



Michigan 4-H Advisory Groups

Creating a Strong Purpose Creates a Strong Committee

Every board, committee or council needs to have a clear purpose or objective to be able to conduct business in an efficient manner. Having a clear purpose helps the group stay on target when daily operations or different personalities and agendas steer them in a different direction.

The purpose statement should be clearly outlined in the by-laws as the second article. For example Article I: Name, Article II: Purpose.

MSU Extension's purpose is: Michigan State University Extension (MSUE) helps people improve their lives through an educational process that applies knowledge to critical issues, needs and opportunities.

Michigan State University 4-H Programs have a solid purpose which is: Our mission is to create non-formal, experiential, education opportunities designed to connect in-school learning with out-of-school time activities that help youth thrive in a complex and changing world.

These purposes provide a good understanding of why the organization exists and what its basic goals are. In addition to the purposes above Michigan 4-H also utilizes the [4-H Guiding Principles](#). A basic summary of these principles are:

1. Youth develop positive relationships with adults and peers.
2. Youth are physically and emotionally safe.
3. Youth are actively engaged in their own development.
4. Youth are considered participants rather than recipients in the learning process.
5. Youth develop skills that help them succeed.
6. Youth recognize, understand and appreciate multiculturalism.
7. Youth grow and contribute as active citizens through service and leadership.

The guiding principles help to define the goals and objectives of the Michigan 4-H program.

The Michigan 4-H Guiding Principles highlight the importance of youth involvement in decision-making in Michigan 4-H. Purpose statements should highlight the importance of youth development and youth leadership goals as well as county or project specific goals.

Some examples of a purpose for these groups may be:

Example 1:

The purpose of this organization shall be:

- a. To provide for and develop leadership opportunities for youth and adults.
- b. To encourage community involvement in the youth programs.
- c. To cooperate with the MSU Extension staff in
- d. To create and sustain the interest of youth in animal agriculture.
- e. To develop and support 4-H youth in their project areas.
- f. To coordinate youth educational activities around the project area.
- g. To encourage, educate and support 4-H membership in raising, producing and marketing a quality project.



Michigan 4-H Advisory Groups

Example 2:

To promote and educate youth and adults in the 4-H Pledge, the Michigan 4-H Guiding Principles, sportsmanship, horse knowledge and horsemanship. While encouraging leadership among members and provide adult support.

Example 3:

Purpose of this association- To support fun and educational activities for 4-H Members of Clover County in the area of (enter project).

Philosophy of this association-

- a. Committee members share common goals of teaching life skills, building self-esteem for youth and making sure that competition doesn't become the only reason for the program.
- b. Part of the Associations responsibility is to require good sportsmanship from our club members, parents, fellow leaders and ourselves as well as to help build strong healthy youth.
- c. Youth develop positive relationships with adults and peers.
- d. Youth are physically and emotionally safe.
- e. Youth are actively engaged in their own development.
- f. Youth are considered participants rather than recipients in the learning process.
- g. Youth develop skills that help them succeed.
- h. Youth recognize, understand and appreciate multiculturalism.
- i. Youth grow and contribute as active citizens through service and leadership.

Example 4:

PURPOSE: The Clover County (project area) Association's aim is to help our 4-H Members to:

- a. Develop life skills such as but not limited to leadership, initiative, self-reliance, sportsmanship, and other desirable character traits.
- b. Prepare for citizenship responsibilities through working in groups and supporting community projects and activities.
- c. Learn skills in (project area).
- d. Explore job opportunities in the (project area) industry.
- e. Youth develop positive relationships with adults and peers.
- f. Youth are physically and emotionally safe.
- g. Youth are considered participants rather than recipients in the learning process.
- h. Youth develop skills that help them succeed.
- i. Youth recognized, understand and appreciate multiculturalism.
- j. Youth grow and contribute as active citizens through service and leadership.



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Example 5:

Mission/Purpose: The mission of the Clover County 4-H (project area) Committee is to, in a spirit of cooperation:

- a. Actively promote, support, enhance and advance the interest and involvement of youth, their families and volunteer leaders by providing opportunity for self-development through educational, social and recreational opportunities related to the 4-H Youth Program conducted in cooperation with and by Michigan State University Extension.
- b. Aid in planning and development of the 4-H educational experience to increase the knowledge of its members as it relates to (project area) activities.
- c. Encourage community involvement and awareness with the (project area) and it's participants by providing educational experiences.

There are many ways to write a purpose, however, best practice is to keep it as clear and concise as possible. When developing a purpose always consider putting all 7 of the guiding principle into the purpose statement either as the simple list outlined in the beginning of this document or written within one of the bulleted items within the purpose.

Having a strong purpose is a great start for your 4-H clubs and advisory groups. However, in order for a group to really get off on the right foot they should develop a complete set of clear by-laws as well. For help on writing by-laws see the document, "Template for writing strong by-laws" and the sample by-laws document.