



Chapter 13: Incentives and Recognition

I. General Principles

One of the main goals of the University of California 4-H Youth Development Program (California 4-H) is to provide a positive environment in which youth can grow and develop confidence, a sense of accomplishment, and a greater level of competence. This environment is created, in part, by the recognition offered to members as acknowledgment and affirmation of their growth, development, and contribution.

II. Purpose

The purpose of incentives and recognition are to reinforce the motivation of members and volunteers to participate, create and achieve in California 4-H; and to underscore a sense of belonging and being valued in the California 4-H community.

III. Definition of Terms

Motivation

Motivation is that which initiates and gives purpose to behavior. People are motivated by intrinsic and extrinsic factors such as a need for achievement, affiliation or influence.

Incentive

An incentive is a stimulus that creates a desire in an individual to participate, learn, or achieve. An incentive to participate in an activity exists prior to the activity itself, for example, the expectation of personal satisfaction or the expectation of a reward.

Recognition

Recognition is the acknowledgment and affirmation of an individual for completing a task or achieving a result.

Reward

A reward is a positive reinforcement that follows the completion of an activity or the achievement of a goal.

IV. Assumptions

The development of an incentives and recognition system in California 4-H should be based on the following assumptions:

1. The goal of the system is to help youth and adult volunteers attain personal growth and a sense of self-worth.
2. Adult support is an essential element for fostering learning, growth, and goal attainment by youth.
3. Recognition is most meaningful when it is presented immediately following a learning experience.
4. A system that provides a variety of incentives, rewards, and recognition is needed in order to serve today's diverse youth audience.
5. An effective incentives and recognition system will foster realistic appraisal of an individual's achievements. Sometimes this involves the recognition of temporary setbacks. However, a system that results in long-term disillusionment or a loss of self-esteem is inappropriate.
6. Intrinsic rewards that occur naturally from participation in an activity are most rewarding. When used wisely, extrinsic rewards can also play a useful and constructive role in the development of competence.

V. Criteria for Incentives and Recognition Systems

The following criteria should be used in designing an incentives and recognition system:

1. Orient all persons involved to the philosophy, purposes, and models of California 4-H recognition before beginning to plan the system.
2. Verify that every California 4-H delivery mode includes an incentives and recognition component.
3. Plan the system to be as comprehensive and inclusive as possible, while retaining its meaningfulness.
4. Adhere to UC and California 4-H policies and guidelines.
5. Keep resources invested in incentives and recognition proportionate to their importance with respect to other dimensions of the California 4-H activity.
6. Use appropriate publicity and promotion to ensure that all eligible members and adult volunteers know of all the available awards and recognition opportunities.
7. Verify that planned competition will enhance the learning experience.
8. Evaluate incentives and recognition against the objectives of the California 4-H activities to which they are applied, and adjust as necessary.
9. Ensure that all systems are consistent with the California 4-H Mission, Core Values, and Framework.
10. Ensure that incentives and awards programs are adapted so that members with disabilities can participate. See *Recommendations for Developing an Inclusive 4-H Recognition Program*.

VI. Incentives

A. Motivators

Incentives are motivators that encourage participation or achievement. They help a young person get started in an activity and see it through to

completion. The expectation of favorable recognition, formal or informal, such as from valued adults can be a powerful incentive.

B. Participation Incentives

Incentives for participation include the following:

1. The opportunity for social interaction with friends or new peers through trips, fun activities, Hi 4-H, etc.
2. The opportunity to learn new and valued skills.
3. The expectation of learning in a secure, stimulating environment, being led by caring adult volunteers.
4. The opportunity to teach others, e.g., younger members.
5. The opportunity to contribute to one's group and community.
6. The expectation of acceptance, encouragement, and informal recognition of one's worth from peers and valued adults.
7. The expectation of formal recognition for participation and contribution.

C. Achievement Incentives

Incentives for achievement include the following:

1. The expectation of acquiring a valued skill or body of knowledge.
2. The expectation of informal recognition of one's skill or worth from peers and valued adults.
3. The expectation of formal recognition such as awards or competitive achievements.

VII. Recognition

A. Appropriate Recognition

California 4-H encourages adult volunteers who work with youth to provide appropriate recognition to all participants.

1. Recognition for participation acknowledges that involvement in educational experiences is a first step in building a positive self-concept.
2. Recognition for progress toward personal goals enables youth to gain experience in goal setting and realistic self-assessment.
3. Recognition for standards of excellence achievements helps youth to measure their own learning experiences, using a set of external, predetermined targets.
4. Recognition in peer competitions is a strong motivation for some, but not all, young people. It is not appropriate for primary members (youth under age nine).
5. Recognition for cooperation helps youth learn and work cooperatively, preparing them to live in today's interdependent, global society.

B. Evaluation Models

California 4-H uses two types of evaluation models for judging.

1. The American (competitive-based; peer-to-peer) system ranks exhibits against one another and awards one first place, one second place, etc.
2. The Danish (standards-based, criterion-based) system compares each exhibit on its own merit against a set scorecard or recognized standard and awards as many first, second and third places as are merited.
3. Each system has places where it is most appropriately used; or a combination of both. The following play a role in determining which system will be used:
 - a. Are there educational benefits that make one system advantageous over the other?
 - b. Are there clearly defined standards and expectations that each exhibit may be compared against?
 - c. Are there incentives and/or awards that make one system advantageous over the other?

VIII. Record Books

A. Not a Requirement for Participation

4-H record books are a valuable and educational component of California 4-H. 4-H record books are not required for membership or for participation in 4-H activities such as club events and activities or for attending 4-H camps or conferences.

B. Notification of Expectations

The 4-H record book process must be based on educational criteria and approved by California 4-H staff. Notification of 4-H record book requirements must be given to the member at the time of enrollment. A 4-H record book may be required to receive participation awards (such as star ranking, medals or pins based on 4-H record book achievements).

IX. Recognition Opportunities

A. Promotion

Recognition opportunities should be promoted widely at the local level. This may be accomplished by conducting training and other education and outreach to ensure competitive and recognition programs are available and publicized to all members and adult volunteers.

B. Achievement Program

The Achievement Program is a voluntary advancement program utilizing a variety of forms to track progress and can be included as part of the 4-H member record book, and/or as a goal-setting tool, aimed at encouraging broad-based participation and achievement in California 4-H. The program is age-specific and is available for primary, junior, intermediate and senior members.

C. 4-H State Ambassador

4-H State Ambassador is one of the highest service opportunities and recognition attainable in California 4-H. California 4-H State Ambassadors

are youth who have excelled in the areas of leadership and community service and have been selected to serve California 4-H in roles that promote leadership through education and service. 4-H State Ambassador Advisors are adult volunteers who are experienced in working with older youth in a youth-adult partnership atmosphere.

X. Event Recognition

1. Many opportunities exist at the county, regional, state and national levels for members to be recognized at events. Many events recognize members through competition for project-based skills (such as livestock judging, poultry, and horticulture) while others allow for recognition of life skills (such as presentations, judging contests, etc.).
2. Some events require a member to qualify before moving on to the next level of competition (such as 4-H Regional and State Presentations). A minimum achievement must be obtained at a qualifying event before the member may exhibit at the next event.
3. California 4-H sanctions teams to attend National 4-H Competitive Events each year after teams qualify at the appropriate statewide event.

XI. Statewide Recognition Opportunities

A. Higher Education Scholarships

4-H Higher Education Scholarships are available for graduating high school seniors and college-attending students.

B. Awards

The 4-H Golden Clover Awards recognize outstanding achievement of 4-H members, adult volunteers, and groups within California 4-H.

C. 4-H Diamond Clover Awards

The Diamond Clover Awards is the highest achievement for which a California 4-H youth member is recognized.

D. State 4-H Record Book Competition

Senior members are eligible to pursue 4-H record book recognition beyond the county level for accomplishment within California 4-H. Record Book Competitions are focused on recognizing 4-H members who have outstanding 4-H record books.

XII. County California 4-H Incentives and Recognition Committees

Counties are encouraged to create a recognition committee to fulfill the following responsibilities:

1. Identify new methods of recognizing members and adult volunteers.
2. Create new recognition opportunities.
3. Ensure new recognition and competitive programs follow the principles of positive youth development, are open and fair to all, and meet the needs of youth in the county.
4. Analyze and evaluate existing competitive and recognition programs to ensure they follow the principles of positive youth development and California 4-H policies.
5. Conduct training and other education and outreach to ensure competitive and recognition programs are available and publicized to all 4-H members and adult volunteers.
6. Answer questions related to the incentives and recognition committee's scope of work.