

CHOUTEAU COUNTY 4-H COUNCIL

Constitution and By-Laws

Article 1 – Chouteau County 4-H Council

The name of this organization shall be the Chouteau County 4-H Council (CCC).

Article 2 – Source of Authority

The 4-H name and emblem are the property of the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) and identify youth programs administered by the USDA, through the Land Grant System and the Cooperative Extension System. The CCC has authority to use the 4-H name and emblem in accordance with the state and federal guidelines based on its affiliation and cooperation with Montana State University Extension (MSU Extension) and Chouteau County Extension.

4-H is a youth education program of MSU Extension, cooperating with the USDA and local county governments. The (USDA), Montana State University (MSU) and MSU Extension prohibit discrimination in all of their programs and activities on the basis of race, color, religion, national origin, creed, service in the uniformed services (as defined in state and federal law), veteran status, sex, gender, age, political ideas, marital or family status, pregnancy, physical or mental disability, genetic information, gender identity, gender expression, or sexual orientation.

The Chouteau County Extension Agents have the responsibility for the leadership of the 4-H program. The agents have authority in matters of conduct, discipline, health and safety in connection with the 4-H members and volunteers enrolled in the county.

Article 3 – Mission Statement

The CCC is an important partner of the Chouteau County Extension Office in carrying out 4-H programs. They assess the needs, interest and concerns of the county's youth, and assist the agent in responding with educational programs relevant to those needs.

The CCC will ethically guide the integrity of 4-H members to be successful in their projects and will conduct all Chouteau County 4-H activities in the same manner. We will be true, honest and forthright in all dealings in our community. We will set a positive example and encourage camaraderie among all those involved in the Chouteau County 4-H program.

Article 4 – Purpose & Objectives

1. Develop, maintain, and promote a balanced 4-H program.
2. Enable volunteers to help develop, evaluate and channel suggestions in carrying out the county 4-H program.
3. Cultivate channels of communication for the exchange of information between the 4-H Center for Youth Development, Chouteau County Extension office, volunteers and youth.
4. Provide and support opportunities for the youth of Chouteau County, stimulating greater interest in and raising the standards of 4-H club work, while learning life skills through participation in 4-H club activities, project work, educational workshops, competitions and leadership opportunities.
5. Encourage opportunities for 4-H volunteers, members and chaperones to attend and participate in district, state and national activities.
6. Promote and adhere to conduct that is moral, ethical and legal, and follow the 4-H Policies and Guidelines set forth by MSU Extension, Montana 4-H and the Montana 4-H Leaders' Council.
7. Establish guidelines and enforce compliance of regulations for 4-H participation in the Chouteau County Fair.

8. Examine and act upon issues and concerns expressed by the membership.
9. Provide opportunity for positive intergenerational learning and service to the communities of Chouteau County.
10. Promote 4-H members and clubs, recruit new members and volunteers and also help mentor the new members and clubs.

Article 5 – Membership

Council membership shall include all enrolled 4-H volunteers and 4-H members age of 14 and in good standing, regardless of race, color, religion, national origin, creed, service in the uniformed services (as defined in state and federal law), veteran status, sex, gender, age, political ideas, marital or family status, pregnancy, physical or mental disability, genetic information, gender identity, gender expression, or sexual orientation. Any member or volunteer enrolled in 4-H through the Chouteau County Extension Office is considered in good standing upon payment of dues and adherence to council By-Laws. All such members are eligible to participate in all council-sponsored activities. All such members and volunteers are eligible to participate in all Council-sponsored activities.

Article 6 – Voting

1. Voting Rights: Each Chouteau County 4-H club is entitled to cast up to four (4) votes at regular or special council meetings, but no member or volunteer shall have more than one (1) vote.
 - A. Members and volunteers “at large” shall have a right to two (2) votes, but no individual member “at large” or individual volunteer “at large” shall have more than one (1) vote.
 - B. Ambassadors are eligible to vote.
 - C. There will be no Proxy votes.

Article 7 – Officers & Elections

1. The Officers of the CCC will consist of:
 - A. President
 - B. Vice President
 - C. Secretary
 - D. Treasurer
2. Election of Officers:
 - A. Annual elections will be held at the second meeting in the fall of each year.
 - B. Terms of office shall be for two years.
 - C. An officer may succeed him/herself in office, but not to exceed two terms, or a total of four years in any one office successively. Vice President may be a candidate to succeed the president at the end of the term(s).
 - D. Retiring officers will be available to newly elected officers in an advisory capacity to aid in the transition of duties and responsibilities.

Article 8 – Duties of Officers

1. President – The duties of the President shall be to:
 - A. Preside at all meetings, appoint committees, and perform such duties as prescribed by the Council.
 - B. Set the agenda for the Council meetings, in cooperation with the County Agent and/or personnel. The President will not have voting rights at Council or Executive meetings unless to break a tie vote.
 - C. Serve as the chairman of the Executive Committee.
 - D. Have signature authority on all CCC accounts.

2. Vice President – It shall be the duty of the Vice President to:
 - A. Assume the duties of the President in their absence or in the event the President office is vacated.
 - B. Serve as chairman of the Awards Committee and an ex-officio member of all committees.
 - C. Learn the duties of the President and be prepared to follow the latter into office at the end of the President’s term if elected.
 - D. Have signature authority on all CCC accounts.
3. Secretary – It shall be the duty of the Secretary to:
 - A. Keep and maintain a record of the minutes of the meetings, call the roll, and submit the roll and minutes to the Chouteau County Extension office. Extension Office will email minutes to Council members prior to the next meeting.
 - B. Keep current records of all the current by-laws, policies and guidelines.
 - C. Have signature authority on all CCC accounts if deemed necessary.
4. Treasurer – It shall be the duty of the Treasurer to:
 - A. Keep accurate financial records, copies of invoices, bills, etc., relating to the funds and property of the Council. A copy of the check register, accounting for all receipts and expenditures, shall be presented at all meetings.
 - B. Receive, record and deposit all funds in a regulated bank or similar financial institution in Chouteau County to the appropriate accounts established by the CCC.
 - C. Pay bills and make other authorized expenditures provided for in the budget or otherwise approved by the Council.
 - D. Furnish financial reports annually at year-end and at such times as required by Montana 4-H. Financial reports should include a Statement of Financial Position (balance sheet) and a Statement of Revenues and Expenses (income statement).
 - E. Act as custodian of all funds and personal property of the CCC and keep a current list of all such property.
 - F. Prepare all financial records for an annual audit to be conducted in November by the Financial Review Committee.
 - G. Prepare and file in a timely manner all reports required by federal, state and local governmental agencies.
 - H. Have signature authority on all CCC accounts.
 - I. Serve as the Chairman of the Financial Review Committee.
 - J. All checks will be counter signed by a second Council member with signature authority.
5. MSU Extension - The Extension Agent serves as an ex-officio member of the Council and its committees. The Extension Agents shall have all privileges of a regular member, including participation, submissions of motions and voice, excepting the Extension Agent does not have a vote.

Leadership for the 4-H program is provided at the national, state, and county levels by MSU County Extension Agents, working cooperatively with parents and volunteers. 4-H advisory committees, 4-H councils, volunteer associations, and other organizations serve in an advisory capacity and give advice to the direction of 4-H program efforts. The authority to establish and administer such groups is held by Montana State University Extension personnel at the county and state level. The County Extension Agent has the final authority and responsibility for the conduct and leadership of the 4-H program in each county.

Extension Agents may have signature authority on CCC accounts, if deemed necessary.

Article 9 – Committees

1. Standing committees of the CCC shall be:
 - A. Executive Committee: The Executive Committee shall consist of the President, Vice President, Secretary, Treasurer, and the Extension Agents. This committee shall have the supervision over matters of general interest of the organization and may meet to attend to Council business between the regular meetings of the Council.
 - B. Financial Review Committee: At least two (2) Council members, in addition to the Treasurer, shall review the account books annually, set a budget sometime during September and present a summary of findings and/or recommendations and an annual budget at the November meeting.
 - C. Awards Committee: To review, evaluate awards and solicit sponsors. There will be three Council members, one of whom shall be the Vice President and the Senior Ambassador(s).
 - D. Chuckwagon Committee: The Chuckwagon committee will consist of one representative from each club. Anyone wishing to be Chairman of the Chuckwagon, must apply for the position, and will be decided on by the committee based on the application.
2. The President may appoint special committees from time to time to facilitate the working of the CCC.

Article 10 – Resignations

In the event of a resignation of any elected member, the vacancy will be announced before the next CCC meeting, at which time the vacancy will be filled by majority vote.

Article 11 – Removal

Any Officer or Representative may be removed from office by the affirmative vote of two-thirds of the eligible voters at a CCC meeting or special meeting called for that purpose, for conduct detrimental to the interest of the CCC and 4-H program, for lack of support for its objectives, or refusal to render reasonable assistance in carrying out its purpose.

Article 12 – Meetings

1. The CCC will meet the third Tuesday of September, November, January, March, May and July.
2. The Executive Committee may call special meetings.
3. Committee meetings shall be as needed.

Article 13 – Amendments

1. These by-laws may be amended or revised in part or total at any regular meeting of the Council, provided the amendments or revisions have been submitted and read at the previous regular meeting.
2. It shall require a two-thirds vote of those present to amend and adopt these by-laws.
3. By-law amendments become effective immediately upon adoption.

Article 14 – Review of By-Laws

1. The By-Laws shall be read at the November council meeting. They must be approved by a simple majority vote to remain in effect.
2. A copy of the current by-laws shall be available for review online or upon request from the Chouteau County Extension office.

Article 15 – Governance

1. The CCC will refer to the most current *Robert’s Rules of Order* for parliamentary authority.
2. The CCC will refer to the current *MSU Extension Montana 4-H Program Policies and Procedures* and the *Montana 4-H Councils & Committees* for guidelines.

Article 16 – Quorum

A quorum shall consist of three eligible voting members including at least two officers.

Article 17 – Majority

1. A majority consists of one or more over fifty percent (50%) of the members present at the meeting.
2. A business item must receive more than fifty percent (50%) of the votes to pass.

Article 18 – Dissolution Clause

If, for any reason, this Council shall be dissolved, any remaining assets will be given to the Montana 4-H Foundation.

Article 19 – Compensation and Conflicts of Interest

All persons associated with this chartered group are volunteers. No adult or youth will use their position with 4-H or the knowledge gained from their position in 4-H for personal financial benefit.

Article 20 – Whistleblowers Protection

To maintain the highest standards of conduct and ethics, the Montana 4-H Program will investigate any suspected fraudulent or dishonest use or misuse of resources. Any allegations of dishonesty will be handled with sensitivity, discretion and confidentiality to the extent allowed for by law. The 4-H organization will use its best efforts to protect whistleblowers against retaliation.

Article 21 – Document Retention and Destruction

The following procedures for the retention and destruction of records will be followed.

- Charter permanent
- By-Laws permanent
- EIN Paperwork permanent
- Minutes permanent
- 990 tax returns 7 years
- Annual and Audit reports 7 years
- Bank records 7 years
- Donor Records and Acknowledgment Letters 3 years
- Grant paperwork 3 years after completion
- Correspondence 3 years

Copies of all permanent records will be kept on file at the local Extension Office. The Extension Office in collaboration with the Executive Committee are designated to identify records that have met their required retention time and will oversee the destruction as appropriate by shredding.

Adoption

The officers and members of the CCC have duly adopted the above Constitution and By-Laws.

The 9th day of May 2023.

President Date

Vice-President Date

Secretary Date

Treasurer Date

Extension Agent Date

Extension Agent Date