

4-H Canada

National Accreditation Standards and Required Evidence

Updated October 2023



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National Accreditation Standards and Required Evidence

Introduction

The accreditation model for 4-H Canada's provincial membership demonstrates internally and externally our commitment to a best-in-class culture as a world-class positive youth development organization. Through our shared national standards, 4-H in Canada is empowered to consistently achieve high levels of competency and rigour in our governance, risk management, operations, brand, and programs.

The accredited membership model for 4-H provinces in Canada was unanimously adopted by the 4-H Canada Board of Directors and the Canadian 4-H Foundation Trustees in November 2018.

Since the start of 2019, 4-H Canada and each provincial 4-H organization have worked collaboratively together along this path for accreditation to achieve excellence together. As a result, 4-H across Canada has:

- greater clarification of the roles between the national organization and its provincially accredited member organizations;
- an enhanced focus on program quality that is consistent across all accredited organizations; and
- a clear model of compliance expectations and consequences that will mitigate our organizations' risk.

Provincial Membership

As the national governing body for 4-H in Canada, 4-H Canada has different classes of membership. To become a provincial member and receive benefits from that membership class, the organization must successfully become accredited through a national standards program.

Requirements:

- The organization has achieved accreditation.
- The organization submits an annual provincial member fee as determined by the 4-H Canada Board of Directors.

Benefits

Provincial member organizations have access to numerous benefits that support the organization, its youth, volunteers, and alumni.

- Authorized use of and management of the 4-H trademarks and copyrights, including the logo, motto, and pledge within the province
- Access to the national insurance program
- Support for crisis communications and risk management
- Access to funding secured and stewarded by 4-H Canada (\$340,000 in 2020-2021)
- Access to funding for clubs secured and stewarded by 4-H Canada (\$120,000 in 2020-2021)
- Access to national programming and events for youth, volunteers, and professionals
- Access to training opportunities for volunteer leaders, professionals, and governors
- Access to national resources and infrastructure, including 4-H LEARNS resource-sharing platform and Youth Safety Reporting System



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- Access to scholarships for youth members (\$127,000 in 2020-2021)
- Engagement in all research initiatives and access to insights and subsequent tools
- Engagement and inclusion in national brand-awareness and recruitment initiatives
- Participation in operational committees to advance national operations and collaboration in areas of communications, funds development, and resource development
- Ability to select a provincial representative for the national Youth Advisory Committee (YAC)
- Ability to select a representative to sit on the national Provincial Leadership Advisory Committee (P-LAC)
- Invitation and participation in the annual Town Hall
- A voting membership to 4-H Canada, with the ability to submit nominations and resolutions, vote in elections and participate in the Annual General Meeting.

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Accreditation Process

Initial Accreditation

The accreditation process is facilitated by 4-H Canada.

Organizations interested in obtaining accreditation should contact 4-H Canada to initiate the following process:

1. Expression of interest
2. Sharing of accreditation standards and 4-H in Canada policy and procedure templates
3. Development of an accreditation action plan
4. Audit of evidence to support standards
5. Awarding of accreditation and access to accreditation insignia

Ongoing Accreditation

Accreditation is valid for three (3) years with the requirement that the organization submit annual reporting to 4-H Canada as outlined by standard OP12.

Annually

Annually in November/December, 4-H Canada will check-in with each provincial organization to ensure all required reporting has been submitted. When the check-in is complete 4-H Canada will confirm the accreditation status for another year and the provincial membership invoices will be issued in December.

Three Year Audit Cycle

4-H Canada continuously reviews non-profit and youth industry standards and may make recommendations for revisions to the accreditation standards as part of the accreditation audit every three (3) years Provincial organizations will have an opportunity to discuss proposed revisions prior to their adoption.

In audit years, a full accreditation audit will be completed in November/December.

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Accreditation Standards

The shared accreditation standards for 4-H in Canada were developed through in-depth examinations across non-profit and youth industry standards. These standards for 4-H are the best-in-class for the youth-serving organizations today and tomorrow.

Our commitment to consistently meeting and exceeding these standards ensures 4-H can deliver world-class programming that empowers youth to be responsible, caring, and contributing leaders that affect positive change in the world around them.

To achieve accreditation, a 4-H organization must achieve a score of 80% in each of the following five (5) standards categories, including all mandatory standards.

1. **Governance** – Board leadership and oversight, governance policies and processes, financial accountability and transparency.
2. **Risk Management** – Incident reporting and processes to support the Code of Conduct, leader and staff screening and training, policies and procedures concerning leaders, sponsorship and partner agreements, and document storage and retention.
3. **Operational Policy** – Financial processes, fundraising practices, staff management, and annual reporting.
4. **Brand, Copyrights and Trademarks** – Sponsorship and partner agreements, data management.
5. **Programs** – Youth programs offered, participation in national programs, policies and procedures concerning youth.

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Insignia for Accredited Organizations

The 4-H in Canada Accreditation Insignia is a visual mark that indicates a 4-H organization in Canada has achieved accreditation.

The insignia is a symbol to the public of the competency, rigour, and focus of 4-H organizations in Canada in providing a safe and inclusive environment for all youth to learn to do by doing. It is a symbol to our community of volunteers, leaders, alumni, and supporters of 4-H's commitment to delivering world-class programming that empowers today's youth leaders.



The use of the insignia is a privilege reserved for 4-H organizations that currently meet all standards for accreditation and are endorsed by 4-H Canada. An organization may not display the insignia if it fails to meet the minimum requirements of the standards program. An organization may not display the accreditation insignia if its membership with 4-H Canada has lapsed and/or the annual fee has not been paid.

Accredited 4-H organizations in Canada should refer to their Accreditation Insignia Usage Guide for full information on the insignia, including how it is intended to be used.

The 4-H in Canada Accreditation Insignia is owned by 4-H Canada and uses registered trademarks of 4-H Canada.

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Appendix A

Governance

ID	Standard	Score
G1	The organization has a Board of Directors that governs the organization.	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Names of current board members and terms 	
G2	The organization has a mission statement that the Board approves.	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Proof of current mission statement 	
G3	The organization has a strategic plan.	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Copy of the organization's strategic plan 	
G4	The Board of Directors has terms of reference or a policy manual defining their governing role and scope.	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Copy of the board's terms of reference as well as any relevant committee terms of reference 	
G5	There is a written procedure for the annual performance and compensation review of the senior staff person that is the direct report of the Board (i.e. Executive Director).	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Proof of the procedure Proof the review has taken place within the year 	
G6	The senior staff person (i.e. Executive Director) has a job description.	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Proof of senior staff person's job description 	
G7	There is a business continuity plan in place with the Board of Directors in the event of the absence of senior leadership or business emergencies.	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Proof of the business continuity plan 	
G8	The Board of Directors has a confidentiality policy that is signed annually.	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Proof the confidentiality policy was signed by current board members 	
G9	The Board has a process for the annual review of its insurance coverage.	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Proof of board meeting minutes demonstrating a summary report on insurance coverage has been reviewed within the last year 	
G10	The Board of Directors has a process for the annual review of governing and compliance documents (i.e. legal registration, charitable status, tax status, by-laws, provincial registration).	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Proof of board meeting minutes demonstrating documents have been reviewed within the last year 	
G11	The Board of Directors has a process for approving the annual budget of the organization and receiving reporting throughout the year.	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Proof of board meeting minutes demonstrating budget review and approval 	
G12	The organization has a mechanism for engaging youth at a governing level.	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Proof of a statement outlining how youth will be engaged with the board (i.e.. By-law, terms of reference, policy) 	
G13	The organization has adopted the Code of Conduct for 4-H in Canada for all youth, leaders, volunteers, staff, and governing leadership.	

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Proof of board meeting minutes demonstrating policy was adopted by the board 	
G14	The organization has adopted the Inclusion Statement for 4-H in Canada.	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Proof of board meeting minutes demonstrating policy was adopted by the board 	
G15	The organization has adopted the policies and procedures outlined in the Youth Safety at 4-H in Canada document.	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Proof of board meeting minutes demonstrating the policies and procedures were adopted by the board 	
G16	The organization conducts board meetings on a regular basis (i.e. quarterly or as required by not for profit laws) in addition to an annual meeting.	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Minutes of board meetings from the last 12 months • Minutes from the Annual General Meeting 	
G17	The organization can demonstrate that the governing leadership of the organization (i.e. Directors and Trustees) has completed the screening and training requirements as outlined in the Youth Safety at 4-H in Canada - Screening and Training Policy.	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Proof of current board members screening on file • Proof of governance training for current board members 	
G18	The Board of Directors has a Conflict of Interest Policy that is signed annually	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Proof Conflict of Interest Policy was signed by current Board members 	
Total Score: Governance		

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Risk Management

ID	Standard	Score
RM1	The organization has adopted the Youth Safety at 4-H in Canada - Misconduct Reporting Policy that outlines incident reporting and follow-up procedures, and the use of the national incident reporting database.	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Proof of board meeting minutes demonstrating incident reporting database was adopted by the board • Copy of provincial Misconduct Reporting and Appeals Procedure 	
RM2	The organization has a procedure in place to ensure communications are established with 4-H Canada within 24 hours of a critical or serious incident.	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Copy of provincial Safety Assessment and Management Procedures that outlines the process for communicating incidents to 4-H Canada 	
RM3	The organization has a crisis communications plan that identifies a provincial spokesperson in the event of a crisis and the provincial crisis communications team.	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Proof of crisis communication plan 	
RM4	The organization trains leaders, volunteers, staff, and governing leadership on how to report a Code of Conduct violation. Details are outlined in the Youth Safety at 4-H in Canada - Misconduct Reporting Policy .	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Proof of policy training plan (i.e. sign-offs) 	
RM5	The organization has an accessible policy that outlines the process for Code of Conduct for 4-H in Canada investigations and the consequences for violations by leaders, volunteers, staff, and governing leadership.	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Copy of provincial Misconduct Reporting and Appeals Procedure • Proof the document is accessible 	
RM6	The organization has an accessible policy that outlines the process for appeals of any consequences of code of conduct violations.	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Copy of provincial Misconduct Reporting and Appeals Procedure • Proof the document is accessible 	
RM7	The organization can demonstrate the Rule of Two has been implemented for all clubs, and is to be followed for all meetings, programming, and events.	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Proof of implementation (i.e. sign offs, screening, club registrations, activity planning etc.) 	
RM8	The organization can demonstrate that staff, leaders, volunteers, and youth leaders have completed the screening and training requirements as outlined in Youth Safety at 4-H in Canada - Screening and Training Policy .	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Proof of screening and training records for randomly selected staff, leaders, volunteers, and youth leaders 	
RM9	The organization has a process in place to internally audit the screening and training results annually.	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Proof of the process for auditing screening and training results 	

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RM10	The organization has procedures in place to report annually to the organization's Board of Directors the results of the screening and training audit and that action is taken with non-compliant clubs, staff, leaders, volunteers, and youth leaders.	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Proof of board meeting minutes demonstrating review of the screening and training audit results 	
RM11	The organization can demonstrate there is a process for 4-H clubs, groups and provincial programs to complete a safety assessment for review by organizational staff prior to outings and overnight events or trips.	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Copy of provincial Safety Assessment & Management Procedures that outlines the process 	
RM12	The organization has a document retention policy outlining the storage, access and duration of all screening and training documents.	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Copy of provincial Information Management Procedures that outlines the process 	
RM13	The organization can demonstrate all screening and training records are securely stored in its possession, indefinitely.	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Copy of provincial Screening & Training Procedures that outlines the process • Proof of screening and training records for randomly selected staff, leaders, volunteers, and youth leaders 	
RM14	The organization has a policy in place that defines the scope of staff, leaders, volunteers, and youth leaders.	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Copy of provincial Screening & Training Procedures that outlines the roles and their scope 	
RM15	The organization has a process in place to ensure all Criminal Record Check or Vulnerable Sector Screen screening decisions are approved by staff.	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Copy of provincial Screening & Training Procedures that outlines the process 	
RM16	The organization has a policy around the storage and access to information of its members (i.e. minors).	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Copy of provincial Information Management Procedures that outlines the process 	
RM17	The organization can demonstrate the information of minors is held in compliance with privacy laws.	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Copy of provincial Information Management Procedures that outlines the process 	
RM18	The organization can demonstrate compliant practice where financial or personal information may be held electronically.	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Copy of provincial Information Management Procedures that outlines the process 	
RM19	The organization has one of the following legal mechanisms in place with organizations where a third party is conducting 4-H competitions for members within the province. (i.e. fairs) or 4-H is using the third-party event space to host their competition or achievement event: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - formal agreements (i.e. MOU's) 	

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - memberships for purchase that have eligibility criteria similar to the MOU 	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Proof of a process for creating an MOU or membership 	
RM20	Any stakeholder organization that is using any of the 4-H trademarks in its name has a legal relationship with 4-H Canada	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provincial organizations purchase a provincial membership • Provincial foundations purchase an associate membership 	
RM21	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The organization has Cyber Security Insurance 	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Proof of insurance 	
Total Score: Risk Management		

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Operational Policies

ID	Standard	Score
OP1	The organization submits a copy of its accountant-prepared financial statements to 4-H Canada annually.	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Copy of accountant-prepared financial statements are submitted with annual reporting 	
OP2	The organization's financial statements are received and approved by its provincial governing board annually and are made publicly available.	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Proof of board meeting minutes demonstrating approval of most recent financial statements 	
OP3	The organization must demonstrate all remittances have been filed (i.e. CRA, HST) in a manner compliant with legislation.	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Proof of remittance filing 	
OP4	The organization displays its charitable status publicly (i.e. website, publications).	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Proof on its website that charitable status is displayed 	
OP5	The organization ensures that all charitable tax receipts issued are done in compliance with regulatory requirements.	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Proof of operational process for issuing charitable tax receipts The registration number must be on charitable receipt 	
OP6	The organization can demonstrate any third parties receiving funds on behalf of the provincial organization are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - doing so in accordance with the law, - raising funds with the consent and cooperation of the organization, and - ensuring all monies received and receipts issued are done through the organization. 	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Proof of operational process for reviewing appropriate fundraising and solicitation on behalf of the organization 	
OP7	There is a current MOU in place with all organizations that are sharing the delivery of the program (i.e. Department of Agriculture).	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Proof of current MOU, if applicable 	
OP8	There is a current MOU in place between the organization and all legal entities that are using the registered trademarks or copyrights in their name (i.e. 4-H Foundations, clubs or associations with charitable status).	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Proof of current MOU or evidence of a legal relationship. May be outlined in governance manual or by-laws. (Optional for clubs and associations until 2026) 	
OP9	There is a human resources policy manual that is accessible to employees.	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Proof of human resources policy manual 	
OP10	The human resources policy manual is reviewed at a minimum every three years to ensure legal compliance.	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Proof of date of the last review 	
OP11	There is a practice in place to ensure business continuity plans are reviewed at a minimum every 24 months.	

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Proof of updated business continuity plans (ie. version within the last year and/or date of the last review) 	
OP12	<p>The organization submits completed and accurate documentation to 4-H Canada annually. This includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - reporting required for all 4-H Canada contribution and sponsorship agreements - statistics and membership numbers requested annually - list of staff contact information - list of Board of Directors contact information - list of Foundation Trustees contact information (if applicable) - evidence of governance minutes from the latest board meeting and Annual General Meeting - payment received for 4-H Canada membership - a copy of the most recent accountant prepared financial statements 	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Annual reporting submitted within timelines requested 	
OP13	The organization sends representation to the 4-H Canada Annual General Meeting.	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Names of most recent attendees 	
OP14	The organization sends representation to the 4-H Canada Annual Town Hall Meeting.	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Names of most recent attendees 	
OP15	The organization has a profile on 4-H LEARNS and updates content annually.	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Location Leader profile name • Date of last content update 	
OP16	The organization participates in senior leadership (operational) meetings.	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Names of most recent attendees 	
OP17	The organization has a designated point person for each of the Operational Working Groups	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Name of working group members 	
Total Score: Operational Policies		

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Brand, Copyrights, and Trademarks

ID	Standard	Score
B1	The senior staff person or Board Chair for the organization signs off on the Brand Agreement for access and use of all 4-H copyrights.	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Copy of signed Brand Agreement 	
B2	The senior staff person or Board Chair for the organization signs off on the Alumni Agreement.	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Copy of signed Alumni Agreement 	
B3	The organization is compliant with all CASL legislation in terms of acquiring personal information for marketing and communication purposes.	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Proof the provincial Information Management Procedures are in place 	
B4	The organization has a procedure in place for informing clubs around brand standards and accessing brand resources.	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Copy of process for communicating brand standards to clubs 	
B5	The organization has contribution or sponsorship agreements in place with any organizations that they permit the use of the provincial brand.	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Proof of agreements or contracts where legal responsibilities have been outlined with sponsors that have brand access 	
B6	The organization communicates with 4-H Canada the name of organizations to whom they have granted permission to use the provincial brand for sponsorship purposes.	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Proof of ongoing notification to 4-H Canada of the names of organizations that have access to the provincial brand and copyrights 	
B7	The organization demonstrates participation in the national fundraising initiative.	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Organization's participation numbers and results from recent initiative provided 	
B8	The organization shares distribution lists with 4-H Canada for purposes of national publications as outlined in the Brand and Alumni agreements.	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Distribution lists are provided in annual reporting 	
Total Score: Brand, Copyrights and Trademarks		

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Programs

ID	Standard	Score
P1	The organization meets 85% of its allocation numbers (as published in the 4-H Canada Program Catalogue) annually in 4-H Canada programs for youth and adults.	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Allocation numbers are published in the 4-H Canada Program Catalogue Participation numbers are provided in annual reporting 	
P2	The organization can demonstrate the promotion of 4-H Canada programs that do not have allocation numbers (i.e. scholarships, global exchanges, internships etc.).	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Samples or links to promotional materials 	
P3	The organization designates a Youth Advisory Committee (YAC) member to represent the organization and work within the YAC framework with 4-H Canada.	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Name of current Youth Advisory Committee member and terms 	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Name of working group member 	
P5	The organization participates in national research and outcomes initiatives to understand the impact of the 4-H program.	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Proof of participation 	
P6	The organization has a process in place for training leaders, volunteers, and youth leaders on organizational policies and procedures.	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Proof of youth safety training being offered Proof of training on incident reporting procedure 	
P7	The organization has a policy in place outlining emergency and first aid protocols for club and regional programming.	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Copy of provincial Safety Assessment & Management Procedures that outlines the protocols 	
P8	The organization can demonstrate evidence of a structure that will support the delivery of projects and programs in a positive youth development philosophy that is consistent with the mission of 4-H in Canada. That is, 4-H youth supported by 4-H volunteer leaders in the completion of skill development leadership projects in a "Learning To Do By Doing" setting.	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> As part of annual reporting, provide an overview of the programs 	
P9	The organization offers programming for youth in the national age range defined as 6 to 25 years old inclusive.	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Participation numbers provided 	
P10	The organization can demonstrate a risk audit of all program and project areas is conducted at minimum once every five years to ensure: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> programming is compliant with laws or regulations that may have changed practices recommended leading standards, not baseline standards volunteers leading programming have appropriate training or certifications. 	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Copy of provincial Safety Assessment & Management Procedures that outlines the process Dates of last risk audits 	
P11	The organization can demonstrate that all youth and their parents or guardians have acknowledged the Code of Conduct for 4-H in Canada and signed a registration form including participant waiver and assumption of risk annually.	

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Copy of provincial Safety Assessment & Management Procedures that outlines the process • Proof of signing or acknowledgement for randomly selected youth 	
P12	The organization has an accessible policy that outlines the process for Code of Conduct for 4-H in Canada investigations and the consequences for violations by youth.	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Proof the provincial Misconduct Reporting and Appeals Procedure is accessible 	
P13	The organization has an accessible policy that outlines the process for appeals of any consequences of code of conduct violations by youth.	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Proof of provincial Misconduct Reporting and Appeals Procedure is accessible 	
Total Score: Programs		