



In response to staff requests for guidance on minimum expectations for 4-H clubs, the State 4-H Policy Advisory Committee reviewed and updated the *4-H Club Program Planning Guide*. The guide provides core elements each 4-H club must follow to maintain their charter and use the 4-H name and emblem. In addition, there are expectations for good program planning to earn the “Club in Good Standing” status and charter seals.

1. **What is the purpose of the *4-H Club Program Planning Guide*?** Planning is an important life skill acquired in the 4-H Youth Development Program. The guide provides a checklist to meet University of California/4-H policies and expectations as well as to help clubs develop quality programming in the areas of Membership and Club Goals, Leadership Goals, and Community Goals. The guide can also be used as an annual program evaluation tool for each club.
2. **Is each club required to use the *4-H Club Program Planning Guide*?** The guide is intended as a tool to assist 4-H clubs in understanding and achieving their obligations of being chartered by the U. S. Department of Agriculture and obtained by National 4-H Headquarters to offer 4-H programming to local youth and adults. In order to ensure that each club is meeting the minimum requirements, it is important that county offices review the plan at the beginning of the year. In addition, county staff can be a valuable resource to support the club’s efforts in program planning. In order for a club to obtain a charter seal at the end of the year, it is important for clubs to submit their completed plans to the county office.
3. **How is the *4-H Club Program Planning Guide* used and who completes it?** The guide is distributed to all clubs at beginning of each program year. Clubs are encouraged to set goals for the entire program year. Clubs can establish a planning committee consisting of 4-H members and club officers to work with the club officer advisor or community club leader to help identify the club’s program objectives and goals for the coming year.
4. **Does the club membership need to approve the goals set by the planning committee?** The goals are presented to club membership early in the program year. Committees can be formed to achieve each of the planned goals. The club





officers should review the guide throughout the year with the membership to check on the club's progress and check off goals as they are achieved.

5. **What is a charter seal and how does a club earn a seal?** A charter seal is an award that acknowledges the accomplishments of a club. The club receives one point for each goal achieved. The total goals achieved will determine the seal award: 14 for Green, 19 for Blue, and 24 for Gold. To earn the minimum status of *Club in Good Standing* and a green charter seal, clubs must complete all of the minimum requirements in *Section 1* of the *4-H Club Program Planning Guide*. A 4-H club may also earn a higher level award by completing a total of 19 goals for Blue and 24 goals for Gold. The seal awards can be presented at the end of year awards ceremony.
6. **Who should review a club's program planning guide?** The completed guide can be submitted to various entities for review and support, including County 4-H Council, County Incentives and Recognition Committee, or 4-H staff.
7. **Can each county and club add their specific information?** The guide is designed so that each county can easily adapt it to meet their local needs. At the end of sections 2, 3, and 4 clubs have an opportunity to develop their own specific goals that meet the needs of its members, including goals for thriving and healthy living. For additional information on club program planning, refer to the **Club Officer's Manual**: <http://www.ca4h.org/files/4234.pdf>.
8. **What are the consequences if a club does not meet the minimum requirements to maintain charter status?** Clubs that do not meet the minimum requirements will receive notification from county staff and may, in some instances, receive a warning with a due date. A club that fails to meet the minimum requirements is considered non-compliant. As such, county staff should complete a *Request for 4-H Unit Change Form* (<http://www.ca4h.org/files/19872.doc>) and submit it to the State 4-H Office, which is the authority to change/remove a club's charter status. Noncompliance can result in removal of the 4-H club charter, dissolution of the club, and withdrawal of permission to use the 4-H name and emblem.
9. **If a club does not meet the requirements in Section 1 of the guide for *Club in Good Standing* status, does this mean it cannot remain a chartered club?** Meeting *Club in Good Standing* status is a desirable option, not a requirement.





- 10. What can be done to help a club that does not meet the minimum standards to retain the club charter?** It is important that clubs meet the required minimum standards. Otherwise, the club charter may be revoked. County 4-H Councils, County Incentives and Recognition Committee, and 4-H staff are resources that can be utilized to help clubs meet the requirements. If possible, enlist and train a few volunteers to help provide clubs needed encouragement and support.

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