2. Turn in the completed Form A to the agent in the county where you reside or where you wish to participate.
3. You will be notified by one of the agents involved after a decision is made.

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