

University of Kentucky, Cooperative Extension Service Clarification for 4-H Participants Who Are 18+

4-H Membership Policy: Any young person ages 9 through 18 may be involved in Kentucky 4-H in the county in which they live or go to school.

4-H Age: 4-H age is the age youth are on January 1 of the current program year. The Kentucky 4-H Program Year is September 1-August 31.

Some youth are 18 years old on January 1 or turn 18 years old within the program year, which means they are eligible to participate in 4-H. Legally, individuals are considered adults at 18 years old, their responsibilities change under the law. Therefore, these expectations are in place to protect all individuals engaged in Kentucky 4-H.

- 4-H members who are 18 years old or older during their 4-H membership are considered members of 4-H and are held to the same expectations and responsibilities of all members.
- Individuals who are 19 years old or older on January 1 of the current program year are not eligible for 4-H membership based on the Membership Policy and are considered volunteers. Therefore, they must go through the Client Protection Process based on their involvement and follow all guidelines and expectations of adult volunteers within the program.
- 4-H members who are 18 years old or older during their 4-H membership **and** have a leadership role with supervision responsibilities of other 4-H members must complete the Client Protection Process. Examples include leaders at 4-H Summit, day camps, etc.
- 4-H members who are 18 years old or older cannot be housed without approved volunteer/chaperone supervision with members who are under 18 years old. Examples include hotel rooms, dorm rooms, etc.
- 4-H members who are 18 years old during their 4-H membership are required to take the training to understand risk management in 4-H programming. This is available on Nearpod, *Module 10: Risk Management*.
- 18-year-olds shall not be assigned as the sole approved volunteer/chaperone when serving in a leadership capacity supervising youth overnight. This applies to all 4-H programming.
- Follow [University Policy E-14-2](#) and the [Cooperative Extension Manual](#) for transportation of youth.

Clarified: July 29, 2024

