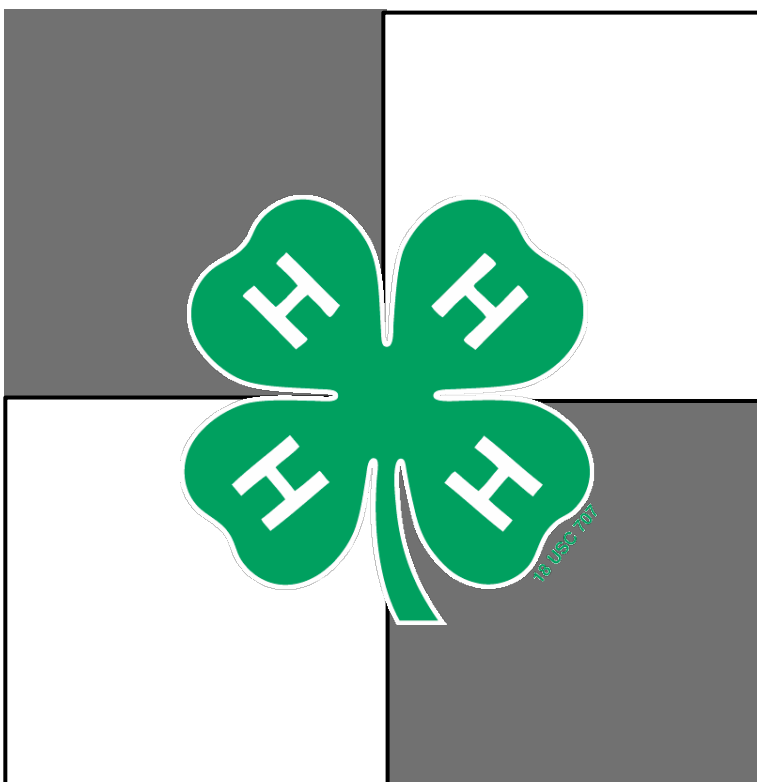


# **Stark County 4-H**

## **Guidelines for Forming New 4-H Club**



This document is adapted from Soule, Gwen; Sandusky County 4-H Guidelines for Forming New 4-H Clubs & Foxx, Doug; Wayne County 4-H Guidelines for Forming New 4-H Clubs.



**THE OHIO STATE UNIVERSITY**  
EXTENSION

Ohio State University Extension  
Stark County  
2800 Richville Drive  
Massillon OH 44646  
234-348-6001

**Dear Potential 4-H Club Leader:**

Thank you for your interest in beginning a new 4-H Club in Stark County. Community Clubs are an important part of the Stark County 4-H Program, involving more than 1,200 youth each year.

A well run 4-H club has the potential to make a life-long positive impact on youth. Through 4-H youth have the opportunity to meet new people, build new skills, and discover more about their own interests and abilities. There are approximately 40 4-H clubs in Stark County, and if you surveyed them all you would probably find 40 different ways of leading and managing the clubs. However, all *successful* clubs have a few things in common.

1. Clubs are led by *caring* adult volunteers, who are there to help the youth accomplish their own goals (and not just the goals of the leaders).
2. Club advisors provide *organized* leadership, ensuring that all families have the information they need to fully participate and benefit from club, county, and state opportunities.
3. Members have a *key role* in making all club decisions, including those about learning activities, community service projects, and club structure.

The information in this packet describes the basic process of starting a new 4-H Club. Please review the information carefully, paying special attention to the deadlines listed on the back page. You are not expected to navigate this entire process on your own, and as a matter of fact, you cannot. You will need the help of Extension staff with many of the steps. This packet serves merely as a guide and not as a do-it-yourself kit. The staff members at the OSU Extension Office are committed to helping our volunteers succeed and provide assistance with the process of beginning new clubs. Please always feel free to call with questions or concerns.

Please note that the very first step in beginning a new club is being approved as a 4-H volunteer. Maintaining the integrity of our program and the safety of our youth are our highest priorities. Please help us to do so by refraining from working with youth until after this screening and approval process has been completed.

Sincerely,



David Crawford  
Extension Educator,  
4-H Youth Development



**Step 1: Volunteer Screening & Selection:**

New Clubs require at least 2 screened, approved adult volunteers. All OSU Extension volunteers must complete a volunteer screening & selection process before they begin volunteering in any capacity.

This process includes:

- ✦ Written Application
- ✦ Volunteer Standards of Behavior
- ✦ Criminal History Fingerprint Background Check
- ✦ Review of References
- ✦ Personal Interview
- ✦ Orientation and/or Training
- ✦ On-going Status: yearly child protection training; every four years a fingerprint background check



Potential new volunteers may begin this process by contacting the OSU Extension Office for an application packet. Please note that it can take several weeks to complete these steps, so please plan ahead and start early.



**Important Note:** Until Step 1 has been **completed** you cannot begin the other steps. ALL volunteers must complete the screening and training process before they can begin to work with youth.

**Step 2: Members**

All clubs must have at least 5 members from at least 3 different families. New club advisors are often aware of a need or interest for the new club before beginning the process, but *cannot* enroll members until they are notified that their volunteer process has been completed.

*Please note that youth are not official members of the club until the enrollment process has been completed.*

**Step 3: First Meetings**

Sometimes this first meeting is scheduled before the minimum five members have been recruited. This is okay, provided you continue to recruit members before the enrollment deadline.

Usually the first couple organizational meetings are informal, because a constitution has not yet been adopted and officers have not been elected. This is the one time it is okay for the adult advisors to operate the meeting without youth officers. It is still expected that youth participate in all items of business. Remember, 4-H Clubs belong to the members.

At these first meetings, club members can begin discussing a club name, provide ideas for club activities, and decide on future meeting dates.



**Step 4: Select a Name & Submit to OSU Extension for Approval**

Please refer to the fact sheet, "Choosing a 4-H Club Name" at the end of this document for guidelines. When choosing a name for the club, you must reference Stark County in the title. This is very important for the filing of the club's EIN. Example: New 4-H Club of Stark County.

**Step 5: Adopt a Club Constitution and By-laws**

All 4-H clubs must adopt a constitution before members can be enrolled. Ohio 4-H has a template for club constitutions, so this process is as easy as filling in a few blanks and having members vote to accept the constitution. A copy of this constitution has been attached. Clubs should print an official copy with their club name entered for members to approve and sign at a meeting. There are very few changes which can be made to a club constitution. All members should then sign the constitution and receive a copy including new members who join at a later date.

By-laws are optional, BUT highly encouraged, and can be completed at any time after the constitution is adopted. By-laws are where clubs can include specific rules such as attendance policies, community service requirements, special officer positions or other rules. If by-laws are adopted they must be signed by members and submitted to the Extension Office to be added to your official constitution. Please see the attached sample By-Laws.

**Step 6: Apply for an EIN Number from the IRS**

All 4-H Clubs are required to apply for an EIN (Employer Identification Number) from the IRS.gov website. 4-H clubs are legal organizations with their own EIN number. All clubs are required to obtain an EIN number before they can receive a charter or enroll members, even if they do not plan to handle money. The Extension Office will file your club's annual 990N e-postcard. This will be based off the club's yearly financial summary which must be filed with the Extension Office.



Apply for your Club EIN online. If you do not have internet access, you can arrange to use a computer at the Extension Office. **Instructions for obtaining an EIN are available on-line at < <http://go.osu.edu/einhelp>>** You must be sure to include the Ohio 4-H program's Group Exemption number 5925.

**Step 7: File your Group Exemption Form with Ohio 4-H**

Once you have your club's new EIN number, complete the Group Exemption Authorization form (attached) and return to the County Extension Office. We will submit this form to the State 4-H Office, once your charter has been approved. (See step 8)

**Step 8: Begin the 4-H Club Charter Process**

There is a simple charter application and check-list which must be completed each year.

**Step 9: Enroll Members and Volunteers in 4-HOnline by March 15**

Once your charter has been approved, you may obtain an enrollment packet from the Extension Office. This packet will contain information and instructions for enrolling members and volunteers in 4-HOnline, additional forms needed by the Extension Office, project guidelines, details and information about spring and summer events. All 4-H youth and volunteer enrollments are due in 4-H Online by March 15. Stark County does not currently have an activity fee for the county. Your club may have a membership fee.

**Attachments:**

- So You Want to Start a New 4-H Club
- Choosing a Name for Your 4-H Club
- Ohio 4-H Club Constitution Template
- Ohio 4-H By-Laws Sample Template
- Ohio 4-H Group Exemption Authorization
- The Ohio 4-H Club Charter Checklist
- Club Meetings at a Glance Worksheet (this is provided as a planning tool / resource; it is not required to be submitted to the Extension Office)



## **So you want to start a 4-H Club?**

### **Membership**

Forming a 4-H club means you will need interest from at least 5 project-eligible members from 3 or more families. More members are preferred so you start from a firm foundation.

### **Leadership Team**

Don't go it alone! Recruit adult supporters who communicate effectively and are committed to the program. Who complements your leadership style? Who brings additional strengths to make up for your weak points? Set a goal to always have at least 1 certified 4-H advisor for every 8-10 youth. Starting a club with only one advisor is not permitted.

### **Logistics**

Once you have solid interest from potential members and a good advisor or two to help you out, contact your local Extension office. You will first need to complete the volunteer certification and training process which usually takes 1-3 months. From there you will enjoy a New Club Orientation training where you will learn about everything it takes to be a long-lasting, high-quality 4-H club!

### **Sneak Peek: What does a great club look like?**

- ✓ 10+ project members and 5+ Cloverbuds
- ✓ Ample certified advisors and supportive parents
- ✓ Meets at least 9 months each year with a mix of community service, project work, public speaking, fun hands-on learning, business, and county-wide event participation
- ✓ Youth take a mix of projects and improve their level of challenge each year
- ✓ Communication flows effectively with all club families and advisors
- ✓ Ethics, reporting, and safety standards are followed at all times
- ✓ Youth experience positive development environment with a mix of safety, fun, and education

# Choosing a Name for Your 4-H Club

Choosing a name for your club may be the first decision your new group gets to make. Keep these pointers in mind as you select your club name:

- **Think Non-Discriminatory**

As a program of Ohio State University Extension, Stark County 4-H does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, age, gender identity or expression, disability, religion, sexual orientation, national origin, or veteran status. Be sure you select a name which is inviting to everyone and does not exclude or offend.

- **Maintain a Positive Image**

Your club name represents Stark County 4-H and the 4-H Program as a whole. Select a name which upholds a positive image of 4-H. Club names cannot promote or insinuate illegal or inappropriate activities for youth. (For example: alcohol, tobacco, drugs, or violence)

- **Represent Your Club Members - Be Unique**

Consider choosing a name which describes your club. Consider the types of projects taken by the members or their geographical location. Choose a unique name to distinguish your group. Try to avoid choosing a name similar to other clubs in your area if possible.

- **Make it a Group Decision**

Allow every member to be involved. Each member can be involved by suggesting possible names or discussing the choices. In a large club, it may be helpful to create a committee who can narrow the choice to just a few. Allow the group to vote on the possible names and choose the one the majority prefer.

- **Submit Your Choice for Approval**

All 4-H club names must be approved by the Stark County 4-H Extension Educator. If you have questions or concerns while selecting your name, please call the extension office for assistance.

Adapted, in part, from: Rutgers Cooperative Extension, New Jersey Leader Training Series, Rutgers. The State University of New Jersey,



## Ohio 4-H Youth Development Club Constitution

### Article I. Name

The name of the Club shall be \_\_\_\_\_ 4-H Club (the “Club”). Organized in the County of \_\_\_\_\_, OH. The Club shall be organized as an unincorporated association.

### Article II. Purpose

The Club will work with youth to help them grow into productive, contributing members of society. The Club will offer fun, active opportunities for personal learning and growth through club meetings, projects, hands-on learning, leadership opportunities, fairs and activities. The Club is organized exclusively for charitable and educational purposes including, for such purposes, the making of distributions to organizations that qualify as exempt organizations under section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code, or the corresponding section of any future federal tax code.

### Article III. Ohio State Extension Affiliation

The Club agrees to comply with all applicable county and state OSU Extension and Ohio 4-H policies and procedures governing 4-H and agrees that the County 4-H Youth Development Professional has all necessary and proper authority to oversee the Club to ensure the Club’s compliance. OSU Extension is authorized to include the Club in a group tax exemption, and the Club will supply all necessary documentation to ensure the Club’s inclusion in a group tax exemption.

### Article IV. Policies

Any major decisions of the Club must be voted on by 2/3 of those youth enrolled and in good-standing unless the Executive committee was authorized to make the decision.

Major decisions include:

1. Amendment of this constitution
2. Financial disbursement from the club treasury
- 3.

### Article V. Membership

Section A. The Club will follow the current Ohio 4-H policy requirements that define eligibility age for membership:

Ohio 4-H membership is based on a child’s age AND grade as of January 1 of the current calendar year. Eligibility for Cloverbud participation begins when a child is age 5 and enrolled in kindergarten. Eligibility for participation in 4-H projects and competitive events begins when a child is age 8 and in third grade. Any youth age 9 or above is eligible for project membership, regardless of grade level. Membership requires enrollment in an authorized Ohio 4-H club or group under the direction of an OSU Extension professional or an approved adult volunteer. A youth’s 4-H eligibility ends December 31 the year they turn 19. Joining Ohio 4 H is a privilege and responsibility for individuals and is subject to the Ohio 4-H Code of Conduct and applicable policies of The Ohio State University.





Section B. The Club may work with Cloverbuds, as well as project members, age 8 and in 3<sup>rd</sup> grade through age 18 as of January 1<sup>st</sup> of the current year. If working with Cloverbud members, they will be part of the total club but will have separate activity-based learning that is appropriate for their age group.

Section C. To become a member, individuals must complete an enrollment form each year with a parent/guardian signature and agree to abide by the rules defined by the Club, the Ohio 4-H Program and the County 4-H program. Members must make a commitment to follow the values stated in the 4-H Club Member Pledge.

Section D. The Club will enroll at least 5 members from at least 3 families each year. At minimum, three of the five club youth must be at least 8 and enrolled in 3<sup>rd</sup> grade, or age 9 and above regardless of grade level for Parliamentary Procedures to be followed.

Section F. The Club will meet the standards of usage and protect the 4-H Name & Emblem as set by 4-H National Headquarters.

## **Article VI. Officers, Elections, and Duties**

Section A. The Club will have the following officers: President, Vice President, Secretary, Treasurer, (and the following optional choices of officers) Recreation Leader, Historian, News Reporter, Health Officer, Safety Officer, Environmental Officer and Community Service Leader.

Section B. Officers shall be elected annually.

Section C. Officers shall perform duties as defined in the 4-H officer guides and/or resources. If an officer resigns or can no longer serve as an officer, the Club will select a replacement.

## **Article VII. Committees**

### Section A. Executive Committee

The Executive committee will be made up of President, Vice President, Secretary, and Treasurer. This committee shall make any business decisions that must be made prior to the next regular business meeting. The Club members may also delegate decisions to this group.

### Section B. Standing Committees

Standing committees are appointed by the Club president and serve as long as needed. Each committee will consist of a chair, and enough members to get the task completed.

## **Article VIII. Meetings**

Section A. The Club will meet a minimum of six times per year. A calendar of meeting dates, times, and locations will be distributed to members.

Section B. All youth and volunteers are expected to attend at minimum 50% of club meetings. Members will be given an excused absence for illness and other reasons. Members must contact an advisor or officer, prior to the meeting and explain why they are unable to attend the meeting.

## **Article IX. Leadership**

The Club shall be under the direction and guidance of adult local club leader(s) who have completed the Ohio 4-H Youth Development volunteer selection process.



**Article X. Enrollment and Registrations**

Annually, members are required to complete a variety of enrollment registration forms and other paperwork in order to participate in 4-H activities and events such as project judging, fairs, clinics, workshops, camps, and awards. It is each member's responsibility to meet the deadline for completion of these forms. Failure to complete the materials in a timely manner may result in non-participation in the activity.

**Article XI. Financial Reporting and Responsibilities**

Section A. The Ohio 4-H fiscal year is defined as January 1 through December 31.

Section B. The Club will obtain and maintain its own Tax Payer Identification Number (TIN), also known as Employee Identification Number (EIN).

Section C. The Club Annual Financial Report in the format requested by OSU Extension must be submitted to the County Extension office every year by the date established by OSU Extension.

Section D. An annual IRS 990 filing (Form 990, 990EZ, or 990N, depending on Club revenue) must be completed by May 15 for the previous tax year.

**Article XII. Use of Club Revenue**

Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code prohibits the Club from paying any net earnings beyond reimbursements for the Club's expenses, to any of its members, directors, or officers. Additionally, Section 501(c)(3) prohibits the Club from participating in or taking sides either in political campaigns or in any effort to pass a specific law. The Club will primarily operate for educational purposes. The above limitations are explained in more detail in the following paragraph.

No part of the net earnings of the Club shall inure to the benefit of, or be distributable to its members, trustees, officers, or other private persons, except that the Club shall be authorized and empowered to pay reasonable compensation for services rendered and to make payments and distributions in furtherance of the purposes set forth in Article II. above. No substantial part of the activities of the Club shall be the carrying on of propaganda, or otherwise attempting to influence legislation, and the Club shall not participate in, or intervene in (including the publishing or distribution of statements) any political campaign on behalf of or in opposition to any candidate for public office. Notwithstanding any other provision of this constitution the Club shall not carry on any other activities not permitted to be carried on (a) by a corporation or unincorporated association exempt from federal income tax under section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code, or the corresponding section of any future federal tax code, or (b) by a corporation, or unincorporated association contributions to which are deductible under section 170(c)(2) of the Internal Revenue Code, or the corresponding section of any future federal tax code.





Article XIII. Dissolution

Upon dissolution of the Club, any assets shall be distributed to a recognized 4-H club/4-H affiliate or distributed to the Ohio 4-H Youth Development Foundation with the approval of the county 4-H Youth Development Professional as long as such organization is an exempt organization within the meaning of section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code, or the corresponding section of any future federal tax code, or shall be distributed to the federal government, or to a state or local government, for a public purpose if such organization is not exempt. Any such assets not so disposed of shall be disposed of by a Court of Competent Jurisdiction of the county in which the principal office of the corporation is then located, exclusively for such purposes or to such organization or organizations, as said Court shall determine, which are organized and operated exclusively for such purposes.

This constitution has been adopted by the members of \_\_\_\_\_ 4-H Club  
on \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature  
Club Organizational Advisor

\_\_\_\_\_  
Printed Name  
Club Organizational Advisor

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature  
Club President

\_\_\_\_\_  
Printed Name  
Club President





## 4-H Club By-Laws – OPTIONAL

*The 4-H Club Constitution is required for every 4-H Club. Though optional, Clubs may create their own set of operational “By-Laws”, as long the added rules do not conflict with the Club Constitution.*

*Include any additional Club rules, guidelines, expectations or policies not listed in the constitution: dues, committees, achievement requirements, record books, project exhibition, fund raising, club trips, etc.*

*Below are examples of optional articles that could be included in a 4-H Club’s By-Law.*

### 4-H Club By-Laws

#### Article I. Name

The name of the Club shall be \_\_\_\_\_ 4-H Club (the “Club”). Organized in the county of \_\_\_\_\_, OH.

#### Article II. Meetings

- Meetings held at on the 3<sup>rd</sup> Wednesday, 7 pm, monthly.
- The re-organization meeting held the third Wednesday in January.
- The annual achievement and awards program held the 3<sup>rd</sup> Wednesday in October.

#### Article III. Policies

- The Club will hold a minimum of six meetings annually that include business, social and recreation activities, and hands-on fun learning.
- All youth and volunteers are expected to attend at minimum 50% of club meetings.
- A simple majority of “votes in favor” will pass decisions, except those identified in the constitution as a major decision, which must be voted on by 2/3 of the membership.

#### Article V. Parliamentary Procedures

The Club will use basic principles of parliamentary procedures as defined in Roberts Rules of Order.

#### Article VI. Officers

- Election of officers will occur one month after the re-organization meeting.
- Nominations from the floor will also be permitted.
- The Club will vote on vacancies in any given office.

#### Article VII. Committees

Standing committees will be: (1) Awards and Recognition Banquet Committee, (2) Fundraising Committee, (3) Community Service, (4) Constitution and By-laws, and (5) Activities Committee.





These By-Laws have been adopted by the members of \_\_\_\_\_ 4-H Club  
on \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature  
Club Organizational Advisor

\_\_\_\_\_  
Printed Name  
Club Organizational Advisor

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature  
Club President

\_\_\_\_\_  
Printed Name  
Club President

Members Present



## 4-H Club Yearly Meetings at a Glance Worksheet

Meeting #	Date/Time	Location	Greeter/ Welcome Activity	Business	Program	Recreation	Refreshments
1							
2							
3							
4							
5							
6							
7							
8							
9							
10							
<b>Activities you may want to include:</b> Committee Work Guest Speaker Health & Safety Talks			Family Activity Community Service Fund Raising Projects	Demonstrations Project Work Group Project Recognition/ Induction Ceremony			

Written by Carolyn Wilson, OSU Extension, former Guernsey County 4-H Educator



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AND ENVIRONMENTAL SCIENCES



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CFAES provides research and related educational programs to clientele on a nondiscriminatory basis. For more information: go.osu.edu/ctae/diversity

## Ohio 4-H Charter Checklist

**4-H National Headquarters and Ohio 4-H Youth Development require that all clubs be chartered.**

Please complete this checklist to determine whether your club has met the Ohio 4-H Club charter requirements. This checklist will be reviewed by your County 4-H Extension Professional. Chartered 4-H clubs are permitted to use the 4-H Name and Emblem according to 4-H National Headquarter guidelines. Clubs that meet these minimum requirements will be granted/continue a charter. The charter checklist must be reviewed every year to assure a club's continued compliance with the 4-H Club criteria.

Name of 4-H Club \_\_\_\_\_ EIN #\_\_-\_\_\_\_\_- (9 digits)

Name of Contact Advisor \_\_\_\_\_

Address of Contact Advisor \_\_\_\_\_

<b>Criteria – Advisors to mark (x) the appropriate box:</b>	<b>Requirements Met</b>	<b>Not Met</b>
All of our adult club volunteers are approved through the Ohio 4-H Volunteer Selection Process.		
Our 4-H club has at least five youth members from three different families		
The name of our 4-H club was approved through the County Extension Office.		
Our club plans to conduct a minimum of six regular club meetings per year.		
Our club has a current constitution.		
Our club has elected officers.		
Our 4-H club agrees to provide a welcoming and safe environment for all club members.		
Our 4-H club plans a series of experiential learning experiences for club members.		
Our 4-H club agrees to follow all national, state and county 4-H policies and procedures.		
Our 4-H club agrees to follow the national and state 4-H guidelines for the use of the 4-H Name and Emblem.		
Our club agrees to follow national and state 4-H guidelines for fundraising.		
Our club agrees to maintain its own Taxpayer Identification Number (EIN/TIN) and complete an IRS 990 filing by May 15 each tax year.		





Our 4-H club will not participate in any political campaign or devote time to attempt to influence legislation.		
Our club agrees to submit a financial report at the end of each club program year.		
Upon dissolution of this club, we agree that any assets will be distributed for a tax exempt purpose.		
Additional Comments from Club Advisor(s):		
Advisor's Signature/Date		
Reviewer Comments:	Circle One	
	Charter Granted	Charter Denied
Extension Professional's Signature/Date		

Revised 3/12/2015

## 4-H Group Tax Exemption Authorization

*PLEASE PRINT CLEARLY*

Name of 4-H Club or Organization: \_\_\_\_\_

County \_\_\_\_\_

Contact Person: \_\_\_\_\_

Taxpayer Identification Number: \_\_\_\_\_  
(Also know as TIN or Employee Identification Number - EIN)

Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

By the signature below of its duly authorized Organizational Advisor, the above 4-H club or 4-H affiliate hereby authorizes The Ohio State University Extension Office to include it in The Ohio State University application for group exemption to be filed with the Internal Revenue Service.

Under penalties of perjury, I certify that the number shown above is the correct taxpayer identification number and that the club or organization named above was organized in the United States.

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Signature)

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Print name)

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Title)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

Return your completed form to:  
**Stark County Extension**  
**2800 Richville Drive SE – Ste 100**  
**Massillon OH 44646**

{00105925-1}



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EXTENSION

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