

Why 4-H Record Books?

4-H youth (and guardians), pour sweat, money, and maybe a few tears into their 4-H projects each year. [Record books](#) are the 4-H program's way of documenting the sweat, finances, and challenges overcome. In an ideal situation, youth pick the project(s) they wish to focus on for the year and set goals. Goals can be related to breeding and raising livestock, showmanship, financials, skills, or community service. Youth then begin to work on their project and create a system of their choice to track income and expenses. A youth who chooses to do a record book on the 4-H foods project may set a goal to learn how to make pies with lattice tops or a flaky crust with proper consistency.

The next step is for youth to work on meeting their goal and share the knowledge they learn along the way with others. Youth may sign up for a 4-H cooking camp, contact a local bakery to be an intern for a day, or call grandma to learn from her. Youth are active throughout the year seeking opportunities, through 4-H and outside of 4-H, to expand their knowledge in the foods project. This knowledge should be targeted at foods but doesn't have to be specific to pies. As youth work towards their goals they'll want to keep track of their income and expenses. Signing up for a cooking camp might cost \$20.00 so they'll file that receipt. Next, they might go grocery shopping and buy \$30 worth of supplies that will make five pies. These practice pies maybe used for family suppers, given as gifts, or sold as a side business. All of these scenarios count as working on your project goals and should be listed in your record book. The pies sold should be listed under income, along with fair ribbon money and bake sale premium (if your fair has one).

Record books should also be utilized to document challenges overcome. An oven might run too hot, certain flour brands might not be the best for your item, etc. Identifying problems and how youth addressed them is a pivotal part of the 4-H record book. Taking pictures through the successful and challenging times is important for the record book judging process.

Youth should also look at ways to exhibit leadership and citizenship through their 4-H project. Leadership might be hosting a foods project meeting to share their knowledge or setting up a project meeting and asking a local expert to lead the meeting. Citizenship could be making food items to donate for benefit auctions or coordinating a canned food drive. 4-H youth can also share their knowledge by giving food related talks at their 4-H club meetings, club tours, or promoting 4-H and its projects through National 4-H Week at school.

The 4-H record book process is meant to capture everything related to a specific project throughout the year, but our 4-H kids do more, both in 4-H and outside of 4-H during the year. The permanent pages in the 4-H record book have a place for youth to document leadership roles, other projects, camps, sports, extracurricular activities, school contests, etc. both from 4-H and other organizations. These permanent pages can become an essential tool for seniors filling out scholarships, 4-H and non-4-H, if they took the time to document their activities each year in their permanent record. Permanent records can be added to each year and kept in a youth's 4-H record book for this purpose.

Many youth can create a side job selling items with skills they learned in 4-H or selling livestock from herds started in 4-H. Record book financials are sometimes slightly skewed because in 4-H the project is a hobby. After leaving the 4-H program, the skill/product can become more business than hobby but the basic financial keeping skills have already been established.

See the [Wildcat record book website](#) for FAQ, and more resources on record books. Remember one project per notebook! All record books are due to the 4-H office by October 1 but your club may have an earlier deadline.

The 4-H program offers scholarships to youth based off their 4-H record books. Local counties might have local opportunities, check with your 4-H agent. At the state level, the [Vanier Family Scholarship](#) is offered to seniors and asks for a detailed list of 4-H accomplishments, which should be documented in a permanent record. The Vanier Family scholarship is typically due March 1.

In Montgomery County youth must submit one completed record book in order to receive ribbon money from fair.

Decided not to do a record book for 2022? That's ok. Start your 2023 plans now!

- Pick a project (s)
- Set your goals
- Establish a way to track finances
- Have fun and take pictures along the way!

**Now is also the time to look at your achievement pin for 2023 to ensure you are participating in enough activities to make the requirements!

