



CREATIVE OPTIONS

4-H
Alberta

www.4h.ab.ca

Project Guide

Alberta
Government



The 4-H Motto

"Learn to Do by Doing"

The 4-H Pledge

I pledge

*My **Head** to clearer thinking,*

*My **Heart** to greater loyalty,*

*My **Hands** to larger service,*

*My **Health** to better living,*

For my club, my community, and my country.



The 4-H Grace

(Tune of Auld Lang Syne)

*We thank thee, Lord, for blessings great
on this, our own fair land.*

*Teach us to serve thee joyfully,
with head, heart, health and hand.*

Acknowledgements

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MESSAGE TO THE LEADER

Note to Member: Please give this sheet to your 4-H leader.

The Creative Options Project can be taken as:

1. An individual project: one member who is a minimum of 12 years old as of January 1st of the current 4-H year.
2. A group project: two or more members, with no age restriction, working on a project.

Each member must:

1. Complete a record book.
2. Attend a minimum of 70% of mandatory club activities.
3. Participate in at least one main communication activity.
4. Participate in the club's Achievement Day.

The Creative Options project allows a member or a group of members to pursue an area of interest. It may be an extension of or a more in-depth study of a project area that they have taken in previous years, (for example: beef, clothing, computers), or it could be a topic that is unrelated to 4-H projects, but is something that the member(s) would like to know more about.

Members are required to have the approval of the club before taking a Creative Options Project. It is important that you spend some time with the member(s) before getting started to ensure that they are on the right track.

The application form is to be submitted to the club for discussion and approval by the leader and the club executive before the member is officially registered in the project. Also, we ask that you assign a project leader to assist the member throughout the year to ensure that they meet with success.

If the member(s) are exploring an extension of a more in-depth study of a project, you may want to consider using parts of a record book that is currently available. For Example: If a 4-H member or group of members wish to explore the Equine Sport Option of Polo. Members should fill in the appropriate pages in the COP Record Book and the Horse Record Book. The project leader / advisor must meet with the members to discuss and determine which parts of the two record books are to be completed to avoid duplicating of information.

INTRODUCTION

Congratulations on your decision to take part in the Creative Options Project! Alberta 4-H is excited about the creativity of the members. To allow for ongoing participation and flexibility, a Creative Option Project can be anything you feel would be beneficial to your growth and progress in the 4-H program and as a contributing citizen in your community!

Objectives

To encourage members to take on the responsibility of developing their project from start to finish including planning, implementation and evaluation.

To have intermediate and senior 4-H members continue their involvement and continue to grow and develop within the 4-H program.

To create new project ideas that may be of interest to other members.

This Creative Options Project Member Guide will give you direction in the formative stages of your new project idea. Please involve a project leader that is willing to mentor and assist you through the project year. The guidelines and planning steps recommended will ensure success in your project.

Guidelines

1. This project can be completed as an Individual Project or Group Project. An Individual Project is to be completed by a 4-H member who is a minimum of 12 years of age. As of January 1st of the current 4th year. A Group Project is to be completed by two or more members of the club with no age restriction.
2. A member or group of members must submit their plans for the Creative Option Project using the application form in the Creative Options Project Record Book.
3. The Creative Options Project is a regular 4-H project. You can expect to spend as much time planning and “doing” your project as you would on any approved project.
4. You are not required to take an additional project but you may if you wish.
5. You are required to meet the basic member expectations. You must:
 - a. Complete a record book (whether it is an Individual or Group Project).
 - b. Attend a minimum of 70% of club activities.
 - c. Participate in at least one main communication activity.
 - d. Participate in the club’s Achievement Day.
6. You will have all of the benefits of a 4-H member.

WHAT IS A CREATIVE OPTION?

The Creative Options Project allows you to pursue an area of interest to you. It may be an extension of or a more in-depth study of a project area that you have taken in your previous 4-H years, (for example: beef, clothing, computers, and so on), or you could study a topic that is not covered in the regular 4-H materials. It could be a topic that is unrelated to 4-H projects, but something that you would really like to become an expert in.

Some examples that have been done are:

ATV safety
Automotive restoration
Training certifications
Fishing
Bike repair
Sheet metal work
Cabinet making
Making videos
Planning trips
Sewing outfits for horse shows
Saddlery
Leather work
Career Opportunity Search
Scrap booking
Beef industry awareness
Marketing Beef Jerky
Vaulting

Are there others you can think of?

Consider the New Leadership Project

Options that are more leadership or program development oriented can be done through the 4-H Leadership Project.

PLANNING YOUR PROJECT

We all plan on a regular basis. Planning allows us to reach our goals in our everyday life. We often don't even realize we are doing it!

Setting your Vision and Goals:

Planning your 4-H Creative Options Project for the year involves the same steps as planning your personal activities, except that you will be required to formally think about your plans and write them down. You may feel that you do not have the skills to properly plan. The truth is you do it every day.

Planning involves looking at where you are now, where you would like to be in a certain period of time, and then creating some logical steps to get there.

Good planning, before you actually start your project, will help you in a number of ways:

It will

- give direction to your year's work
- help you spread the work out over the club year
- allow you to make arrangements well in advance
- assist you in determining your financial needs well in advance and prepare a suitable budget
- allow you to talk over your plans with your leader so that there are no big surprises for you or your leader!
- ensure that your plan fits in well with your club objectives and does not overlap with other members projects

Exploring Your Interests

This will be your project. There will never be another one like it! Whether you are creating something, investigating an idea, or expanding your knowledge on a topic of interest, this is your chance to be creative! When choosing a topic consider your interests, ambitions, and future career goals. These may give you some ideas.

In order to help you plan your project, you will have to be clear on your goals: exactly what do you expect to accomplish with this project. You should write these goals down to keep yourself on track with your activities. Then... evaluate what you accomplish.

Your Support System

You will need to find your own resources for this project. There is a wealth of resources right in your own community. As you develop your plan, you may be working with some of the leaders in your club. These resources will become valuable to you in your project year as well.

Your Project Leader

You should have one screened leader that is determined as your project leader. They will be your advisor and evaluator as you work through your established tasks. They will help to develop your plans.

Other Resources

There are other resource people that you may have access to that can be very helpful as well. If you have picked a specific topic area, you may be able to look for professionals that may not have time to be a leader in 4-H but are willing to spend some time with you to develop project workshops or coach you through a smaller task. You can find these people everywhere, all you have to do is ask around. You may find them in the following areas:

- 4-H club parent group
- Local schools
- Local agriculture and industry business owners/operators
- Government offices (agriculture or other related departments)
- Facility managers
- Retail businesses
- Your parents/grandparents and other relatives
- People who have studied or had experience with the topic in which you are interested
- Local libraries

PROJECT APPROVAL PROCESS

Application for Approval

There is a application form in your record book that you need to complete. It will be presented to the club and leader for discussion and approval. This will be the most important step in your project, so take your time and think it through carefully!

Start by asking yourself:

1. What you want to do?

Brainstorm all of the things that you have a passion for. Write them down on a big piece of blank paper. Don't limit yourself to 4-H experiences, think about school, hobbies, dreams and aspirations. Brainstorming allows you to record all of your ideas without screening them or thinking of the limitations. Be bold! Sometimes the best projects seem unrealistic at first.

Next:

Narrow down your choices by a quick review other factors that may be necessary to plan for such as finances, preparation, invitations, response time, other resources that may need to be pulled in.

2. Why you want to do it?

Make sure there is a need in the club for your project idea. It is important that they will benefit and that you will feel valued for your contributions.

3. When you want it done?

The timeline you will set for your project should fit in the club year and should be compatible with your project leader's schedule as well.

4. Where it is to be done?

Consider the number of people, the season, facility costs (or can it be done at someone's home/farm/yard?), availability/bookings and so on.

5. How to do it?

Seek out an existing leader, or recruit a new one, that supports your project idea and can commit to coach and mentor you through the year. Design your creative option project blueprint. Get your Creative Options Project Record Book out and write your plan down.

WHY KEEP RECORDS?

The Creative Options Project Record Book provides the necessary guidelines for planning and keeping records. Become familiar with it early in the year, and keep your Record Book up to date.

- A record is part of your 4-H project and as such is a means of evaluating your work.
- A record tells the story of your progress, what you have accomplished others did through your guidance.
- A record teaches you the value of data gathering and correct recording methods that will serve you for many years.
- A record provides you with your own personal analysis of the job done and what should be done in the future.

Make sure you complete and submit your application prior to starting the work of your project. The club General Leader and membership will need to approve the concepts and ideas so you can have their full support.



Fill out the application form found in your record book before going any further!

STEPS TO PLANNING A SUCCESSFUL PROJECT YEAR

There are five basic steps to follow:

1. Decide exactly what your vision is for your project. Be very clear about what you will try to accomplish. If your project is too vague, it will be hard to plan an effective program and it will be difficult to know if you actually achieved what you set out to do. An example of a project vision is “To learn advanced techniques in sewing with leather.”

2. Decide what your goals for your project will be. Your goals should be very clear in your mind. They should specify what you would like to achieve.

Examples of goals for a project to learn advanced techniques in sewing with leather might be:

- To learn about the process of making leather.
- To learn about special techniques in cutting, sewing, and finishing leather garments.
- To learn how to choose appropriate patterns for use in constructing leather garments.

3. Determine the activities that will help you to meet your goals.

Remember that a goal is a general statement of what you want to accomplish, while an activity is something specific that helps you to meet that goal.

Goal: To learn about the process of making leather.

Activity: Ask the local librarian to assist me in finding books or other resources on the topic, and prepare a short presentation for the club.

4. Prepare a project plan.

Your project plan should answer the who, what, when, where, and why for each planned activity. It will assure that no jobs are forgotten. You can use any format you wish for recording your plan.

5. Evaluate your project.

This is a key ingredient in planning your project. It is essential that you take time to think about the parts of your project that worked well and the aspects that you would do differently if you were to do it again. You may devise your own evaluation system

BUDGETING YOUR PROJECT

No matter which Creative Options project you are taking, you will need to finance your project.

Decide how much each part of your project will cost so that your plans will fit your resources. You may find that you have to change your plans if you are overspent or you may be able to expand your project if you find you have additional money. In either instance be sure you don't get part-way through your project and find you don't have enough cash to finish.



RECORD KEEPING

All 4-H projects require some method of keeping records of what you accomplish during the year. This Creative Options Project is no exception.

In addition to your COP Record Book, you may wish to use a 3-ring binder format to keep a diary or journal, and to add pictures, newspaper articles, or other interesting memorabilia that you collect during the year.

It is really important that you include your goals and objectives, and your evaluation as part of your project records.

If you need assistance on how to keep your records, or some feedback about whether you are on the right track, please be sure to talk to your leader.

