

Youth Advisory Committee: Information for Provincial Offices

Terms of Reference

About the Youth Advisory Committee

The Youth Advisory Committee (YAC) is the national youth voice for 4-H Canada, providing leadership opportunities for outstanding young people from across the country who are currently active 4-H members or recent alumni. Our YAC members – one per province for a total of 10 members – are youth who want to continue to play a role and contribute to the 4-H movement in Canada.

Roles and responsibilities of YAC members

As part of their mandate, YAC members should meet the following requirements:

- Attend and actively participate in monthly meetings and all scheduled training
- Participate actively in the ongoing work of YAC including participating in YAC subcommittees focused on advancing and achieving YAC priorities and goals.
- Carry out the following responsibilities as applicable:
 - Assist 4-H Canada staff in the planning and facilitation of national conferences.
 - Act in an advisory capacity to 4-H Canada staff on the development of youth-friendly programs, resources, marketing and communication materials, web content, etc.
 - Representing 4-H youth members at the national level on national Committees and/or Working Groups as well as to the 4-H Canada Board of Directors.
 - Attend and provide youth insight to the ongoing work of the 4-H Canada Board and Foundation committees as requested and able.
- Represent 4-H Canada within their province and promote national programs and opportunities through provincial networks.
- Represent 4-H Canada at various events and promote national programs and opportunities.
- Be a positive role model for 4-H members.
- Represent provinces and complete all provincial duties as required.
- Share 4-H Canada events and key messages with networks within 4-H.

Criteria for becoming a YAC member

To be eligible, prospective YAC members must:

- be between 18 to 25 years old.
 - Candidates must be 18 years of age as of January 1 of the year in which they begin their term.
 - Candidates should not turn 26 before the end of their term.
- be current 4-H members in good standing or recent alumni, within three years of aging out of the 4-H program.
- commit to:
 - volunteer at least two hours per month for YAC duties and additional time as required
 - attend scheduled meetings and contribute to discussions and decisions
 - maintain strong ongoing communications with 4-H Canada staff and fellow YAC
 - contribute actively to all committees and working groups assigned to
 - meet all deadlines set by 4-H Canada and their respective province
 - share 4-H Canada events and key messages with their 4-H networks.
- demonstrate knowledge of 4-H nationally, provincially, and locally.
- demonstrate an interest in public speaking, group facilitation and being a team player.
- be willing to travel within Canada to at least one in-person meeting and one additional meeting, program, or event within Canada to be determined (depending on requirements).

YAC Structure

YAC Executive Roles

During the first meeting of the year, YAC members will hold an election to fill the roles of:

- Chair
- Vice-Chair
- Secretary

National Committees and Working Groups

Each YAC member commits to contributing actively to one National Committee or Working Group. Each Committee/Working Group has a different purpose and role. Committees/Working Groups are designed to allow YAC members to take part in the planning and carrying out of various programs and initiatives and to gain concrete experience within 4-H Canada operations and governance.

Members sign up to be part of one Committee/Working Group each year depending on their availability. After that year, YAC members can choose to move into a different Committee/Working Group. Committees/Working Group meetings will vary and fluctuate depending on the group and the tasks. Each Committee/Working Group will have a schedule independent of the overall YAC schedule.



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The National Committees and Working Groups include:

- Program Innovation Committee
 - Strategy-focused committee with the purpose of identifying and/or developing:
 - strategic initiatives and best practices around youth programming
 - innovative models and approaches within 4-H that may be replicated within the movement
 - tools and training to build diversity, equity, and inclusion within 4-H
- Brand Committee
 - Strategy-focused committee with the purpose of convening conversations, consulting on strategic projects and hearing recommendations from stakeholders on national priorities of the 4-H movement that are being managed and resourced by 4-H Canada to support growth.
- Youth Safety and Standards Working Group
 - Operationally focused committee tasked with ongoing work to support world-class youth development standards and youth safety.
- Research and Data Committee
 - Strategy-focused committee of 4-H Canada with the purpose of convening conversations, consulting on strategic projects and hearing recommendations from stakeholders on national priorities of the 4-H movement that are being managed and resourced by 4-H Canada around digital platforms and data to improve infrastructure and insights.
 - May also choose to act as a resource for surveys and measurement required on an ad hoc basis from any stakeholder to review measurement tools to ensure consistency and rigour.
- Marketing, Communications, and Fundraising Working Group
 - Operationally focused committee tasked with stewarding and advancing established communications and brand initiatives, as well as national fundraising initiatives.
 - Engaged in the communications and/or fundraising function of their organization.
- Board Representatives
 - must be a second-year YAC; receive an automatic term extension of 1 year
 - two non-voting seats on the 4-H Canada Board of Directors
 - determined by an application process

YAC Membership Terms

A YAC member's term lasts two years, with the possibility of renewal for an additional one-year term, if the YAC member is a representative on the 4-H Canada Board of Directors, or if both provincial and national offices agree to do so. The year officially starts in January.

New YAC members are invited to join the YAC January meeting as observers and for onboarding purposes. The outgoing YAC will facilitate information sharing with the new YAC to help ensure a smooth transition process and the continuation of YAC priorities and work. At the regularly scheduled February meeting, new YAC members officially assume their roles, National Committees and Working



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Groups are selected, a new YAC Chair, Vice-Chair and Secretary are elected, and farewells are given to outgoing YAC members.

YAC members are only eligible to apply for a position as a Board Representative in the second year of their term. Therefore, those who are a part of this group will be automatically extended for one year.

If you would like to extend your provincial YAC's term, please send an email request to 4-H Canada staff outlining the reasons.

YAC Membership Selection

YAC members are selected through their provincial 4-H office. Selection processes vary among provinces, but 4-H Canada has a standard application form and job description (included in this package) that provinces are requested to use or adapt. When selecting a YAC member, it is highly recommended you involve the current YAC member to help with the selection process, as they can provide insight and knowledge on the role. 4-H Canada is also happy to assist with your selection process and answer any questions that may arise.

Names of new YAC members must be submitted to 4-H Canada by January 6, 2025.

If you are unsure when your YAC member term ends, please email 4-H Canada staff for assistance.

Suggested timelines for the selection process

It is important to start the selection process early before your current YAC member's term comes to an end. Here is a sample timeline:

- August/September → Advertise for the YAC position
- October → Hold interviews and complete reference checks
- November → Selection of your new YAC member is complete, and their name is submitted to 4-H Canada

YAC Support

YAC is supported by a 4-H Canada staff member and a 4-H Canada Board of Directors member who acts as a mentor.

Staff

The 4-H Canada **Program Director** supports YAC by:

- administering the budget.
- assisting provinces in facilitating the YAC selection process.
- offering mentorship and support for YAC members.
- identifying and confirming YAC opportunities.
- connecting YAC to other 4-H Canada staff for Committee/Working Groups, and as needed.



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- supporting the YAC Chair, Vice Chair and Secretary in their roles
- develop and update resources, documentation, and contact lists.
- following up with working groups YAC are involved in.
- clarifying information, roles, and guidelines for new and existing YAC members.
- offering mentorship and support to YAC members.
- meeting agenda development with the Chair of YAC as needed.

4-H Canada Board of Directors Member/Mentor

The 4-H Canada Board of Directors Member/YAC Mentor supports YAC Board members by:

- playing a mentor role to individual YAC members who sit on the 4-H Canada Board of Directors (two non-voting members).
- facilitating a meeting with YAC representatives to the Board to ensure they understand their roles and expectations and understand Board policy and process (including review of the governance manual).
- advocating for meaningful youth engagement at the Board level.
- supporting YAC members in reporting on Board meetings, YAC meetings and the Annual General Meeting.

YAC Meetings

YAC will meet monthly as a committee, including, when possible, one in-person meeting per year. A schedule for YAC meetings will be set by YAC members collaboratively and led by the YAC Chair and Vice-Chair. When possible, the in-person meeting will take place during the 4-H Canada Leadership Summit, and all expenses will be covered by 4-H Canada. The remaining meetings will take place by video conference.

YAC meetings will follow an agenda and are an opportunity to:

- hear updates from YAC members regarding their provincial activities.
- find out about 4-H Canada programs, initiatives, and events.
- get updates from Committees/Working Groups regarding various programs, initiatives, and events they are involved in.
- hear reports from the two YAC representatives to the 4-H Canada Board of Directors.
- discuss other agenda items as needed.

Whenever possible, YAC meetings will be scheduled three weeks before 4-H Canada Board of Director meetings for YAC Representatives to prepare and share relevant information with Board members.



Dismissal of a YAC member

If a YAC member has been inactive in their role for two months or longer, dismissal may be initiated by the 4-H Canada Program Director.

Inactivity includes:

- not attending three consecutive meetings, i.e., a combination of scheduled Committee/Working Group meetings and YAC meetings.
- not carrying out roles and responsibilities as outlined in this document.
- not communicating with fellow YAC members and/or 4-H Canada staff or mentors.
- not meeting agreed-upon deadlines.

Dismissal will be carried out in three steps:

1. The 4-H Canada Program Director will send the YAC member an email indicating that corrective behaviour is needed. The email will outline clear expectations, objectives, and timelines for the YAC member to meet to continue in their role. The email sent will be cc'd to the provincial contact, 4-H Canada Board of Directors mentor and 4-H Canada CEO. Response by YAC member is required within 48 hours.
2. If no response or correction is made, the 4-H Canada Program Director will phone the YAC member. Together they will address the issues and discuss how they may be resolved. Objectives and timelines will be agreed upon.
3. If no response or correction is made again, the YAC member will be dismissed in writing. The email will be cc'd to the provincial contact, 4-H Canada Board of Directors mentor and 4-H Canada CEO.

If dismissal is initiated by the province:

In a case where a provincial 4-H office has concerns and is considering dismissing their YAC representative, they must initiate a discussion with the 4-H Canada Program Director to notify them of their concerns.

Together, the 4-H Canada Program Director and the provincial 4-H office will proceed in carrying out a similar dismissal process as the one outlined above.

Ways to Engage Your YAC Member

4-H Canada Youth Advisory Committee members can play a key role in supporting and promoting provincial activities in addition to national programs.

Here are some ideas for involving your provincial YAC representative provincially:

- ✓ Invite your provincial YAC representative to regional and provincial events, conferences, and camps, as a way for them to interact and share information and experiences with 4-H members.
- ✓ Consider engaging your provincial YAC representative in your governance structure and decision-making processes.
- ✓ Ask your provincial YAC representative to do a presentation or year-end report at a 4-H Board of Directors meeting.
- ✓ Invite your YAC representative to be a part of the Board of Directors as a youth advisor and/or full Board member.
- ✓ Tap into your YAC representative if you need a youth perspective or a youth-friendly opinion on a specific issue or decision.
- ✓ Invite your provincial YAC representative to participate in media interviews related to 4-H.
- ✓ Ask your YAC representative to help you share program information and promote new initiatives.
- ✓ Tap into YAC as a guest speaker or co-facilitator at events and conferences.
- ✓ Involve your outgoing YAC representative in the selection process of new YAC members. They know best what to look for in a strong candidate and they know best what level of commitment is required in their role.