

Handling Grants & Contracts Pertaining to UF/IFAS Extension 4-H Youth Development

The intent of this document is to clarify roles, expectations, and procedures for applying for and managing grants and contracts (not donations) for 4-H Youth Development purposes. (If a proposal to be funded includes the name "4-H" in it, then these procedures apply, although collaborating with other organizations may require some flexibility depending on which partner serves as the lead agency.) Grants/contracts have specific outcomes and deliverables expected including required reports to the funding source, whereas donations do not require this kind of reporting to the donor. Please realize that donors/grantors do not always label their funding consistent with these definitions.

Background – Roles and Standards

Standard practice across the University of Florida is for grants and contracts to be managed via the UF Division of Sponsored Research (DSR). IFAS Extension has its own Grants Coordinator to facilitate the process for County Extension faculty/staff.

The purpose of the Florida 4-H Club Foundation, Inc. is to raise funds to support the UF/IFAS Extension 4-H Youth Development Program. Its focus is tax-deductible donations for statewide 4-H programs. Auditors and others have recently cautioned about using the Florida 4-H Foundation to accept grants/contracts because it potentially increases costs, liability, and workload. Therefore, the Florida 4-H Foundation will only accept grants/contracts on a very limited basis for those that meet certain conditions.

County 4-H Associations were set up to be able to accept tax-deductible gifts but the issue of grants is far less clear. In general, these volunteer-based organizations are not equipped to process and manage grants. Legally, they may be able to and, in some cases, it may be our only option when a grantor requires a 501(c)3 organization instead of a non-profit educational institution like UF. In other words, just because it may be possible for a County 4-H Association/Foundation to accept grants, does not mean it is a good practice because most agents do not have sufficient training and experience for processing and managing grants or mistakenly believe they can expect their volunteer-based County 4-H Association to take on these potentially substantial responsibilities and liability (depending on the complexity of the grant or its reporting requirements).

Minimum Expectations

Grants and contracts will be expected to support highest priorities of the UF/IFAS Extension 4-H Youth Development Program, especially as indicated in Initiative 7 of the Extension Roadmap.

- For county-specific grant projects, consult with your County Extension Director and/or District Extension Director to confirm it would meet local needs and is consistent with the annual plan of work.
- If a grant/contract is for a multi-county or statewide 4-H program, it must receive the approval of the State 4-H Program Leader. Also, please note that nearly all 4-H Youth Development grants from National 4-H Council and USDA/NIFA require approval of the State 4-H Program Leader so it is best to secure consent before preparing a grant/contract proposal or submitting a letter of intent.
- All funds accepted for 4-H Youth Development must be used for valid 4-H purposes.

Special Considerations for Applying for Grants/Contracts on Behalf of 4-H Clubs, County 4-H Associations, and County 4-H Foundations

- All grants/contracts pertaining to 4-H Youth Development grants must have the consent and/or involvement of an Extension/4-H faculty or staff member before a grant/contract application is submitted.

- 4-H clubs in Florida do not have the tax exempt status or legal authority to accept grants directly, except via their respective County 4-H Association (or, in some cases, County 4-H Foundation). Therefore, when grants are applied for on behalf of 4-H clubs or other entities authorized to use the 4-H name and emblem within a county, a UF/IFAS Extension faculty/staff will serve as the Principal Investigator (P.I.), possibly with a volunteer as a co-P.I., co-investigator, or simply as a cooperator.
- For some types of grants, such as those involving federal funds, UF requires that all Principal Investigators undergo specific training before the grant can be accepted. Most agents and virtually no volunteers understand the current rules for federal grants because many of those rules have changed and some of them are counter-intuitive. Therefore, County 4-H Associations and County 4-H Foundations are not permitted to accept grants/contracts with federal funds as the source.

Procedures for Applying for Grants/Contracts

These procedures are in place to protect the organization and its faculty/staff and volunteers. Disregarding these procedures may subject the individual(s) accepting funds to unnecessary personal financial or legal risk. Faculty, staff, and volunteers are not permitted to sign any contract (which generally includes any written agreements, MOUs, etc.)

Procedures are generally based on who will serve as the Principal Investigator, the scope of work of the grant/contract, and the source of funds. The more complicated a grant, the more advance planning is needed in order to submit a grant application by the deadline set by the grantor.

- **Grants/contracts with county-based Extension faculty/staff or 4-H Regional Specialized Agents serving as the P.I. (including grants that may potentially be managed by County 4-H Associations or Foundations)**
 - Contact Christy Huntley, Grants Coordinator, in Extension Administration (chuntley@ufl.edu), who will help determine how the grant can be managed.
 - ✓ If the grant/contract is for a multi-county or statewide 4-H program, it must receive the approval of the State 4-H Program Leader, preferably before contacting the Extension Grants Coordinator and definitely before proceeding with a grant/contract submission or letter of intent.
- **Grants/contracts with state Extension faculty member based in an academic department serving as the P.I.**
 - Apply via UF Division of Sponsored Research (DSR) using established department channels.
 - ✓ If the grant/contract is for a multi-county or statewide 4-H program, it must receive the approval of the State 4-H Program Leader before proceeding with a grant/contract submission or letter of intent.
- **For grants/contracts with Extension faculty/staff from 4-H State Headquarters serving as the P.I.**
 - Contact Kathy Hartman (Accountant/Comptroller) at 4-H State Headquarters to determine whether grant will be applied for via the UF Division of Sponsored Research (DSR) or the Florida 4-H Foundation.
 - ✓ All grants to be managed by the Florida 4-H Foundation require approval of the Foundation's State 4-H Program Leader and/or Chief Executive Officer before submission of a grant application or letter of intent.