**Sample Constitution and By-laws**

Constitution and By-laws of the \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ 4-H Council

**CONSTITUTION**

Date Adopted

Date Revised

ARTICLE I

**Name**

The name of this organization shall be the 4-H Council hereafter referred to as Council.

ARTICLE II

**Section 1: Purpose**

The purpose of the Council shall be to fulfill the mission of the 4-H youth development education program of Nebraska Extension in cooperation with the Extension staff and the Extension Board. The University of Nebraska and the 4-H program does not discriminate based on race, color, ethnicity, national origin, sex, pregnancy, sexual orientation, gender identity, religion, disability, age, genetic information, veteran status, marital status, and/or political affiliation in its programs, activities, or employment.

The Council is organized exclusively for charitable and educational purposes including, for such purposes, the making of distributions to organizations that qualify as exempt organizations under section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code, or the corresponding section of any future federal tax code.

**Section 2: Mission and Philosophy**

The mission of Nebraska 4-H is to “empower youth to reach their full potential by working and learning in partnership with caring adults. The phrase “learning by doing” sums up the educational philosophy of the 4-H program. Young people learn best when they are involved in their learning.

**Section 3: Affiliation with Nebraska Extension and Nebraska 4-H Foundation**

The Council agrees to comply with all applicable Nebraska Extension policies and procedures governing Nebraska 4-H and agrees that the County 4-H Youth Development Professional has all necessary and proper authority to oversee the Council to ensure the Council’s compliance. The Nebraska 4-H Foundation is authorized to include the Council in a group tax exemption. The Council will supply all necessary documentation to ensure the Council’s inclusion in a group tax exemption.

**Section 4: Responsibility**

The responsibility of the 4-H council is to:

1. Secure and manage private resources and fund raising available to the 4-H and youth development program to support local programs.
2. Assist in planning and executing a well-balanced program for 4-H youth with both short- and term-goals.
3. Support local policy development, while understanding state and national guidelines for the larger program.
4. Serve as a community connector between the 4-H program and the Extension Board, Fair Board, Agriculture Societies, other youth organizations and the public.
5. Advocate the philosophy of the 4-H youth development program and serve as an advocate for youth.
6. Develop and maintain a vigorous active Council membership that works in cooperation with the Extension staff to have a strong program in the best interest of youth.
7. Provide a recognition program for volunteers and youth in the 4-H program.

ARTICLE III

**Membership**

**Section 1: Composition**

The 4-H Council will be made up of adult and youth volunteers who are interested in promoting positive youth development and will be representative of the demographics in the county. Members will be representative of different delivery modes and project areas. Members should have interest in Extension education and youth, and should represent all geographic and economic groups. It shall be determined on a nondiscriminatory basis without regard to race, color or national origin.

**Section 2: Number**

There shall be 9-12 adult members on the Council and 4-6 youth with adults and youth having equal membership of one vote. A simple majority of these representatives constitutes a quorum.

**Section 3: Term of Office**

Term of office will be three years for adult members and two years for youth members. Members of the Council may not serve more than two consecutive terms of office except to fill a vacancy. Three year terms shall be staggered in such a manner that one-third of the adult membership will be elected each year. Two year terms shall be staggered so that ½ of the youth membership will be elected each year. Terms will be based on the calendar year.

**Section 4: Elections**

An annual election will be held by a vote of the 4-H population. Council members will be elected for the upcoming calendar year.

**Section 5: Vacancy**

A vacancy will be declared if a member misses three consecutive meetings without requesting to be excused. Vacancies may be filled with a simple majority vote of the Council.

**Section 6: Role of Extension Staff**

The Extension staff shall be ex-officio member(s) of the Council and the executive committee, without the privilege of voting or holding office. Extension staff shall interpret local program needs, University and Extension policies, and state-wide programs. Extension staff will ensure the Council does not supersede any state/national policy but works in accordance with the entire national/statewide program scope and philosophy. Extension staff will serve as the local director of the program and has the final determination in policy and programming decisions.

ARTICLE IV

**Officers**

**Section 1: Officers**

The current officers of the Council shall be the president, vice-president, secretary and treasurer. Youth and adults are eligible officer candidates.

**Section 2: Term of Office**

The officers shall be elected at a predetermined annual meeting for a term of one year. Officers may be elected for a second term, but will not be eligible to serve more than two consecutive years.

ARTICLE V

**Executive Committee**

The current officers of the Council and one member at large shall make up the executive committee. At least one youth should be represented.

ARTICLE VI

**Fiscal Year**

The fiscal year of the Council shall be from January 1st through December 31st.

ARTICLEL VII

**Meetings**

Meetings of the Council shall be held as established by the executive committee. 4-5 meetings per year are recommended and established for the entire year.

ARTICLE VIII

**Committees**

Committees deemed necessary by the Council shall be appointed by the chair. The members of all standing committees shall serve for a period of one year, such period to be concurrent with the fiscal year of the Council. Ad hoc committee members shall serve in accordance with the charge to that committee.

Section 1: Grievance Committee - See policy handbook

ARTICLE IX

**Quorum**

A simple majority of elected members present at any regular or special meeting will constitute a quorum. A quorum is required to have an official business meeting. Without a quorum no voting can be done.

**ARTICLE X**

**Fiscal Operations**

**Section 1: Fiscal Policies**

The Council will follow all University of Nebraska–Lincoln Extension fiscal policies, as well as state and federal regulations.

**Section 2: Fiscal Year**

The Nebraska 4-H fiscal year is January 1 through December 31.

**Section 3: Employer Identification Number (EIN)**

If the Council handles money, it will obtain and maintain an EIN.

**Section 4: Required Financial Reporting**

The Year End 4-H Club/Council Treasurer’s Report must be submitted to the county extension office every year by the date established by UNL Extension. In addition, an annual IRS 990 filing (Form 990, 990EZ, or 990N) must be filed by May 15 for the previous tax year. The extension office will file 990-N. If the Council is not eligible to file a 990-N, the Council is responsible for filing any other Form 990.

ARTICLE XI

**Use of Club Revenue**

No part of the net earnings of the Council shall inure to the benefit of, or be distributable to its members, trustees, officers, or other private persons, except that the Council shall be authorized and empowered to pay reasonable compensation for services rendered and to make payments and distributions in furtherance of the purposes set forth in Article II above. No substantial part of the activities of the Council shall be the carrying on of propaganda, or otherwise attempting to influence legislation, and the Council shall not participate in, or intervene in (including the publishing or distribution of statements) any political campaign on behalf of or in opposition to any candidate for public office. Notwithstanding any other provision of this constitution the Council shall not carry on any other activities not permitted to be carried on (a) by a corporation or unincorporated association exempt from federal income tax under section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code, or the corresponding section of any future federal tax code, or (b) by a corporation, or unincorporated association contributions to which are deductible under section 170(c)(2) of the Internal Revenue Code, or the corresponding section of any future federal tax code.

ARITCLE XII

**Dissolution**

Upon dissolution of the Council, the members agree that all real property, including money, equipment and land, shall become the property of a The Nebraska 4-H Foundation with the approval of the county Extension Educator responsible for 4-H. The last official duty of the Council’s president shall be to transfer Council property and records to the Extension office. Disbandment of assets of the Council will be handled following the procedures outline in the Nebraska 4-H Policy and Procedure Handbook.

ARTICLE XIII

**Amendments**

Amendments to the constitution may be made at any regular or special meeting by a two-thirds majority vote of the elected membership providing:

1. A note of the pending amendment was sent to all members of the Council at least two weeks and not more than four weeks prior to the meeting, and
2. A quorum of the Council is present at the meeting.

ARTICLE XIV\_\_\_\_\_

**Parliamentary Authority**

Roberts Rules of Order shall govern the proceedings of the Council not otherwise specified in the Constitution.

The Constitution of the 4-H Council was adopted on (date) at (location.)

Approved:

President of the 4-H Council – date

Secretary of the 4-H Council – date

President of the Extension Board – date

**By-laws**

of the \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ 4-H Council

Date Adopted

Date Revised

ARTICLE I

**Members**

**Section 1: Selection of Council**

**Members**

1. The 4-H Council will be made up of adult and youth volunteers who are interested in promoting positive youth development and will be representative of the demographics in the county. Members will be representative of different delivery modes and project areas. Members should have interest in Extension education and youth, and should represent all geographic and economic groups. It shall be determined on a nondiscriminatory basis without regard to race, color or national origin.
2. The nominating committee will be the Executive Committee of the Council At least two candidates for each position on the ballot will be nominated. All nominees on the ballot must have given prior consent and be willing to serve if elected.

**Section 2: Council Elections**

1. Elections shall be held annually prior to the start of the calendar year in which they will serve.
2. All 4-H participants are eligible to vote.
3. Vacancies may be filled with a simple majority vote of the Council.

**Section 3: Duties of the Council Members**

1. Consider what is in the overall best interest of young people in promoting positive youth development when making Council decisions and recommendations.
2. Work in partnership and collaboration with 4-H staff hired to administer the program.
3. Regularly attend Council and committee meetings.
4. Represent community needs and concerns to Extension staff.
5. Volunteer at 4-H events and activities
6. Understand Extension goals, objectives and programs, and how they are decided and implemented.
7. Represent and promote Extension in the community.
8. Exert influence in attracting financial, human and public resources.
9. Share concerns and views fully with respect to all members
10. Support the final recommendations and decisions of the Council

ARTICLE II

**Officers**

**Section 1: Officers of the Council**

Officers of the Council shall be president, vice-president, secretary and treasurer.

**Section 2: Election of Officers**

1. Officers will be elected by the Council for a one year term at the first meeting of the year.
2. Nominations will be made from the floor.
3. Voting will be done by a paper ballot.
4. Officers shall serve until their successors have been elected and duly installed.

**Section 3: Officer Duties**

1. The president shall be the chief executive officer of the Council. S/he shall preside at all meetings of the Council, and shall chair and preside at the meetings of the executive committee. The president shall appoint the members of all committees of the Council. S/he shall sign all documents requiring the president’s signature and will work with Extension staff to formulate meeting agendas. S/he shall perform all other duties incidental to the office.
2. The vice-president shall perform the duties of the president in the absence or incapacity of the president. The vice-president shall automatically become president of the Council upon the resignation or death of the president. In the event the vice-president becomes the president, a new vice-president shall be elected to fill the vacancy.
3. The secretary shall keep an accurate record of the activities of the Council and its executive committee, shall issue all notices of the Council meetings, shall be responsible for the correspondence of the Council, shall prepare and keep a listing of all chairs and members of special and standing committees for the current and two previous years, and shall provide the county Extension staff a copy of all records of the Council.
4. The treasurer shall keep an accurate record of all monies allocated to the Council, shall supervise the disbursement of the funds subject to the direction and approval of the executive committee, and shall serve as chair of the finance committee.
5. The representative to the Extension Board can be any of the elected officers or another elected position as deemed appropriate by the Council.
6. Other representatives may also be established (i.e. Fairboard)

**Section 3: Officer Vacancies**

Vacancies occurring in any of the offices due to illness, death or other incapacity to comply with assumed duties shall be filled by election by council members except in case of president, when the vice-president shall succeed the chair. Such officers shall serve only until the next regular election.

ARTICLE III

**Committees**

Committee are established to research, study and provide valuable input to a specific action for the Council. Those committee recommendations are then brought before the entire Council for a decision to be made. Committees do not make the decision but suggest the expertise and input to the decision.

**Section 1: Executive Committee**

1. The functions of the Executive Committee shall be to:
2. Perform the essential Council activities that must be acted upon between meetings of the membership.
3. Formulate and recommend programs and activities to the members of the Council in consultation with Extension staff, for their consideration and approval.
4. Identify and help formulate other committees necessary to further the purposes and functions of the Council.
5. Serve as liaison with other groups and to the total Extension program.
6. Serve as the nominating committee
7. Serve as the county Grievance committee.

**Section 2: Finance and Budget Committee**

1. The finance and budget committee will oversee the financial condition of the Council and determine a yearly budget accordingly. Specific functions include to:
2. Report the financial condition and financial results of the operations of the Council.
3. Prepare a balance sheet and regular statement of financial activities.
4. Initiate an annual audit.
5. Determine the need of fund-raising activities and provide leadership if necessary.
6. Will take a role in the division of financial responsibilities – depositer, reconciler, etc.
7. The Council treasurer will serve as chair of the finance and budget committee.
8. The Executive Committee could also serve as this committee depending on situation.

**Section 4: Public Relations Committee**

The public relations committee shall:

1. Inform the public about 4-H through various media.
2. Develop community support for the 4-H program.
3. Get more people involved and increase membership in 4-H.
4. Assist all other committees in the Council with their public relations needs.
5. Assume responsibility for activities that promote the overall 4-H program.

**Section 5: Resource Development Committee**

Resource development committee shall:

1. Work with the Finance and Budget committee to assess financial needs.
2. Create and implement a comprehensive plan to develop resources to support and enhance 4-H Youth Development programming in cooperation with 4-H Youth Development faculty and staff.
3. Plan and implement resource development activities for 4-H program support.

**Section 6: Program and Activity Committees**

Specific program and activity committee will be formed to plan, execute, and evaluate components of the 4-H program in the county. Duties will be specified in committee job descriptions.

ARTICLE IV

**Meetings**

1. The regular Bi-monthly/Quarterly meetings of the Council shall be to conduct the business of the Council as outlined under Article II of the Constitution. More specifically the meetings shall be to:
2. Approve, reject, amend or refer back to the committee for further study reports from special or standing committees.
3. Introduce new ideas with requests for the chair to appoint committees to make further studies and report back their recommendations to the Council.
4. Evaluate reports of completed activities, projects or programs and make suggestions for improvement.
5. Discuss the fund development to support programming efforts.
6. Assess needs, generate program interest and market youth development program in cooperation with 4-H Youth Development faculty and staff.
7. Provide Council members information concerning the area, district and state Extension programs helpful to them in their efforts to address identified needs.
8. Approve and disburse money in support of programs supported by the Council.
9. Participate in educational experiences.
10. Special meetings of the Council may be called by the chair, the executive committee or upon request of any five members.
11. Written notice shall be sent to all members of the Council at least one week in advance of all meetings. Notice shall include the date, time and place of the meeting. (Exception-Amendment of the Bylaws shall require a 10 day notice.)
12. Each member (youth and adults) shall be entitled to one vote.

ARTICLE V

**Quorum**

A simple majority of elected members present at any regular or special meeting will constitute a quorum. A quorum is required to have an official business meeting. Without a quorum no voting can be done.

ARTICLE VI

**Amendments**

Amendments to the Bylaws may be made at any annual, regular or special meeting by a simple majority vote of the voting membership providing:

1. A notice of the pending amendment was sent to all members of the Council at least two weeks and not more than four weeks prior to the meeting and
2. A quorum of the Council is present at the meeting.

ARTICLE VII

**Parliamentary Authority**

Roberts Rules of Order shall govern the proceedings of the Council not otherwise specified in the Bylaws.

The Bylaws of the 4-H Council were adopted on (date) at (location.)

Approved:

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

President of the 4-H Council – date

Secretary of the 4-H Council – date

President of the Extension Board – date