



# Illinois 4-H | Spark Ideas. Ignite Possibilities.

As times change and technology becomes more prevalent, youth will need to prepare for careers and jobs that don't currently exist. According to Michigan State University Extension, young people need more than a good education to prepare for that perfect job; they need well-rounded skills that can be applied to any career as well as the ability to explore and try exciting opportunities in a safe and informative way. Career awareness and preparation will equip youth with all the soft skills to apply and interview for their first job during and after high school.



## Exploring Building Your Future

### Spark Activity: Create a Digital Portfolio

An E-Portfolio is a place where youth keep track of projects throughout their 4-H years. Creating and maintaining one allows youth to pull important information when completing college or job applications.

The benefits of creating and maintaining portfolio include:

- Allows youth to keep track of all projects, recognitions, and achievements
- Provides youth an opportunity to build on their self-esteem and self confidence
- Youth take control of their learning and develop their own goals
- Show and tell with quality presentation
- May be reviewed and assessed with guidance from club leader, educators, and counselors to provide support and feedback to reach desired goal

An E-Portfolio should include but is not limited to:

- Full name and a summarized version of your goals and objectives (to be written in third person)
- Skills, knowledge, and abilities
- 4-H club name, number of years as a 4-H member, and any offices held
- Education background
- Special recognitions and accomplishments
- List of community and service projects (school and 4-H club)
- Awards and honors



## 4-H Project Levels and Goals

### Beginner

- Learn about decision-making
- Learn about time management
- Learn different savings options
- Participate in job shadowing
- Learn about marketing a product or solution
- Learn the importance of working with teams
- Develop an elevator speech
- Learn about entrepreneurship

### Advanced

- Connect experiences, personal interests, skills, values, and personality to career options and college majors
- Learn about career and employment portfolios and following the steps to create a portfolio
- Learn advantages and disadvantages of becoming an entrepreneur
- Develop a business plan

## Put Your Project Into Action

### Show Your Skills

- Explore a career and then create a display board about it
- Put together a budget for a year
- Create a resume to get your dream job

### Service and Leadership

- Donate clothes to Goodwill or thrift stores
- Coordinate a food drive for a local food pantry
- Lead a fundraiser for back-to-school supplies
- Serve as a peer mentor
- Participate in Money Smart Week events
- Interview financial advisors from major banks
- Attend craft fairs throughout the year
- Serve as peer mentor in your local 4-H club
- Do a personal skills inventory
- Attend a career fair at your local school

### Entrepreneurship

- Research famous entrepreneurs and what steps they took to start their businesses
- Create a business plan for a business you create
- Create an online business or platform where you could sell a product or service

### Technology Connection

- Career simulations
- Virtual tours/job shadowing
- Online resume builders
- Online record keepers

### Connecting with a Mentor

- Local Chamber of Commerce
- School counselor for job shadowing opportunities
- Career assessment inventories
- Check with local Extension office for 4-H Juntos clubs and resources
- Check with local community college for career assessment tools or workshops

### Events

- Illini Summer Academies
- Junior Achievement
- College fairs
- Check with your local Extension or county Farm Bureau office for financial wellness programs



### Careers for People Interested in Career Readiness

School Counselor  
Career Counselor

Admissions Counselor  
Financial Advisor

## Start a Conversation

What does your future look like?  
Where do you want to live?  
What car do you want to drive?  
What job do you want to have?  
How do you think you will get there?

## Want to learn more?

[go.illinois.edu/4Hbuildyourfuture](https://go.illinois.edu/4Hbuildyourfuture)

## Explore more at Illinois 4-H!

[4-h.extension.illinois.edu](https://4-h.extension.illinois.edu)



# Illinois Extension

UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS URBANA-CHAMPAIGN

College of Agricultural, Consumer and Environmental Sciences  
University of Illinois | U.S. Department of Agriculture | Local Extension Councils Cooperating.  
University of Illinois Extension provides equal opportunities in programs and employment.

**Credits:** 4-H Entrepreneurship Opportunity Video - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DuDk75HYaKE> | Michigan State University 4-H Extension Preparing Children & Youth Project Sheet | Headed2 Career Exploration - <https://headed2.com> | 4-H Spark Sheets are a collaborative effort of 4-H staff, volunteers, alumni and teens from across Illinois. A big thanks to the many contributors and reviewers!