

Nebraska Transition to 4HOnline

Frequently Asked Questions

Updated ~~January 6, 2015~~ ~~October 30, 2014~~

Thank you for your interest in managing your local 4-H enrollment data! Nebraska is joining more than 19 other states with 2.9 million youth in using the 4HOnline system. While it might be tempting to worry that having families enter their own enrollment data will put you out of a job, in reality, your responsibilities are more important than ever. The method of collecting data is changing, but your job of maintaining and reporting accurate information about your youth program contacts remains essential.

In this digital age, there are higher expectations for real-time access and management of 4-H enrollment data; both by our clientele and those who fund our positions!

Why is Access shutting down?

National 4-H Council had been responsible for the development, maintenance and support of the ACCESS 4-H system. The vast majority of operating costs had been funded through corporate donor support. Support fees paid by counties and states accounted for only about 15% of operating costs. When corporate donations were no longer available to support the system, alternate sources of revenue were explored (including an event registration system). Finally, National 4-H Council announced in June of 2014 that it would scuttle the ACCESS 4-H system at the end of March 2015.

Why the Rushed Timeframe?

Ideally, we would not have to make this change. We all would have appreciated more time to make the transition. Unfortunately, with the ACCESS 4-H system going offline before the end of the 2015 enrollment year and the inability to import enrollment data into 4HOnline, we have to make the shift during the fall 2014 enrollment process. If we don't make the transition now, we'll have to go through the enrollment process twice this year.

We appreciate all the extra effort on your part to set up and implement this new system. We realize the capacity of your staff is limited and this will require all of us to spend time and effort we had not anticipated for this year.

We will still use the ACCESS 4-H system throughout the fall to complete ES-237 reporting for the 2014 enrollment year.

Who needs all this information?

The primary user of enrollment information should be the local Extension Office. It's a tool for you and your PDC's and your volunteer leaders to communicate with families, make programming decisions and measure your program's progress. As we get into this system, there will also be opportunities for event registration, volunteer management, and fair management. Your 4-H families will be able to manage their participation in multiple 4-H activities using this one system.

As a secondary purpose, the state 4-H program also uses this data to measure programming priorities and progress. It can be used for state level program management and communication. The information collected is also important to our funders and stakeholders at every level including the USDA through the annual ES-237 report.

What is ES-237?

The ES-237 Report is a federally required report to the United States Department of Agriculture on the demographic information of all youth reached through our Extension efforts.

ACCESS 4-H will be used to complete the 2014 enrollment year ES-237 report. It is critical that your efforts are accurately reflected in ACCESS for the 2014 enrollment year. The deadline to have your data ready for the ES-237 is November 1, 2014.

Webinars

Webinars will continue to be held on a bi-weekly basis through December, for those who are unable to watch they will be archived on the 4-H Data Management website. Face to Face trainings will be held in each of the four Districts on the following days:

Northeast- December 10

Southeast- January 27

Panhandle- January 29

West Central- January 30

Online Enrollment Logistics – Moving from Paper

There are concerns with allowing families to enter their own 4-H enrollment data online. These issues include; Internet access, accuracy of information entered, collecting information in a timely manner, and the ability of Extension offices to enter data for families.

Internet Access

Based on the experiences of many other states, Nebraska is moving to the 4HOnline system taking advantage of the capabilities for families to enroll themselves online.

Proxy Enrollment

For families who do not have reliable access to the Internet we are asking you and your office to consider some afterhours times or enrollment events which you and your staff could be available at to help complete the enrollment process. These do not have to be held at your office, but could be held in a high school technology lab or your local library.

E-mail Accounts

E-mail addresses are a required field, but a bogus account may be set up using domains that do not offer e-mail service such as: [familyname]@nomail.com. Since this does not host actual e-mail accounts, you won't risk sending messages to real people. Do NOT enter bogus e-mail addresses for @gmail.com or @yahoo.com type of domains since those may contain live accounts now or in the future! If families do not have a functional e-mail address they will not be able to receive information or password re-set information. You can edit family profiles to add a functional e-mail address or other profile changes.

Accurate Data

In previous years, families completed information on paper enrollment forms. The family will remain the source of enrollment information but will now be re-directed to an online form. There are basic contact and demographic fields which are required to complete the online enrollment process. Required fields are nearly impossible to enforce when collecting and submitting paper forms. Information such as "Years in Project" can be confirmed directly by families during the enrollment process. Previous enrollment systems could not track years in project as members progressed through multiple levels of a single project.

Reviewing & Editing Enrollment Data

Extension staff must review and accept enrollment submissions. You will receive e-mail notifications when enrollments are submitted online; Enrollment submissions are also located on your county's 4HOnline dashboard.

If a family submits an enrollment and staff notices an issue, they would send it back to the family with instructions on what needs to be fixed. If the family's record has already been accepted by staff, staff can still make changes (except for the electronic forms). The system **does not** alert staff of changes, but it does track and list all changes made where staff can view them. If there is ever an issue of something being edited, you can find out exactly who made the change and when.

Timeliness

Getting families to submit information will continue to be an issue. Families are notoriously late turning in paper forms for enrollment, entries and event registrations. Utilizing an online system will at least open access to your 4-H program enrollment beyond office hours and from

the convenience of their homes, schools, offices, or coffee shops, libraries or any place with Internet access.

Clubs, Junior Leaders or Extension offices could also conduct enrollment parties by setting up multiple computers, iPads or other devices and walking families through the process at one time.

Is there support for Spanish?

We have the capability to add Spanish instructions to the 4HOnline log in page if necessary.

How do we enter Volunteers?

Right now with the short implementation timeline, everyone's efforts are focused on youth enrollment. Volunteer screening **will be** addressed in future phases of implementing 4HOnline. While the system has many more fields and features (including a learning management system for training programs) we will need to match these capabilities up with the standard procedures used in Nebraska. Training sessions will address this vital area of volunteer management. For this year, please keep your volunteer information in a separate place such as an Excel spreadsheet. We hope to be able to add volunteers at some point this program year but want to have everything in place before we take that step.

Permissions – Who gets to see what?

The State 4-H Office will work with 4HOnline to establish an initial Administrator account for each Extension unit and county. Many of you have already appointed your local 4HOnline administrator and those accounts are being created..

Each Extension unit may give club leaders permissions to see their own clubs and even manage their own clubs if they wish. Project leaders may also be given permissions for specific projects. Those permissions can be revoked if necessary. Through their e-mail address and password, families will have permissions to view and edit their accounts as necessary. (With enrollments and reenrollments being accepted by local extension staff). How the family shares access to their account will be up to them. This access will become more important in the future if the event registration feature is utilized.

Projects

Each county has the capability to set one project selection deadline for all projects. Families will enroll in their projects online, just as they would on paper; the only difference is that families would be responsible for project add/drops instead of staff receiving the information to enter into the system.

Staff may easily determine when families make changes in 4HOnline by utilizing the Audit Search feature. This feature shows data insertions and removals, who modified the record, their IP Address and even the date stamp the change occurred! Staff may enforce electronic deadlines; it would be no different than refusing a late written or verbal request.

Each local Extension unit may tailor their project listings to fit their local needs. They may create project “aliases” if they wish to have county level only projects in addition to the state projects.

Local Extension units will be able to track participation years for junior project leaders, club officers, even camp counselors.

Data cannot be exported from ACCESS and imported into 4HOnline. Families will be able to indicate project years during reenrollment, but staff may modify this number and other data as necessary when electronic reenrollments are received. It is recommended that staff run an ACCESS report of this information to refer to; you might even consider providing this information to your families ahead of time to help with this process. Years of involvement will automatically increase each active participation year.

Clubs & Groups

Clubs, groups, activities, events, and awards in 4HOnline work differently than they did in ACCESS 4-H.

The state 4-H office is working with 4HOnline to create your community clubs, project clubs and other groups. Many of the details are still being explored with 4HOnline so specifics on how to use different types of clubs, groups, and group enrollments for military clubs, school enrichment and others will need to be addressed in future webinars and face-to-face training sessions.

How do Group Enrollments work?

Details of using group enrollments to track school enrichment and military 4-H clubs will be covered in training sessions.

Can 4HOnline Send E-mail and Text Messages?

4HOnline has a robust Broadcast E-mail feature! The same feature also allows you to send text messages to members and families that provide this contact information.

Mailing Labels

The 4HOnline system does allow users to print mailing labels. Details on using this feature will be covered in training sessions.

Event Registration

We will continue to use our current registration systems until we have a chance to learn more about the 4HOnline event registration features. This first year, the primary efforts will be focused on learning and utilizing the youth enrollment functionality of the system.

What kind of support will there be?

4HOnline support will be provided by Katie Pleskac in the State 4-H office. You may call or email her directly Monday through Friday, 8:30 am to 5pm.

What about Historical Enrollment Records?

You will need to export any necessary information from the ACCESS 4-H Enrollment system before the end of March 2015. Nebraska 4H recommends that you export a report of your 2014 members and years of enrollment along with a list of 2014 volunteers and their years of service as these pieces were the hardest to recover during the switch from 4H Plus to Access4H.

Multi-Household Families

Enrollment is family based, which centers around the youth members. Information for adults who live in the same household as the child can be listed as well as parent information for a second household.

Each household has a “family name” to mail to, which may be different from youth names and even individual parent names.

Since the 4HOnline account is family controlled, it is possible that a parent may not enter information for another parent. Staff could enter this information directly into the family’s account, but ultimately a parent could remove it if they wished. There is a feature Extension staff could utilize within 4HOnline to help in these types of situations. Staff can also create a note and mark it as “private” so that only staff can view it.

Creating two different family accounts for the same youth is strongly discouraged, as it will duplicate data. If this happens, 4HOnline has a feature to merge family profiles.

Use of Old Backtag Numbers

We did away with carrying backtag numbers which included the county identifier over when we began using Access 4-H and will not be incorporating that into 4HOnline. You will have to keep that separate at the county level if you want to continue using that format of a number. ShoWorks will renumber each youth for you, so if you did away with the county identifier it would actually be easier for you to print backtags at fair time!

4-H Member vs. Clover Kid

There is no way to differentiate between a Clover Kid and a youth 4-H member in 4HOnline. The State 4-H office continues to recommend that the first year enrollment pin is given in that first year regardless of if the youth is a Clover Kid or Member. We understand that it is going to potentially cause some questions but to make it the easiest on you and your office staff for accounting purposes, this is the best solution.

County Project Deadline

In 4HOnline, each county has the ability to set its own project selections deadline. If the county does not select a deadline, June 15th should be used as it is the deadline which youth must be enrolled in 4-H to participate in State Fair. Once the deadline passes for project selection, that members will not be able to add projects for that year, and consequently will not be able to enter projects other than those designated prior to June 15th in the county fair. The family can however change/add/edit personal information.

FFA Members and 4HOnline

You will not be able to track your FFA members which participate in your county fair in 4HOnline. This system is meant to manage 4-H members only and does not give us the option to create a club and not count it in the ES237. Katie will work with counties to get those participants into ShoWorks easily for fair time.

Online Health Form

The health form is still there, but is no longer required to complete before enrollment. If you as a county would like specific information please let your families know and monitor that on your own.

Online Payment

The online payment feature is still in process as the UNL Bursar's Office has been through some regulation change and is working with us and 4HOnline to resolve those issues as soon as possible.

Until the time when online payment is available please proceed with the handling of enrollment fees as you have in the past. We are asking Counties to send an email to families as they enroll reminding them of your specific fees. A sample email will be shared which counties can edit for their use.

As counties decide if they will use the online payment option or not, please be aware there is a way for families who are either unwilling or unable to pay online to select pay by check and continue in the enrollment process as if they have paid.

Schools in 4HOnline

Schools will be listed in 4-HOnline by county. Families should select the county they attend school in and their school from the drop down menu. If you have youth who are live in your county but attend school in another (for example live in Butler County but attend school in Shelby) those youth would select Polk County as the county they attend school in and Shelby will be an option to select. For out of state youth or homeschool youth, they would utilize the second option in 4-HOnline and type in the name of their school/homeschool and select which type of school it is.

How will the organizational leaders know who is in their club as the on-line registrations come in?

Organizational leaders will have to get that information from you as enrollments come in...since we are not putting volunteers in until later this year, there is no way to allow them access to their clubs right now. When they have been added to the system, counties can choose to give them permission to their club information in 4HOnline.