



## Leadership and Personal Development Self and Group Determined Projects

A self or group determined project provides youth an opportunity to select, plan, develop, and evaluate their own project. Self or group determined projects are part of the 4-H leadership and personal development experience that emphasizes learning how to learn (called metacognition).

The self or group determined project is not an alternative for other project categories, but is intended to provide youth more autonomy and control, under the supervision of an adult project leader. In the self or group determined project, youth plan, implement, and evaluate a learning pathway (project) from beginning to end in a topic of their choosing.

The difference between a self and group determined project is the number of members. In a self-determined project, there is one youth member and at least one adult project leader. In a group-determined project, there are at least two members and at least one adult project leader.

What a Self or Group Determined Project	
IS	IS NOT
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ A project where a member(s) may take a more active role in deciding what they will learn, the activities undertaken, and evaluating their own progress.</li> <li>✓ A leadership experience for member(s) to plan learning goals, seek educational experiences, and evaluate their learning.</li> <li>✓ Topic areas may be from other 4-H project areas, because the self and group determined project emphasizes leadership and personal development.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✗ A miscellaneous or “other” category for a project that does not seem to fit into an existing project code.</li> <li>✗ A subject-specific project. While member(s) will choose a topic area, like agriculture, health, or technology, the emphasis is on leadership and personal development, not just about the subject.</li> </ul>

### Project Requirements

A self or group determined project requires planning, goal setting, and self-reflection so members should be:

- At least 9 years old as of December 31 of the program year. The self or group determined project is not appropriate for primary members.
- Have already completed at least one 4-H project.
- Under the supervision of a certified 4-H volunteer project leader.
- Willing to put in the time to complete the project which includes a minimum of 6 hours of learning experiences (the minimum to complete a project) along with approximately another 4 to 6 hours for planning, evaluating, sharing, and reporting components.
- Able to enroll in the Self-Determined (individual member) or Group-Determined (two or more members) projects in the 4hOnline enrollment system.



## **Responsibilities of Member(s), Project Leader, and Parent/Guardian**

The member(s):

- Establish objectives and goals
- Determine methods to reach the goals
- Determine a way to measure accomplishment of the goal
- Complete the worksheets

The project leader:

- Provide coaching and mentorship to the youth
- Identify needed resources
- Ensure the project meets the quality standards reflected on the project evaluation form at <http://4h.ucanr.edu/files/4780.doc>

The parent/guardian:

- Show interest and enthusiasm for the project
- Assist youth by providing materials, supplies, and guidance
- Support the project leader by providing transportation when needed



## For the Youth Member(s)

The self or group determined project emphasizes planning as an important learning component. In the following pages, you will read about the six steps in planning, conducting, evaluating, and sharing your experiences. There are blank worksheet pages for you to document your work. Review the plan with your identified project leader and your Community Club Leader at the beginning of the year and then share the final report at the end of the year. The steps include:

1. Choose a topic
2. Set project goals
3. Develop a plan to reach your learning goals
4. Carry out your plan
5. Evaluate progress toward goals
6. Report your accomplishments

### The Self and Group Determined Project is based on helping you Thrive.

- ✓ **Goal Selection:** Choose meaningful, realistic and demanding goals.
- ✓ **Pursue Strategies:** Create a step-by-step plan to make daily choices that support your goal.
- ✓ **Shift Gears:** Change strategies if you're having difficulties reaching your goal. Seek help from others. What are youth going to do when things get in their way?

### Step 1: Choose a topic

The selection of a worthwhile and interesting project is an important decision for you to make early on in the self or group determined project. One way to begin is to make an **inventory** of what sparks your interests, your needs, aspirations, and concerns. This inventory is not necessarily related to anything you are now doing or have done-it could include something new you want to do.

Before you make the inventory, review these definitions:

- An **interest** is something that sparks your feelings and gains your attention or curiosity. A spark is something you are passionate about; it really fires you up and gives you joy and energy. It causes you to say, "I'd like to do that!"
- An **aspiration** is a strong wish, something you long for or seek to attain. It makes you think, "I really want to try to reach that."
- A **need** is something that you, your family, or your community wants, lacks, or requires. You say to yourself, "Yes, I can see that it is necessary to do that."
- A **concern** is something that affects the welfare and happiness of you, your family, and your community, society, or world. A concern causes you to say, "I care about that."

- A. Make an Inventory:** List five to eight ideas that interest you. List ideas that are related to you and your ever-expanding relationships with other people: you, yourself; you and your home and family; you and your friends; you and others in your community, county, state, nation, and world. Include ideas or problems you'd like to investigate; something that you'd like to be able to do, find out about, or learn; situations about which you feel strongly; things that you think you need to do or wish you could do; ways in which you could be helpful to other people. As you work on your inventory, you may want some help and guidance from other people. For example, talk with friends, neighbors, parents, leaders, teachers, counselors, scientists, artists, craftspeople, business people, farmers, ranchers, homemakers, engineers, mechanics, dietitians, nurses, doctors, or dentists.



**A. Narrow your List:** When you have made your list, narrow these down to three ideas you might be able to do something about this coming year. Consider these things when trying to choose your ideas.

- How and where can you get information?
- How much is it going to cost?
- What benefit will this project have for me?
- What do you think you might be able to learn from it?
- What other people besides you will benefit from it? Should your idea be an individual project or should a group of people work together on it?
- What other things (such as your school activities) will you be doing which may affect your time, energy, how well you can do the project, cost?
- Do you have someone to go to who is willing to help and who knows something about what you want to learn?
- Would this help you decide your future career?

**B. Pick One:** Now, pick one of the three ideas which you will develop as a project. Circle it.

### Step 2: Set project goals

Now that you have your project idea, you need to begin setting realistic goals. You should set both action goals and personal learning goals that are meaningful, realistic, and positive.

**Action goals** might include types of things you would like to do in this project. They also might have to do with creating positive change in your school, neighborhood, or community.

**Learning goals** are about what you want to get out of doing this project. For example:

- Being aware of new knowledge, facts, information, thinking, or understanding.
- Strengthening skills, ways of doing things, actions, or behavior.
- Improving or changing attitudes, feelings, values, beliefs, or dedications.

### Step 3: Develop a plan to reach your learning goals

We all plan ahead; we have to. A plan is what we make ahead of time so we can do something we want in the future. For your self or group determined project, you need to set goals and describe ways you will go about trying to accomplish your goals. Identify and select or develop at least two activities that will help you reach your goals and record them in the worksheet.

Here are a few ideas for common project activities; however, yours may vary depending on your specific goals.

- Attend a clinic, workshop, demonstration or speech on a topic related to your project.
- Prepare a public service announcement for school, radio, television or the Internet on a topic related to your project.
- Help organize a club activity on this project.
- Prepare your own demonstration, illustrated talk or exhibit.
- Participate in county judging.
- Assist in setting up and/or cleaning up for a show or event.



- Help someone with his or her project.
- Help organize a workshop or show in your community.
- Encourage a friend to join 4-H and take a project.
- Teach someone something that you learned about 4-H or about your topic.
- Invite someone to talk to your club about your topic.
- Give advice to a member who is preparing a project for the fair.
- Prepare and exhibit a display promoting your topic or 4-H.
- Help organize a workshop about your topic.
- Invite a speaker to your club to talk about your special-interest topic.
- Help a younger member prepare a project for exhibiting at the fair.
- Organize a social event for your club.
- Volunteer to be a member of a committee in your 4-H club.
- Demonstrate something you learned to the other members of your club.

#### Step 4: Carry out your plan

#### Step 5: Evaluate progress toward goals

Satisfaction comes when you can see your progress or improvement. Evaluate your progress throughout the project. Progress is measured in terms of the goals you set at the beginning of your self-determined project.

**Recording Progress:** Here are some additional ways to record progress toward your goals.

1. **Take pictures.** Photographs and slides can tell a story. Take before and after pictures. Plan a series of pictures to show the steps or different stages in your project.
2. **Keep records.** There are many forms of records such as diaries, outlines, stories, notebooks, written reports, tables, charts, drawings, and pictures. Decide what best fits your project.
3. **Have samples, models, or objects.** Some projects lend themselves to growing, making, or collecting. These examples of what you have done provide evidence of your growth in knowledge, skills, abilities, and attitudes.
4. **Talk with people.** You can gain insights about your progress by discussing your project with people who are knowledgeable about it.

Whatever methods you use, consider these questions:

- What am I learning?
- How can you show the extent to which you are learning or accomplishing what you set out to do?
- How can you describe or show what you did?
- How can you show the data collected or the results of your investigations or work?
- How does your project benefit other people?
- Should you show how you used your time and energy?
- Do you need to keep track of the money you spent and received?



### **Step 6: Report your accomplishments**

Further satisfactions and opportunities for growth come from sharing what you have learned with other people. Sharing can help you summarize, analyze, and further assess what you are accomplishing in the project. Consider these ways of sharing:

- Workshops, programs, meetings, and committees.
- Exhibits, window displays, bulletin boards, and fair booths.
- Demonstrations, illustrated talks, dramatic scenes, and TV programs.
- Talks, interviews, panel discussions, and radio and TV programs.
- Newspaper articles and features in magazines.
- A self-determined project open house.