The Basics of NC 4-H Project Records

***Definitions:***

**4-H Project** - All of the cool things you do in a year, generally centered around one topic.

**Topic** - the centralized theme for your annual activities.

Whatever the topic, it falls within one of the 4-H Curriculum Categories:

Animal Science

Citizenship & Civic Education

Communication & Expressive Arts

Family & Consumer Sciences

Environmental Sciences

Healthy Lifestyles

Personal Development & Leadership

Plant Science

Science & Technology

*Choosing your topic:* Your topic can be anything. It is generally best if you pick your topic at the beginning of the year and build experiences upon it. Alas, since project record books are not due until the end of the year, topics are often picked post-completion of activities. Next year, try to pick your topic first and then seek out 4-H and other opportunities to build your project!

You can do multiple projects or combine all of your activities into one. If you did some cooking, some painting and raised some chickens, you could separate them into a Healthy Lifestyles, Communication & Expressive Arts and an Animal Science project, or you could merge them all together into a Personal Development & Leadership project, especially if you helped teach others about what you did.

**Project Guide/Curriculum Guides** - these are purchased workbooks/activity guides that help you explore more opportunities with your 4-H project. 4-H project guides are available at Shop 4-H, while many other guides are available online. These are not required to complete a project. They can be useful when explore a topic on your own or as a group so you don’t have to spend time researching activities to do. They are not localized, however, and your 4-H agent, club leaders and members will be your best resources for local activities related to your project.

**Project Record/Record Books** - These are the report forms used by NC 4-H to ensure that youth compete on a standardized form. Youth ages 9-13 complete 7 sections while youth 14-18 complete 10. Cloverbuds ages 5-8 may use local forms. See your 4-H agent for these. Completing a Project Record is not required to be a 4-H’er, however, it is an integral part of the 4-H experience. These records allow youth to showcase annual achievements, while serving as records over long time periods that can be used for future award recognitions and scholarships.

\*\*\*Project Records may be typed on separate paper in similar format to forms, typed directly in the form or neatly handwritten. See submission guidelines for covers and folders suggestions.



Project Record Form Parts & Recommendations

\*\*If doing more than one record, only your Project Focus section and the Supporting Materials section need to be different. You can use the same for every other section - make sure to include everything from all projects!

1. **Personal Information**

Fill this section out completely. Make sure to have your parent, club leader and county agent sign these. Don’t forget to fill out reflection and suggestion sections.

1. **My 4-H Story**

This is your entire 4-H story. A bit of your 4-H history, a bit about yourself, and an in depth description of your projects for the year (all of them). Include all 4-H activities and any non 4-H activities that pertain to your projects. Include an introduction, at least 3 supporting paragraphs and a conclusion. Can only be 4 pages. See guidelines for suggestions. Feel free to reuse and edit from year to year. Eventually this will be a great college entrance or scholarship essay!

1. **Project Focus\*\***

List ALL of the things you did pertaining to ONLY THIS PROJECT TOPIC. **This is the most important part of your project** so take the time to add details and showcase what you have learned. Include dates. You can use bullet statements, list or chart.

1. **Leadership/Citizenship/Community Service**

This is the only difference between the junior and senior 4-H’ers. Juniors can enter it all on one chart, seniors have three different sections giving them ten in all. Follow the example for how to list and identify. Data is very important here. Showcase your reach! Make sure to include ALL opportunities, including club work for all project areas and elsewhere. You may also include non 4-H activities if they are related to your project work or if 4-H helped you to prepare for it.

1. **Awards & Recognition**

Your time to shine! Include all recognitions and awards - though you will need to move things around if you are doing more than one project. Only include this project topic in the 4-H project award section. Make sure to include all of your other ones as well, just in the other section.

1. **4-H Photos and Supporting Materials\*\***

The fun part - everyone wants to make a big deal out of this section - just remember, section 2 and 3 are worth more points. See the project score sheets for details. It is fun to play with this section. Let your creativity shine through. You can use digital or printed pictures, just make sure to arrange them neatly, use pictures large enough to see and ADD CAPTIONS! Tell the story of your project - this should be mostly on your project topic. 

1. **Goals** - Keep them neat! Check out SMART goals to help write better goals.