



UW-MADISON EXTENSION

Wisconsin 4-H Policy Update for 2026-27

May 2026

Below are selected highlights from the changes over the past year to Wisconsin 4-H Policies. To review all Wisconsin 4-H Policies please visit: [Wisconsin 4-H Policies – Wisconsin 4-H](#)

4-H Name, Emblem and Records Policies

Wisconsin 4-H Charters and Annual Authorization (REVISED POLICY)

The 4-H Charter indicates that a 4-H Club or Group is organized in accordance with the objectives of the Wisconsin 4-H program. The University of Wisconsin-Madison, Division of Extension grants 4-H Charters which formally authorizes a Wisconsin 4-H Club or Group to use the 4-H Name and Emblem for educational purposes in accordance with laws and regulations established by Congress and the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

The Annual Authorization grants 4-H Clubs and Groups official charter status, allowing them to use the 4-H Name and Emblem. The information submitted in this document will be reviewed by the 4-H Program Educator and shared with the Wisconsin 4-H Program State Office.

Annual Authorization for 4-H Clubs and Groups

Wisconsin 4-H Club and Group Annual Authorization is due on **September 1** or an earlier date as determined by the 4-H Program Educator.

4-H Camp Policy

4-H Base and Outpost Camp Policy (REVISED POLICY)

4-H Program Educators must ensure compliance with the following minimum standards for 4-H Base Camps, except when other offices or organizations are responsible for compliance. A camp is defined as any overnight program held at a camp facility or campground. Camp programs are limited to a maximum of three (3) consecutive nights.

IMPORTANT: Because planning and implementing an overnight camp program involves a higher level of risk, PYD staff are required to follow all procedures outlined in the [Camp Planning Document](#) available on the internal SharePoint site.

High Risk 4-H Projects and Activities Policies

Food Stands (NEW POLICY)

Health Regulations and Permits: Any 4-H Club or Group operating a food-stand fundraiser (brat fry, food/concessions at a community event, etc) **MUST** follow their county health department safe food handling guidelines and regulations. Contact your health department for specific guidelines. If a county does not have a local food safety policy, you must follow the Wisconsin Department of Health Services guidelines.

Youth Participation in Food Stands: Youth should be assigned duties in the food stand that are appropriate for their age and development. Younger youth (ages 5–13) may assist with customer service, simple food assembly, stocking supplies, and cashiering under adult supervision, but may not operate cooking equipment, handle hot foods, hot grease, or power-driven machinery. Older youth (ages 14–19) may take on food preparation, cashiering, approved equipment use, and additional leadership responsibilities, while still complying with applicable child labor laws and safety requirements. All youth must work under appropriate adult supervision and may not perform hazardous tasks.

Financial Requirements: 4-H Food Stand operations must follow [Wisconsin 4-H Financial Management Policies](#).

SERVSAFE Certification Requirements:

- Every 4-H food stand that is operated for 4 or more consecutive days must have at least one staff member or volunteer with a **minimum** of [SERVSAFE Food Handler certification](#) and ensure safe food handling practices are followed. The SERVSAFE Food Handler certification is valid for 5 years. Please refer to the [Wisconsin DATCP website](#) for an up-to-date listing of certification course options.
- 4-H volunteers must post a copy of their SERVSAFE Food Handler certification in a visible location at the food stand.

Alcoholic Beverages: No alcoholic beverages can be served or sold at 4-H food stands.

4-H Overnight Programs and Activities Policy (NEW POLICY)

Due to the increased level of risk, supervision requirements, and logistical planning associated with overnight programs and activities, all volunteer-led 4-H overnight events must receive prior approval from a 4-H Program Educator.

Approval must be obtained before any planning is finalized or commitments are made. 4-H volunteers are responsible for sharing all necessary details for review, including but not limited to: event purpose, location, dates, supervision plans, safety protocols, emergency procedures, and participant accommodations.

This policy is intended to ensure the safety and well-being of all participants, compliance with organizational standards, and appropriate risk management practices. Failure to obtain proper approval may result in cancellation of the event.

4-H Financial Management Policies

Paying Volunteers, Independent Contractors or Guest Speakers (NEW POLICY) Fall 2026

4-H volunteers may not receive payment beyond reimbursement for approved, actual expenses incurred while performing their authorized volunteer role. 4-H Volunteers serve without compensation. Any payment beyond reimbursement of allowable expenses is prohibited.

Volunteers may be reimbursed for reasonable, pre-approved, and documented expenses directly related to their 4-H volunteer role. Reimbursements must:

- Be for actual expenses incurred
- Be properly documented with receipts or required records
- Be approved according to established 4-H Club or Group procedures

Reimbursement does not constitute compensation.

A 4-H Club or Group may hire an independent contractor or pay a guest speaker. For more information, please review the [Paying Individuals Tip Sheet](#).

Leaders Organization Treasurer Position: The only exception to this policy is that, due to the size, scope and continuous (year round) financial activities in some 4-H Leader Organizations, a treasurer may receive a nominal payment of not more than \$10 per week, not to exceed \$500 total annually, regardless of the funding source. Individuals serving in this role would retain their volunteer status.

Health and Safety Policies

Health Coordinator (NEW POLICY) Fall of 2026

The [Health Coordinator](#) role provides leadership for the health and safety needs of participants and works cooperatively with youth and adult volunteers in providing a safe event for youth.

All Health Coordinators must be registered for each event or activity with the State Office. Registration must be completed prior to the start date of the event or activity by an Educator or Specialist and include the following:

Health Coordinators must submit documentation that they are a physician, registered nurse, physician assistant, practical nurse, National Athletic Trainers' Association certified trainer or an emergency medical services practitioner OR that the individual completed the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction's online course, "Medication Administration Principles," and passed the assessment.

AND

Health Coordinators must submit documentation of current certification by the American Red Cross or American Heart Association in First-Aid, basic CPR and AED.

More information can be found on the [Health Coordinator Resources](#) webpage.