



Request for 4-H Program Fee Waiver/Reduction FAQ

1. What if a 4-H member cannot afford to pay the program fee?

The 4-H YDP is to be open and accessible to participants, regardless of their individual ability to pay. All brochures, marketing, or other communications of the 4-H YDP should include a notice of such. It is strongly recommended the [Request for 4-H Program Fee Waiver/Reduction](#) is filled out by the parent/guardian of the youth. Alternatively, parent/guardian of an eligible youth may also contact the county 4-H office to discuss the current local process for Fee Waiver/Reduction requests.

Sample Access Statement: The 4-H Youth Development Program is open to participants, regardless of their ability to pay. Program fees will be waived or reduced for eligible youth. Parent/guardian may complete the Request for 4-H Program Fee Waiver/Reduction or contact the county 4-H office to discuss request and confirm local process.

2. If a youth is eligible for a fee waiver or reduction what fees must be waived?

The program fee required to enroll in the 4-H YDP must be waived or reduced. This includes 4-H club/unit program fees, the county 4-H program fees and the state 4-H accident/sickness insurance and program fees. Additional fees to participate in other 4-H programs, events and activities, such as summer camp, leadership conferences, citizenship trips, horse shows, etc. are not required to be waived or reduced.

3. What if a 4-H adult volunteer cannot afford to pay the program fee?

4-H adult volunteers are critical to the delivery and success of the 4-H YDP. Counties may decide to subsidize the program fee for 4-H adult volunteers to the extent that resources are available. If a formal process is desired, the 4-H YDP staff and county director should refer to this document for guidance.

4. If a youth is eligible for a waiver or reduction of the program fee, who is responsible for subsidizing the fee?

Provisions will be made by the 4-H unit or 4-H volunteer management organization (VMO; e.g., council) to cover program fees for eligible youth who are unable to pay them. The 4-H unit may decide to waive rather than subsidize unit program fees. The 4-H VMO may also decide to waive rather than subsidize county program fees with approval of the county director or designee. State 4-H accident/sickness insurance and program fees will not be waived. It is recommended that members of the 4-H VMO discuss with county 4-H personnel and decide on a process for handling requests, including how the paperwork will be processed (e.g., where it should be turned into) and how fees will be subsidized (e.g., half from the 4-H unit and half from 4-H VMO).

5. What if a 4-H unit or 4-H VMO is unable to subsidize program fees for eligible youth who are unable to pay them?

When a youth meets eligibility for a reduced or full 4-H Program Fee Waiver, the enrollment fees MUST be covered by the county 4-H program. We encourage local staff and volunteer leadership to

strategize together around the development of a local funding plan to keep 4-H strong and growing. The California 4-H Foundation is a valuable resource with whom to partner in developing a local funding plan. It is recommended that the 4-H unit and 4-H VMO allocate funds in their annual budget for subsidizing program fees.

6. Is a [Request for 4-H Program Fee Waiver/Reduction](#) form required to be filled out?

No. Completion of the Request for 4-H Program Fee Waiver/Reduction is not required to be eligible for a fee waiver or reduction. Counties may opt to handle this process informally whereby verbal expression of need is sufficient. Use of the form is preferred as it helps standardize the process and provides a paper record for future reference.

7. If the annual household cash income is at or below \$52,5720 (see: 2024-2025 Federal Poverty guidelines), must the program fee be waived or reduced?

Yes, the program fee must be waived or reduced (depending on the family request) if the family requests this AND the annual household cash income is at or below \$52,720.

8. Where can I find the federal poverty guidelines?

The guidelines are released annually and can be found at: <https://aspe.hhs.gov/topics/poverty-economic-mobility/poverty-guidelines>. The federal poverty guidelines chart shows the household size used for determining eligibility for full or reduced 4-H fee waivers.

9. If a youth is eligible and a fee waiver in full is requested, may we give a reduction?

No. If the parent/guardian of the eligible youth is requesting a waiver of the program fee in full, the entire fee must be waived.

10. Can a youth still receive a fee waiver or reduction if they do not meet the requirements on the [Request for 4-H Program Fee Waiver/Reduction](#) form?

The county director or designee would be responsible for waiving or reducing fees for other situations and circumstances. The family should provide a written request to explain any extenuating circumstances to the county director or designee. Additional personal information or documentation may not be required by the county director or designee to make a determination. Such requests are subject to availability of funding to subsidize the program fee.

11. Can a county, 4-H VMO or 4-H unit establish income eligibility guidelines for a waiver or reduction of the program fee that is above the 2024-2025 Federal Poverty Guidelines amount of \$52,720?

4-H VMOs or units may not establish separate criterion for assessing need and eligibility for program fee waiver or reduction. As referenced in Question 4, state 4-H accident/sickness insurance and program fees will not be waived.

12. Can additional questions be asked to assess need?

Additional family, household or personal information may not be asked. A certain amount of risk is created when more information is required than is needed to make a decision. The more personal information requested, the more safeguards required to protect the information.

13. How long should the Request for 4-H Program Fee Waiver/Reduction form be retained?

After decisions regarding the waiver have been made by the 4-H Unit/VMO, any request for fee waiver/reduction paperwork received, must be submitted to the county 4-H staff for record keeping. The document should be retained for 5 years consistent with the [Record Retention Guidelines](#) for enrollment forms.

14. Can a 4-H VMO or 4-H unit place additional requirements on a 4-H member receiving a fee waiver?

No. There should only be one set of standards or requirements for membership regardless of an individual's ability to pay. Additional requirements, including but not limited to project attendance, event attendance, participation in fundraiser(s), 4-H record book completion, cannot be imposed as a result of receiving a fee waiver/reduction.

15. What is the process for other programs, events or activities where fee waivers or scholarships are offered based on need?

The [Request for 4-H Program Fee Waiver/Reduction](#) form should serve as the template for these activities. The only question used to assess need is the confirmation of annual household cash income is at or below \$52,720. Counties, 4-H VMOs and 4-H units may establish criterion above the Federal Poverty Guidelines total of \$52,720 for their activities and events only. However, this would not apply to the program fee.

16. What are the proper handling procedures for the Request for 4-H Program Fee Waiver/Reduction form?

If used by the parent/guardian, the form should be turned in by the family to the 4-H unit, 4-H VMO, or local UCCE/4-H office. The location to return the form should be listed on the form. The form should be securely stored in the local UCCE/4-H office and retained for 5 years. At each level (i.e., unit, VMO, county) the form should be held in greatest confidentiality and only seen by individuals as needed (e.g., club leaders, enrollment coordinators, officers).

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