

Grievance/Appeal Guidelines for County 4-H Program Issues: (Activities, Programs, Projects)

The grievance procedures outlined in this document are utilized as part of an internal process of the Indiana 4-H Youth Development program for use when grievances of 4-H members, their parents/guardians, or 4-H volunteers cannot be resolved via reasonable conversation. This policy affords the opportunity in those unique situations to allow voice or opinion to be heard when there is a dispute regarding 4-H participation, activities or programs. This is not a mechanism for complaints against individual 4-H members (or their families), 4-H volunteers, judging officials for competitive events, or Purdue Extension staff. All resulting decisions will be made in accordance with the Indiana 4-H Program's stated mission to be an inclusive organization designed to encourage and maximize youth participation. The rights of the individual filing the grievance are limited to those provided by Indiana 4-H Program policy.

Purdue University, as the Land Grant University in Indiana, is charged (by the United States Department of Agriculture) with implementing the 4-H Program in communities across the State of Indiana. Purdue Extension Educators in each Indiana county represent the university in local communities and have the responsibility of assuring all 4-H volunteers meet basic university criteria as they serve as representatives of the university. Purdue Extension Educators additionally provide oversight to 4-H volunteers including the assurance that Indiana 4-H Policies and Procedures are appropriately implemented in 4-H Program delivery.

Individual county 4-H policies and procedures should be created and reviewed to assure they do not contradict established statewide 4-H policies and procedures. If a contradiction is discovered during the grievance process, Indiana 4-H Program policy shall be followed in determining the grievance outcome.

1. Grievances are made by completing the Indiana 4-H Grievance/Appeal form with the burden of proof being the responsibility of the individual filing the grievance. The completed grievance/appeal form and supporting documentation shall be presented to the president of the 4-H policy-making body (e.g., 4-H Council) or the Purdue Extension Educator who works with the 4-H Program. (NOTE: concerns regarding staff or volunteers are not issues for which a grievance may be filed. 4-H volunteers are assigned by the 4-H Extension Educator. Concerns regarding 4-H volunteers or other individuals should be addressed directly with the Purdue 4-H Extension Educator.)
2. Grievances pertaining to 4-H activities, programs or projects shall be filed within 14 days of an incident or occurrence. Grievances pertaining to county fair related issues are often time-sensitive and must be filed within 24 hours of the incident.
3. The grievance process occurs in the county where the issue or concern arises and offers three opportunities for a concern to be heard and reviewed.
 - A. The grievance is initially heard by an unbiased, representative grievance sub-committee. It is the Purdue Extension Educator assigned to 4-H Programming who shall annually work with the chair of the county 4-H Council to determine this committee's membership to include the following individuals: one representative of the 4-H Council; two 4-H volunteers serving as a 4-H club organizational leader; one member of the County Extension Board; and one 4-H volunteer knowledgeable in the subject matter (project) of concern (this individual will vary dependent on issue raised with the grievance). The Purdue Extension Educator assigned to 4-H shall convene the group. The person filing the grievance may appeal the decision of the grievance sub-committee to the 4-H policy-making body, which will then review the facts in evidence and render a decision.
 - B. The person filing a grievance may appeal a decision of the 4-H policy-making body to the County Extension Board. The Extension Board will review the facts in evidence and render a decision. This is the **final level** in the appeal process.

**While there is no doubt some overlap in who serves on these committees, the intent of a three level process is to assure different individuals have the opportunity to hear and act on the grievance. ALL individuals involved at any level of the grievance procedure are reminded of the importance of keeping discussions regarding grievances confidential.

To maintain the confidentiality of the parties involved, the grievance hearings at each level will be closed to the public. Only the individuals who have filed the grievance, the members of the grievance committee, and the Purdue Extension Educators will be present during each level of the grievance process. ***The grievance process is internal to the Indiana 4-H Youth Development Program and meetings of the grievance committees are not subject to Indiana's Open Door Policy.

The Purdue Extension Educator assigned to work with the 4-H Program has the obligation to inform all parties that there is a grievance procedure if there are disagreements with policies.

The practice of charging fees from those filing grievances shall be eliminated and all counties will utilize the Indiana 4-H Grievance/Appeal Form as part of the grievance process.

Indiana 4-H Grievance/Appeal Form

WARNING: You must read and initial this section before proceeding to complete this document.

- ___1. I understand and agree that filing a grievance that alleges
A. facts that are not true, or
B. facts that I know are not true, or
C. facts I should know are not true:
will be considered a violation of the 4-H behavioral expectations.
- ___2. I understand and agree that all statements made herein by me are subject to the pains and penalties of perjury and I hereby affirm that my statements herein are true.
- ___3. I understand that perjury is a crime in Indiana.

I, the undersigned, allege that the following term(s) and condition(s) have been violated:

The facts which support this allegation are set out as follows:
(If needed, additional sheets may be attached.)

I swear or affirm under the penalties of perjury ^{(1) (2)} that I have read, understand, and accept the above statements to be true, accurate, and complete.

Signed: _____ Date: _____ Time submitted: _____

Print your name: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____

Oath ⁽³⁾

Before me, _____ A Notary Public in and for _____ County, State

of Indiana, personally appeared _____ and he/she being first duly sworn by me upon his/her oath, says that the facts alleged in the foregoing instrument are true.

(signed) _____ My commission expires: _____

(SEAL)

1. Perjury –making a false, material statement under oath or affirmation, knowing the statement to be false or not believing it to be true. In Indiana, a person who commits perjury commits a Level 6 felony, ⁽⁴⁾ which may be punishable by imprisonment, fine, or restitution (Indiana Code 35-44.1-2-1 and 35-50-2-1)
2. Prosecution for violations of Indiana law will be referred to the proper authorities.
3. Oath – An affirmation of truth of a statement before an authorized person.
4. Felony – A crime of graver or more serious nature than those designated as misdemeanors.