

4-H Achievement Ladder Award Program FAQ's ***Frequently Asked Questions***

What is the 4-H Achievement Ladder Award Program? The award consists of six levels that each require a 4-H'er to plan and accomplish a broad range of age-appropriate tasks, acquiring valuable leadership life skills as they progress. The 4-H Achievement Ladder Award Program is designed to enable every 4-H member willing to exert the effort, regardless of how they are engaged in 4-H, to be successful. The 4-H Achievement Ladder Award Program should also be considered optional, but strongly recommended. The 4-H Achievement Ladder Award Program is not intended as a replacement for record books. Those 4-Hers completing their record book by computer will find ample opportunities to “cut and paste” between documents as some of the requested information is very similar.

How does a 4-H'er earn the award? The process begins with a 4-H'er obtaining the 4-H Achievement Ladder Award Program Plan/Report form. The next step is choosing the age-appropriate activities they will accomplish from the suggested list. The club or project leader will review the plan and approve it or make suggestions for improvement. The first four levels should be considered as an agreement between the 4-H member and club or project leader. Club leaders know their 4-H members well and are in the best position to challenge those members who need motivation and to guide those members who need help in developing an achievable plan. Level Five also requires the approval of the county 4-H educator. Level Six is more involved and requires the 4-H member to work with the 4-H Board of Directors that includes the club or project leader and the 4-H educator. When the 4-H'er has completed their plan they will submit a brief report.

What are the six levels? The 4-H Achievement Ladder Award Program is designed with six levels, each with a corresponding color/identifier: Level One – Green, Two – White, Three – Bronze, Four – Silver, Five – Gold and Six – Diamond.

What are the requirements of each level? A list of suggested tasks for each level is available on the 4-H Achievement Ladder Award Program Guidelines. These tasks are age-appropriate and grow in quantity and difficulty as the 4-H member grows. Participants will choose from among the tasks listed and are encouraged to explore a wide variety of 4-H projects, contests and activities to enable them to acquire the leadership life skills that will benefit them for the rest of their lives. The list of tasks have been created to enable any 4-H member, no matter how they are engaged in 4-H, to be successful.

What is the time frame for the award? A 4-H'er may complete one level per year. The purpose of the award is to enable 4-Hers to acquire as many life skills as possible at each level. The goal of the awards program is a rich and diverse learning experience, not being the first to finish.

At which level do older 4-Hers start? For the best possible experience, 4-Hers should progress through as many levels as possible. The goal of the award is for every 4-H member to have the opportunity to earn one of the 4-H Achievement Ladder Award clovers. Older 4-Hers, who by starting at level 1 and completing one level per year, would “age out” (reach their 19th birthday) before reaching level six, may begin at a higher level. The 4-Her's leader will help determine where they should begin. The county 4-H educator must be involved in the planning process for 4-Hers starting level 5. 4-Hers should not begin the Level six or Diamond award before their 16th birthday.

How are accomplishments documented? After completing the planned tasks, a 4-H'er will submit a short report, using the bottom section of the form they used to plan their work at the beginning of the year. The form will be submitted to the 4-H club or project leader for the first four levels. The county 4-H educator and the 4-H Board of Directors will approve the level five report. The report form will be available to download from the 4-H web page. The 4-H Achievement Ladder Award Program report is not intended as a replacement for a record book.

How and when are successful 4-Hers recognized? A pin for each level will be in the color of that level (see above) with the colored chip in its center. A certificate of achievement will also be provided to document the

completion of each level. The pins will be presented at the annual county 4-H achievement event as part of the award program.

Is completing a project necessary to complete a level? Yes. Completing at least one project as one of the tasks for each level is required. 4-H members who select independent study or other approved non traditional projects are carrying a project and must complete a finished report.

What does completing a variety of projects mean? It is recommended a 4-H'er choose at least one project from a different project category for each level.

Is it possible for a 4-Her's plan to be amended? Yes. Think of the plan for levels one through four as an agreement between the member and the club or project leader. If for some good reason (death of an animal, drought damaged garden, etc.), a 4-H member is unable to complete his or her plan, they may negotiate an amendment with their 4-H club or project leader. Amending the plan for levels five and six require approval from the county 4-H educator.

The 4-H Achievement Ladder Award Program was adapted from the Maryland 4-H Awards and Recognition Program.

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