

CONSTITUTION OF THE BERRIEN COUNTY 4-H LEADERS ASSOCIATION, INC.

ARTICLE I

Purpose

Section 1. The name of this organization shall be known as the Berrien County 4-H Leaders Association, Inc.

Section 2. The purposes of this Association are:

- A. To give guidance and counsel to the County Extension Staff on the 4-H Program and its human, financial and physical support.
- B. To promote the well-being of 4-H and the Cooperative Extension Service.
- C. To help to provide non-tax dollar support for the County 4-H Program.

Section 3. The Board of Directors of this Association shall be known as the Berrien County 4-H Council, who shall make decisions and take action as elected representatives on behalf of the total membership.

ARTICLE II

Membership

Qualifications for membership: All 4-H Leaders, Administrative, Project, Resource Leaders, and all teens shall be eligible for membership in this Association.

- A. Adult Representatives: all 4-H leaders, Administrative, Project and Resource Leaders, who are gold-level or silver-level for the current year.
- B. Teen Representatives: All 4-H teen members (13-19 years old or up to 26 years old if eligible) who are members of Berrien County 4-H during the current year.
- C. Inactive past Leaders who have been recognized as Outstanding 4-H Leaders and other distinguished 4-H alumni.

ARTICLE III

Meetings

Section 1. The fiscal year of this Association shall begin the first day of January and conclude the last day of December of the current calendar year.

Section 2. The Annual Meeting of this Association shall be held in April or May of each calendar year.

Section 3. Association Meetings may be called by the President, a simple majority of the

Council, the Berrien County 4-H Youth Development Program, or upon the petition of 10 or more members of this Association.

Section 4. Notice of the Annual and all other membership meetings of this Association shall be sent to all members of record, by either the Extension Office, or the Council via hardcopy and/or electronically at least thirty days prior to the date of meeting. Such notice shall be promoted to the general public at least one week prior to said meeting(s), including the time, date, place and purpose(s) of the meeting.

ARTICLE IV

Board of Directors

Section 1. The Board of Directors shall be known as the Berrien County 4-H Council.

- A. Shall consist of 9 adults, who are current members of this Association, and 3 teen representatives.
- B. Term of office of said adult council member(s) shall be three (3) years. Term of office of said teen council member(s) shall be two (2) years.
 - 1. Council members may be re-elected to a second consecutive term of office, at the conclusion of which they must retire from Council for at least one (1) year before once again becoming eligible for election.
 - 2. Council members that are elected to complete a partial term will still be eligible to be re-elected for two (2) consecutive terms after the completion of the partial term.
- C. Council members are elected by mail-in ballots on a plurality vote basis.
- D. Shall conduct the official business of this Association.
- E. Leaders, in their retired year from council, cannot be appointed to fill any vacancy if other leaders express interest in filling the vacancy. If the Election Committee has not found any leaders to fill the position, the Extension Office will send notice to all leaders on record to inquire about interest before any appointed placement occurs.

Section 2. Duties of the Directors:

- A. To represent the 4-H Leaders Association in all actions and discussions.
- B. To give guidance and counsel to the Berrien County 4-H Youth Development Program.
- C. To promote 4-H.

- D. To communicate with leaders, clubs and all 4-H committees and boards.
- E. To administrate and be responsible for all business affairs of the 4-H Leaders Association.
- F. To annually allocate, by approved budget, financial support to the Berrien County 4-H Program.
- G. To conduct and oversee, on behalf of all 4-H leaders and members, fund-raising activities that help provide the non-tax dollar support needed by the County 4-H Program.

Section 3. Election of Council Member

- A. The annual election shall be conducted in the following manner:
 - 1. The President shall appoint a nominating committee composed of not less than Four (4) members, one of which shall be a teen. The committee shall survey the membership of said Association to determine eligible adults and the 4-H membership list for eligible teens. At least one member's name shall be submitted for each vacancy on the Council. The nominating committee report must be submitted to the Berrien County 4-H Youth Development Program no later than-September 1st.
 - 2. The report of said Nominating Committee shall be made at the September Meeting of the Council.
 - 3. Nominee's names and resumes will be included in the Fall Newsletter.
 - 4. Ballots will be sent to eligible volunteers and members by coordination between the election committee chair and Berrien County 4-H Youth Development Program.
 - 5. All voting must be complete and returned to the MSU Extension Office by November 15 of the current year. All ballots received shall be audited and counted by the elections committee and report results to the Council at the November meeting. Results must be adopted by the Council at this time. The three (3) adult nominees receiving the highest number of votes will be declared to the Council. Any ties in the first ballot shall be broken by a random drawing, witnessed by at least two Council. This procedure shall also apply to the election of teen representatives.
 - 6. The ballot shall consist of names of persons confirmed by the nominating committee. Space shall be provided on all ballots for a "write-in" candidate(s). Incumbents shall be noted on the ballot. Adult leaders vote for adult leaders only, and teen members vote for teen representatives only.
 - 7. New Council members shall be seated at the Council's re-organizational

meeting held in January. Current Council members shall continue to serve until their replacement has been elected and seated at the re organizational meeting of the Council.

Section 4. Officers of the Council are the same for the Association

- A. Officers shall include a President, Vice-President, Secretary and Treasurer.
- B. Officers shall be elected by current and incoming Council members at the reorganization meeting in January. Current Election Committee Chair will be responsible to conduct nominations and vote (current or outgoing).
- C. The term for all officers is for one (1) year. An officer may be re-elected in the succeeding year.

Section 5. Duties of Officers

- A. President - the President shall be the presiding officer of the 4-H Leaders Association. He/She shall be considered the official representative of the Association wherever his/her capacity is needed. He/She shall appoint all committees as the need arises and shall be either an active member on committees or ex-officio of all committees. The President shall have the authority to make the necessary decisions between Council meetings to dispose of situations which may arise. Such decisions shall not be contrary to this Constitution or approved Council Policies. All Council members may be contacted as necessary for consultation. Any such decisions shall be reported at the next Council meeting for review.
- B. Vice-President - the Vice-President shall assist the President in the efficient conduct of 4-H business, including in the absence of the President, he/she shall assume the duties of the President.
- C. Secretary - the Secretary shall keep a record of minutes and attendance of all Council members of all meetings and answer correspondence.
- D. Treasurer - the Treasurer shall keep a record of receipts and expenditures and shall present a full accounting of finances at the end of the fiscal year to the audit committee. Said officer shall prepare an annual financial report and present it at the Annual Meeting of the Association.

Section 6. Council Vacancies

- A. Any member of the Council who is absent for three(3) consecutive meetings, including Re-organizational and Annual Meetings, as duly noted by the Council Secretary, shall be considered for replacement. Consideration should be given to the desires of the absent member to remain on the Council as well as other special circumstances. If the absent member no longer desires to remain on the Council, their position shall be declared vacant. If the absent member wishes to continue on the Council, the Council shall vote on allowing the absent member to continue on the

Council at the next business meeting, with the absent member restricted from voting on the question.

- B. Council members who are aware of an impending extended absence are encouraged to submit their resignation to minimize the time the Council will be short of members.
- C. Any vacancy that shall arise shall be filled by the Council at their next regular meeting following the declared vacancy by approval of the majority present of an agreeable candidate. The term of office of vacancy filled by the Council, shall be until the next annual election, at which time the office shall be declared vacant and the Berrien County Leaders Association shall elect a member to the Council to fill the unexpired term of said vacancy.

Section 7. Regular Meetings

- A. The meetings of the Council shall normally be held on the fourth Monday of the month.
- B. There shall be at least six (6) regular meetings each year.
- C. The place, date, agenda and time for each meeting is to be designated by the President in cooperation with the Berrien County 4-H Youth Development Program.
- D. Regular meetings shall be run according to "Robert's Rules of Order".
- E. A quorum shall be six Council members.
- F. Remote Meeting Attendance should be reserved for times when circumstances do not allow for in-person attendance. A virtual meeting program with video, will be made available for each meeting. Council members should contact the council president and the Berrien County 4-H Youth Development Program in order to obtain connection information.

Section 8. Special Meetings

- A. Special meetings may be called by the President, any Council member, Berrien County 4-H Youth Development Program, or by a petition of any ten (10) members of the Association.
- B. Special meetings shall be run according to "Robert's Rules of Order".

Section 9. Ex-Officio Members

- A. The current Berrien County 4-H Youth Development Program shall be ex-officio members of said Association and Council.
- B. Such members serve as consultants and advisors but have no voting privileges and must be notified of any and all meetings of the Council and Association by the Secretary or President of the Council.

Section 10. Committees and Appointments of the Council and Association

- A. The Council shall have several standing committees directly under its

supervision and direction. Standing committee members are appointed by the President and may include both Council members and non-Council members. The President must appoint at least one of its members as chairperson for each of its committees.

Examples of Standing Committees include Budget and Investment, Promotion, Annual Election, Annual Association (Leaders) Meeting, Recognition, Audit, Scholarship, Training & Education, Fund Raising, and others named from time to time as the pleasure of the Council.

B. Foundation Representative

1. One Council member shall be designated to serve on the 4-H Foundation for a one (1) year term. This member shall be determined at the January meeting by:

1. Endorsing a single willing candidate
2. Voting to select from multiple candidates
3. Presidential appointment if there are no candidates

Section 11. Council Policies

- A. The Leaders Council may formulate Policies to further implement this Constitution or otherwise ensure efficient operation of the 4-H Program. Council Policies shall not contradict any provision in this Constitution. Policies shall be approved by Council vote and shared with the membership of the Association as practical. Council Policies should be numbered and structured for ease of reference in 4-H business and should normally be reviewed each year.

ARTICLE V

Association Funds

Section 1. The funds of the Association shall be deposited in such financial institutions as may be designated by the Council.

Section 2. The Treasurer shall be empowered to sign all checks for disbursements up to \$899.99. Checks for disbursements of \$900.00 or more shall require a written/emailed authorization of an additional officer whose name appears on the respective signature cards of that institution.

Section 3. Association funds in such financial institutions are subject to withdrawal only on the signatures of any two officers whose names appear on the respective signature cards of the institution.

Section 4. Association funds shall be used to promote and implement the County 4-H Program in cooperation with funding from the 4-H Foundation. Funds shall normally be spent directly on the implementation and support of 4-H Programs and/or 4-H members participating in 4-H Programs. Association funds may be used for scholarships for 4-H alumni, selected community programs in accordance with approved budgets, and other expenditures judged to

be prudent by the Leaders Council.

Section 5. The annual audit or financial review will take place between January 1 and the Re-organizational meeting each year.

ARTICLE VI

Amendments

Section 1. This constitution may be amended if written notice of intent is given to all members of this said Association at least one month prior to action involving said amendment(s) or revisions. At the meeting following notice of intent there must be a majority vote of the members of the 4-H Leaders Association present at the meeting to adopt said amendment, amendments, or revision. Either or all of said meetings may be duly called special meetings.

(Last amended: April 2025)