

SPARK ACHIEVEMENT PROGRAM



Purpose and Structure of the 4-H Achievement Program

The 4-H iSprout, Spark Achievements, Emerald Stars, and Impact Stars are progressive and work together to provide a guiding framework for youth to discover what inspires them, to learn about their communities, and to become empowered to make a difference. This system focuses less on tallying up activities to meet required totals and more on the quality of those experiences and the meaning behind them.

Each level is tailored for the needs and abilities of a specific age group.

- ❖ **iSprout:** Primary members (ages 5-8) explore a wide range of topics and activities that help them learn about 4-H.
- ❖ **Sparks Achievements:** Junior members (ages 9-10-) work toward earning their Spark Achievements. Spark Achievements are an approachable way to explore the exciting opportunities of 4-H. Members earn the four levels of the Spark Achievement pin by engaging with activities related to leadership, civic engagement, project learning, healthy living, and community service. Once they have earned all four levels, members have discovered what interests them and can identify their [spark](#).
- ❖ **Emerald and Impact Stars coming in 2023-24**

Achievement Rank Overview

All three Achievement Ranks work together to empower youth by helping them form meaningful youth-adult partnerships, identify what inspires them, set goals, and work towards purposeful and informed change. This is another way in which 4-H equips youth to grow and thrive.

	Primary	Junior	Intermediate	Senior
Age Range	5-8 years old	9-10 years old	11-13 years old	14-19 years old
Achievement Ranks	iSprout Achievements	Spark Achievements	Emerald Stars	Impact Stars
Focus	Introduction to 4-H	Trying New Things	Discovering Purpose	Making an Impact
Record Book Competition	None	Unit Level County Level	Unit Level County Level	Unit Level County Level State Level
Suggested minimal levels of involvement	Project Unit	Project Unit	Project Unit County	Project Unit County Multi-County State National

Progression from Star Rank System

With the introduction of the new Achievement Ranks, members will enter at different points depending on what they have accomplished in the previous Star Rank system.

Juniors (9 - 10 year olds)

- ❖ 9 year olds: Spark Achievements.
- ❖ 10 year olds: Spark Achievements. If you were a member when you were 9 years old, you can count your previous year's work toward Spark Achievements. Any Star Ranks you have earned, you will keep.

Intermediates (11 - 13 year olds)

- ❖ If Star Ranks were not previously earned, complete Spark Achievements. You can count your previous years' work toward Spark Achievements.
- ❖ Any Star Ranks you have previously earned, you will keep.
- ❖ If you already have previously earned Star Ranks in the previous system, and you *want* to complete Spark Achievements, you can start there and work your way through the progression of achievements.
- ❖ If you earned a Bronze Star in the previous Star Ranks system when you were 9 or 10 years old, you can start Emerald Star I without completing Spark Achievements.

Seniors (14 - 19 year olds)

- ❖ If you join 4-H or begin to work on Achievement Ranks as a Senior member, complete at least one level of Spark Achievements with the goal being to identify your spark.
- ❖ Any Star Ranks you have previously earned, you will keep.

How do members keep a record of their work?

- ❖ The Spark Achievement Report builds from year to year. Members keep a copy either on paper or on a computer and save their work. Members will turn in the most recently completed Spark Achievement Report when they have earned the next Spark Achievement.

Who do members work with?

- ❖ Sparks: work individually with a 4-H adult volunteer or teen leader as a mentor.
- ❖ Community service activities are done at the club level with other members.

How do members get their Rank Achievement Awards ?

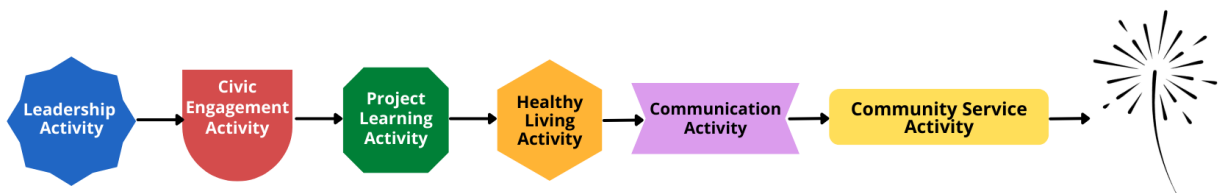
- ❖ Members complete the forms and requirements of the achievement level they are working on and when completed, turn it into a 4-H adult volunteer. A teen leader may act as a mentor who can review and approve the Spark Achievements Reports. All other levels should be reviewed by a 4-H adult volunteer or staff member.
- ❖ The 4-H unit (club, camp, etc.) schedules when pins are awarded.

Pins are ordered using the All Action Pin Order form in the regular pin ordering time frames every spring and fall. Forms are available from the County 4-H Office, typically in October and March.

Earning Your Spark Achievements



Overview



The Spark Achievement levels are intended to provide new members with an introduction to 4-H and to help members through the discovery process to identify a member's spark(s). A spark is something you're passionate about; it really fires you up and gives you joy and energy. A spark comes from deep inside of you and is an important part of who you are. A spark may be an interest, skill, quality or passion. Your spark is also something you use to make a positive difference in the world. It might be anything from playing a musical instrument to rebuilding antique cars, from leading a 4-H project to caring for animals at a shelter. Your spark can also be a way of being in the world, like kindness, happiness, or mindfulness.

It can be something that you don't think you're very good at yet—being good at it isn't what's important—it's how you feel when you're doing it that matters.

Helping youth see the potential within themselves is central to youth development work. For more information, go to <http://4h.ucanr.edu/Projects/>.

Key points to remember:

- ❖ Members may earn more than one level per program year.
- ❖ Activities/Items can be completed in any order but may not be repeated within a category.
- ❖ One activity/item may count in more than one category, but not more than twice.
- ❖ The form is cumulative, and if the member has completed more items than are needed for the current level, they can use the extra items to earn a future level.
- ❖ Members can potentially earn four pins, one for each level of Spark Achievement.
- ❖ Since this is a cumulative form, we recommend to keep the same copy year to year.
- ❖ As part of the Spark Achievements, members will complete a community service activity to earn each Spark Achievement level.
- ❖ Upon completion of the Spark Achievements, members will identify their [spark\(s\)](#).

What Is a Spark Achievement?

- ❖ A Spark Achievement reflects a member’s experiences in 4-H.
 - They are designed for the target age range 9-10 year olds, although anyone can earn them.
- ❖ Members must complete all 4 levels of Spark Achievements to be eligible to work on the Emerald Star Rank. Intermediate members can work on completing all 4 levels of the Spark Achievements and Emerald Star I at the same time. Senior members that are new to 4-H must complete one Spark Achievement level.
- ❖ Members earn a series of pins that shows others they have achieved each level. Most 4-H members choose to wear these pins on their 4-H hat.
- ❖ Spark Achievement pins show member experiences and accomplishments in 4-H.
- ❖ There are four levels of Spark Achievements.
- ❖ We designed the pins to group together on the hat.

What do members need to do?

1. **Choose a Spark Achievement Report to use.** There are two versions of the Spark Achievement Report:
 - a. Google Sheets: coming soon
 - b. Google Docs: <https://bit.ly/SparkChart2>

Note: If the member uses the Google Sheets or Google Docs version, the link will ask if the member would like to make a copy. The member should click “Make a Copy,” and it

will open a document that belongs to the member alone. The member can then edit or print from there.

2. **Members complete their units' (community club, spin club, camp, etc.) community service activity.**

3. **Members fill out their Spark Achievement Report** as they complete activities throughout the program year.
 - a. To earn one level of Spark Achievement, a member must complete ONE activity in each category. Members are expected to complete one community service activity offered by the unit, to earn each level. Members may earn more than one level in a program year, as long as they have completed the requisite number of activities in each category.

For example: To earn TWO levels in one program year, a member would need to complete two leadership activities, two civic engagement activities, two project learning activities, two healthy living activities, two communication activities and two community service activities.
 - b. Items within each category cannot be completed more than once for credit.
 - c. Activities must be completed in 4-H unless otherwise stated as “outside of 4-H.”
 - d. Activities may be counted in up to two **different** categories if they meet the requirements in each respective category.

For example: If a member gives a presentation on a topic related to a project they are in, and that presentation follows the Presentation Manual guidelines, that one presentation may count under both leadership **and** project learning.
4. When the Spark Achievement Report is completed for each level, follow the instructions from your unit leader on when and how to turn it in. The pin award schedule is determined by the 4-H unit or 4-H adult volunteers.
5. To obtain your fourth level, members identify their spark(s).

The Sparks Achievement Report is meant to be kept and added to over a period of time. Members are instructed to keep a copy of the Spark Achievement Report. However, it may be beneficial for 4-H adult volunteers to keep an extra copy just in case.

How do members complete the annual community service activity?

- ❖ Most likely, you hear each month at your 4-H unit meeting about service as it is a part of the 4-H pledge we all learn. Community service projects are an opportunity for youth to develop a sense of pride and ownership for the community in which they live. Additionally, community service allows youth to learn the value of giving back to the community while working with adults and helping others at the same time. More information about community service activities can be found at <http://4h.ucanr.edu/files/260039.pdf>.
- ❖ The community service activity requirement must be done in a group. Units organize community service activities, often at unit meetings. Sometimes, community service activities are organized countywide or through a project, or even a smaller group of members. Examples: sock drive, holiday caroling, writing letters or cards to military service members.
- ❖ To obtain a Spark Achievement level, the member needs to participate in at least one unit community service activity. As the member becomes more experienced, the member could also participate by planning or organizing a group community service activity with others.

Spark Achievement Report Activities

Leadership Activity

- Serve on a 4-H committee at any level.
- Lead a 4-H group activity.
- Be a 4-H officer.
- Enroll and participate in a leadership project at any level.
- Attend a 4-H leadership conference, workshop, or training at any level.
- Be a junior or teen leader (if 11 years or older).

Civic Engagement Activity

- Visit (virtually or in person) a place of historical significance to your community.
- Participate in a 4-H community service donation drive that benefits a community organization outside of 4-H.
- Learn about your local (city or county) government and how it works.
- Give a talk inside or outside of 4-H, about something you learned in a 4-H community service or civic engagement or civic education experience.
- Participate in a 4-H sponsored or organized civic engagement activity or event.

Project Learning Activity

- Complete two 4-H projects each of which is at least six hours of educational experience.
- Participate in a 4-H judging contest or junior judging contest at any level.
- Create a flyer, poster, video, or slideshow for a 4-H project skill that teaches the reader something you learned in the project.
- Give a talk at any level about something you learned in your 4-H project(s).
- Participate in a 4-H event or activity that demonstrates your project knowledge to an audience, judge or evaluator.

Healthy Living Activity

- Complete an activity that explores healthy nutrition inside or outside of 4-H.
- Complete an activity that explores physical activity and fitness inside or outside of 4-H.
- Complete an activity that explores social and emotional wellness inside or outside of 4-H.
- Participate in a 4-H Healthy Living event at any level.
- Be involved in an activity outside of 4-H that requires at least 25 hours of active participation and shows you are connected to your community.

Communication Activity

- Give a 4-H presentation that follows the 4-H Presentation Manual.
- Write an article or blog post for a 4-H publication or about 4-H.
- Give an 4-H event or project report at any 4-H meeting at any level.
- Write a thank-you letter to someone that supports 4-H.
- Make a video that promotes 4-H to the community.
- Appear as a guest representing 4-H for radio or television.

Community Service Activity

- In order to earn a Spark Achievement, the member must complete at least one 4-H unit community service activity with others. Examples: canned food drive, holiday caroling, cards or letters to military service members.

About Project Learning Activity

- ❖ For all activities in this category, members must be enrolled in the project which they are using to record an activity. For example: if they demonstrate knowledge of embroidery to an audience, they must be enrolled in an embroidery project during the same year that they are recording the activity.
- ❖ Keep track of hours in the [Annual Project Report \(APR\)](#).

About Civic Engagement Activity

- ❖ **Community Service Activity:** Record events and activities that serve the common good in the interest of the community or members of the community.
 - **Examples:** canned food drive, beach cleanup, clothes drive, convalescent home visit (this is not an exhaustive list).
- ❖ **Civic Engagement and Civic Affairs:** Record events and activities in which you are engaging in one of the following categories as a part of your 4-H experiences:
 - **Civic Engagement**
Advocacy, activism, and discussion on issues in the community that are of interest to the citizens of the community.
 - **Civic Education**
Learn about government principles, processes, and structures; personal roles and responsibilities; history and cultural heritage; global understanding
 - **Examples:** attend a training about any level of government; understand how Robert's Rule of Order or Democratic Rules of Order are followed in meetings; understand/discuss the pros and cons of a current affair in your school or community; give a talk about how your spark can make a positive difference in the world (this is not an exhaustive list).

About Communication Activity

- ❖ To be counted as a presentation, you must meet the requirements in the [State 4-H Presentation Manual](#).

Spark Achievements Report Example Document

If you have questions or need clarification while working on your Spark Achievement Report, see this [filled out example version](#) of a member working on their Spark Achievements.

Record Books for Achievement Program

A complete Record Book includes...

	Spark Achievements
Cover Page	✓
Table of Contents	✓
Achievement Rank Forms	✓
My 4-H Story	✓
Annual Project Report with Expression Page	✓
4-H Resume (Senior)	✓

Cover Page (one 8.5 x 11 inch page)

- ❖ Full Name
- ❖ 4-H Unit (club, camp, etc)
- ❖ County Name
- ❖ Program Year
- ❖ Graphics/artwork is acceptable, not required

Table of Contents

- ❖ Follow the order as specified for each achievement
- ❖ Number pages

Spark Achievement:

- ❖ Spark Achievements Report: Place in front and add to over time. No need for new copies annually.
- ❖ My 4-H Story: Junior: 250 - 500 words or 1-2 minutes video/audio; Intermediate and Senior: 500 - 1000 words or 2-4 minutes video/audio
- ❖ Annual Project Report(s) + related Expression Page(s): At least one APR must be included. Encourage members to complete one for each project in which they are enrolled.
- ❖ Senior Members: 4-H Resume

Achievements may be earned and awarded at any time during the program year. Members may submit the achievement report without submitting a full Record Book. Record Book evaluations and competitions are a separate activity from the Achievement Program. It is up to the unit to decide when to review achievement records and award recognition items.

My 4-H Story Instructions

Your 4-H story is an opportunity to reflect on your 4-H experiences that focus on the current 4-H year. Your story can be printed on both sides and should meet these *minimum* word counts. Do not write more than 2000 words.

- ❖ Junior: 250 - 500 words or 1-2 minutes video/audio;
- ❖ Intermediate and Senior: 500 - 1000 words or 2-4 minutes video/audio

Follow these formatting guidelines:

- ❖ Double space.
- ❖ Print single OR double sided, you choose.
- ❖ Use an easy-to-read font such as Times New Roman or Garamond.
- ❖ Keep the text size between 12 point and 14 point.

The following may help in developing your story:

Pick a theme and build the story around that theme so the story flows naturally. If you are having trouble developing a theme, you may use the following questions to help think about what to say.

(Senior members submitting a book to the State Competition, focus your story on Parts 3 & 4.)

Part 1 - About You

- ❖ What might be one of your Sparks: interests or passions?
- ❖ What are your plans for the future?

Part 2 – 4-H Projects and Activities

- ❖ What goals did you set in your projects and which ones did you reach?
- ❖ What would you do differently if you were to try it again?
- ❖ What skills have you learned in 4-H?
- ❖ How have you handled financing your projects, if needed?
- ❖ Who was especially helpful to you? How?

Part 3 – Leadership and Civic Engagement

- ❖ How has 4-H helped you become a better leader and citizen?
- ❖ What types of civic engagement projects or leadership roles have you been involved in?
- ❖ How did you work with others to contribute to your community or your school?

- ❖ What have you learned from working with other 4-H'ers through your leadership positions?

Part 4 – 4-H's Impact on You

- ❖ What kinds of relationships have you had with your 4-H leaders?
- ❖ How has your 4-H participation changed how you feel about yourself?
- ❖ How has your participation influenced your school and career goals?
- ❖ What has being a 4-H member meant to you?
- ❖ How has 4-H helped you identify your Spark?

Section 4: Annual Project Report (APR) Instructions

Projects are all about learning new things and teaching others. Each year you will participate in at least one project.

A minimum of six hours of project instruction or more, as required by the project leader, must be completed.

Completing this Section

- ❖ This section is used to document your specific project experiences
- ❖ Place items in the following order for each separate project:
 1. [Annual Project Report \(APR\)](#) form for every project you have completed.
 2. Expression page for that project, behind the APR.

Annual Project Report Form

- ❖ In the Learning Experiences box, record every project-related activity or event where you learned something new or developed a skill related to the project. Write about what you did, where you did it and what you learned or the skill you practiced. Be sure to list the hours of work you dedicated to that event or activity. Even if you and another family member did the same project, attended the same meetings, etc. you must use your own thinking and words to document what YOU learned. Just because a sibling learned something, you may have learned something completely different during the same meeting. (Evaluators notice if a book is word for word like another book. Copying another person's work is not allowable.)
- ❖ In the second, third and fourth tables in the APR:
 - List things raised, grown or improved, honors and awards, civic engagement and leadership activities and keep track of your expenses and income related to that project. To find the value of something you made, you might ask an adult volunteer to help you do some research to find a similar item.

You may not participate as a 4-H member in jackpot or prospector shows that do not comply with 4-H Policy. Participation in these shows should NOT be recorded as a 4-H experience or as an “Outside 4-H” experience. Events that do not comply with 4-H Policy may not be recorded in the Record Book at all.

If you are a junior or teen leader:

- ❖ And you are enrolled in that project, you will complete an APR
- ❖ And you are not enrolled in that project, you will not complete an APR.

Expression Page

Include one Expression page for each Annual Project Report. The Expression page must:

- ❖ Teach the reader something that you learned which was interesting to you
- ❖ How you built your Spark(s) through this project

The use of photos, drawings, graphics, a slide deck, a video or audio recording, and/or written documentation should demonstrate something that you learned, which was interesting to you, that you are now teaching the reader/viewer/listener. The design should be age appropriate and creative.

If the Expression page is a drawing, written words, photos or other graphic images, the page must be one side of an 8 ½” x 11” piece of paper. You may draw, write, use graphic design elements, or other creative elements, etc.

If the Expression page is a slide deck, provide the URL to the slide deck for viewing electronically or make a PDF of the slide deck and insert it into the record book. Slide deck slides are limited to 4 pages.

If the Expression page is a video or audio recording, provide the URL to the item. Videos and audio recordings should be less than 5 minutes.

Record Books, Evaluations & Competitions

4-H Record Book evaluations and competitions measure your achievements and growth in 4-H, particularly in the areas of leadership and civic engagement. 4-H Record Books may be evaluated at the unit, county and state levels.

The Purpose of Record Book Evaluations and Competitions

- ❖ Provide an incentive to record your project work and personal achievements

- ❖ Receive feedback and encouragement on your 4-H project skill development, leadership, and civic engagement
- ❖ Develop record-keeping skills
- ❖ Recognition for outstanding 4-H work

Unit Review/Evaluation

Record Books are usually reviewed and may be evaluated by 4-H adult volunteers and/or parents (this varies between units). If books are evaluated, it must follow the State guidelines for evaluation. Sparks Achievements are awarded at the unit level and may include a county review and verification process, which could be a different process than County Competition. An administration guide and forms are available to unit leaders from the County 4-H office.

County Evaluation

This level of competition is not the same in all counties, so check with your County 4-H Office to find out what your county does. If the County holds a competition, the State guidelines for evaluation and competition must be followed. An administration guide and forms are available to the coordinator of the county competition from the County 4-H office.

State Evaluation

Only Senior members may enter their Record Books to state competition. Members do not need to compete at the unit or county level to enter state level competition. All guidelines to enter state competition are found on the [state webpage](#).

Record Books are OPTIONAL!

It is not necessary to complete a Record Book to be a member in 4-H. If you want to earn Achievements, you must complete Sparks and Stars forms.

By 4-H policy, Record Books **may not** be required to:

- participate in any other 4-H activity or event.
- be elected as an officer or to serve in any other leadership role.
- be awarded scholarships at any level.
- exhibit at fairs.

Your Record Book is YOURS...

4-H Record Books must be completed by the 4-H member – that means you! This includes completing forms, creating your 4-H Showcase (for Emerald and Impact Stars) and other records. In Emerald Stars and Impact Stars, your adult mentor should fill out the section for their comments and nothing else. Your mentor and other adults may assist by guiding, explaining, helping to compile information and proofreading, but they may not fill out the forms for you.

...And it Goes Where You Go!

4-H Achievements transfer from one California county to other counties.

Autographs, please!

You'll need to get signatures on some forms from an adult mentor after they review the 4-H work you have documented in your forms. Signatures can be collected electronically.

Special Accommodations

The core values of the California 4-H Youth Development Program state that we “appreciate, respect and value diversity through a commitment to inclusion of diverse Californians.” If you cannot complete your Record Book in the standard format, 4-H is more than happy to accommodate you. Accommodations are made on a case-by-case basis. Speak with your County 4-H Community Education Specialist to make a request.

Questions?

If you have questions while completing your Record Book, ask a 4-H adult volunteer in your unit or county to help you. This Record Book Manual is designed for 4-H adult volunteers, parents and members and more information can be found on the State 4-H website.

Index

Terms to Know

Civic Responsibility

Civic responsibility means active participation in the public life of a community in an informed, committed, and constructive manner, with a focus on the common good.

Spark

All youth have a spark – a quality, skill or interest that they are passionate about—but they may not know it yet. A spark comes from inside of us and when we express it, it gives us joy. Sparks must be nurtured over time by caring adults with whom youth interact. A spark is something or a way of being that brings you great joy AND you use that thing to make a positive difference in the world.

Highlights:

- Sparks are the passions, ability, skills and strengths that are discoverable in all youth.
- Sparks are a catalyst for thriving.
- Sparks are a source of motivation (come from within a person).
- Sparks often change over time.
- Sparks are deeper than activities (e.g., watching TV).
- Sparks make (or have the potential to make) the world a better place.

Avoid:

- Using a spark as a label (i.e., a natural ability, talent or attribute)
- Excessive matching of sparks to career goals
- Referring to a spark as “something you’re REALLY good at” (you may be passionate about something that needs effort and persistence before you’re “good” at it)

Youth Adult Partnership

Youth-adult partnerships take place when youth and adults plan, learn and work together, with both groups sharing equally in the decision-making process.

Research studies indicate that successful youth adult partnerships require a variety of elements, including:

- ❖ Youth and adults share equally in the decision making process.
- ❖ Together, youth and adults achieve better results than either would if working alone.

- ❖ Roles for youth and adults are authentic and meaningful.
- ❖ Youth and adults learn together and serve as resources for one another.
- ❖ Each group is treated with respect and dignity by the other group

Resources

Information on Youth Adult Partnerships

<http://4h.ucanr.edu/About/Framework/YAP/>

State 4-H Presentation Manual

<https://4h.ucanr.edu/files/2193.pdf>