**IOWA 4-H SHOOTING SPORTS PROGRAM PLAN**

**AND REQUIREMENTS**

## Mission and Objectives

The **Safety & Education Shooting Sports Program** is part of Iowa 4-H Youth Development. The mission of Iowa 4-H Youth Development is empowering youth to reach their full potential through youth–adult partnerships and research-based experiences.

The National Objectives of the 4-H Shooting Sports Program include but are not limited to

* To encourage participation in natural resources and related natural science programs by exposing youth to the content through shooting, hunting, and related activities.
* To enhance development of self-concept, character, and personal growth through safe, educational, and socially acceptable involvement in shooting activities.
* To teach safe and responsible use of firearms and archery equipment, including sound decision-making, self-discipline, and concentration.
* To promote the highest standards of safety, sportsmanship, and ethical behavior.
* To expose participants to the broad array of vocational and lifelong avocational activities related to shooting sports.
* To strengthen families through participation in lifelong recreational activities.
* To complement and enhance the impact of existing safety, shooting, and hunter education programs, using experiential educational methods and progressive development of skills and abilities.

The Iowa 4-H SESS Program uses experiential learning and youth–adult partnerships. Based on the above objectives, SESS falls under the Iowa 4-H Program Priorities of STEM and Healthy Living. Positive Youth Development (PYD) occurs at all levels of the Shooting Sports program, with the primary focus on safety and education before competition. This does not diminish the importance of competition which is a core principle of SESS.

The Iowa 4-H program’s priority areas align with Iowa State University, Iowa State University Extension and Outreach, and 4-H National Headquarters. Iowa considers 4-H Clubs and Learning Communities as its deepest and most sustainable level of intervention.

## Positive Youth Development Elements of Shooting Sports

* Shooting Sports should be conducted as a group project with appropriate supervision, rather than as an individual 4-H member independent project.
* SESS uses a prevention education model.
* SESS emphasizes youth–adult partnerships and peer leadership.
* SESS teaches safe shooting and wildlife management.
* SESS has the potential to reach new youth and volunteers to 4-H.
* Competitive events are not the main objective of the program but are optional and individual.

## Administration of the Iowa 4-H Shooting Sports Program

The Iowa 4-H Shooting Sports Program is administered by the Iowa 4-H Program Leader and the 4-H STEM coordinator, with the support of the Iowa 4-H SESS Steering Committee.

### Structure of the State SESS Steering Committee

* Committee membership shall include State Program Leader; State Program Coordinator; state-level, nationally certified 4-H SESS instructors, 4-H volunteers, Extension staff, and state SESS youth ambassadors.
* Committee leadership will be provided by State STEM Coordinator.
* The Steering Committee is an appointed committee and not elected.

### Role of the SESS Steering Committee and STEM Coordinator

* Administer the program.
* Develop a program outline for counties to follow.
* Provide orientation to county staff on SESS.
* Assist with resource development in support of the program.
* Assist program operations and administration in cooperation with County Extension staff.
* Review training requirements for instructor certification.
* Conducts instructor training and certification.
* Maintain files of 4-H SESS instructor certification status.
* Provide leadership for state SESS events, including:
  + All SESS Instructor trainings and certifications.
  + State 4-H Youth SESS Qualifying Match.
  + Other state SESS events the committee establishes with approval of the State 4-H Program Leader.
  + Other State 4-H SESS contests, events, fun shoots, activities, or programs as established by the committee and supported by Extension 4-H Administration.
* Shooting Sports committee will work to incorporate additional training to improve instructor skills.

## Instructor Guidelines, Certification, and Expectations

### Instructors’ Code of Ethics

* Instructors should demonstrate a positive role model for youth to follow.
* All 4-H Shooting Sports instructors or volunteers must review, sign, accept, and abide by the National Shooting Sports Code of Ethics AND the Iowa 4-H Code of Conduct for Volunteers.

### Instructor Certification Requirements

SESS requires the use of national 4-H-trained-and-certified instructors to provide certification training in programs within the various disciplines. The National 4-H Shooting Sports Curriculum is *the* established adult-teaching curriculum for training adults to teach youth the 4-H Shooting Sports disciplines.

No person may be certified as an instructor until the following requirements are met:

1. The prospective volunteer must complete an application at the County Extension office and approved by their County Extension council.
2. The prospective volunteer must complete the appropriate screening.
3. The prospective volunteer must be recommended by County Extension staff and county coordinator.
4. Must be 21 years of age.
5. Successful completion of instructor training sessions as administered by the SESS Steering Committee.
   1. Only one discipline certification may be achieved at a single state-sponsored training-and-certification workshop, except for Coordinators.
   2. A participant must attend all the training sessions at a state-sponsored workshop which includes 12 hours of discipline instruction, an additional 6 hours on topics of SESS philosophy, positive youth development, risk management, planning county programs, and any additional topics identified by the State SESS Steering Committee.
   3. The training will include demonstrated competency to instruct as determined by a written test, trainer observation, and other screening used in training.

### Out-of-State Certifications

If certification is completed out of state, proof of certification must be provided to the County Extension Office and the State office, and volunteer must meet all five points listed above. An Iowa Discipline Instructor Manual will be provided at that time.

### Levels of Instructor Certifications

**Level I** — A local 4-H shooting sports instructor that has successfully completed a state-level instructor workshop in a discipline that has met the national minimum standards.

**Level II** — A national 4-H shooting sports instructor that has successfully completed a national 4-H instructor workshop in a discipline and has been approved by the State 4-H Coordinator and State Committee.

**Level III** — National Instructor: A national 4-H instructor (Level II) that is actively engaged in training volunteers at the state level adheres to national guidelines in their instruction, has an instructor application on file, has apprenticed at a national-level workshop, and has been approved by the National 4-H Shooting Sports Committee as a national-level instructor.

The SESS Steering Committee reserves the right to withhold instructor certification.

### Instructor Renewals and Recertification

1. Maintain an updated profile in 4HOnline.
2. Instruct at least once in a two-year period — the class must be reported and documented.
3. Volunteers must want to continue in their role in the SESS program.
4. The county must want to see the volunteer continue in their role.
5. All Iowa 4-H Shooting Sports volunteers must attend Annual 4-H Volunteer Training in their respective county.
6. Complete recertification once every three years consisting of 3.5 hours of discipline-specific instructions and updates, plus a 1.5-hour session on updates to Iowa 4-H Shooting Sports policies and Positive Youth Development (PYD) practices
   * + If you are an approved instructor in more than two disciplines, you will need to attend multiple recertification sessions to maintain your status.
7. If the certification lapses, the volunteer must repeat the state training program.

### Guidelines of Shooting Sports Program Instructors

1. All Iowa SESS instructors will need to obtain 4-H SESS Program Instructor Certification BEFORE conducting programs with youth.
2. 4-H Certification is required for volunteers in the Shooting Sports discipline projects: Archery, Rifle (Air Rifle and Smallbore Rifle), Pellet Pistol, Shotgun, Muzzleloader and Wildlife Skills. No other certification or qualifications are accepted as a substitute.
3. All Shooting Sports instructors must have current 4-H SESS training and certifications.
4. Only 4-H-certified SESS instructors may conduct a SESS activity in the specific discipline they are certified in.
5. Instructors have the right to refuse any participant from an activity, in the interest of safety for that participant and others in the program.
6. 4-H-trained-and-certified instructors MUST adhere to safety rules and regulations.
7. National- and State-4-H-trained-and-certified instructors conduct classes and programs in the following disciplines at the county level:
   1. Rifle
   2. Shotgun
   3. Muzzle loading
   4. Hunting/Wildlife
   5. Archery
8. No certifications will be given by individual state instructors.
9. Instructors will receive a copy of the 4-H SESS Curriculum for their individual discipline. If the instructor leaves the program, the curriculum must be returned to the County Extension Office as the property of the 4-H program.

### Duties of Certified Instructors

1. Provide basic instruction to youth, as well as other duties outlined in the county volunteer job description.
2. Report all training activity and trained youth to the County Extension Office.
3. Make an annual report to the SESS Committee or designee, covering the 4-H year of September 1 to August 31. (See appendix — County Summary: Iowa 4-H Shooting Sports Annual Demographics Report)
4. Attend instructor updates or retraining sessions, as available and required by the SESS Committee
5. Cooperative programming, inter-agency cooperation, and shared use of facilities and equipment is strongly encouraged.

## Risk-Management Plan

State, County, and Club-Level Shooting Sports programs will have written risk-management plans. The plan will include items such as emergency response and preparedness, insurance, safe storage of firearms and ammunition, reloading policies, etc.

### Staffing/Supervision

* See previous section “Instructor Guidelines, Certifications, and Expectations”
* 1 adult/10 youth, or SESS instruction requirements if higher.

### Insurance

* Waivers
  + All 4-H members enrolled in the SESS program are to have a parent or guardian read and sign the Iowa Shooting Sports Parental Permission/Waiver of Liability form annually signed before participation. Forms are to be kept in a permanent file in the County Extension Office (see appendix), and a copy to be kept in club files.
  + If a waiver is required from the site hosting the meetings, it must be read and signed prior to participation. These forms are to be kept in a permanent file in the County Extension Office, and a copy to be kept in club files.
* Health History/Health Insurance/Medical Release Forms
  + All 4-H Shooting Sports members must be enrolled in 4HOnline with active membership, prior to shooting sports participation.
  + The leader will obtain and keep on file the medical release and health statements of all members and volunteers. The leader and all assistants will familiarize themselves with any special medical needs or problems of the 4-H members. Discuss with parents any procedures that should be followed in the case of an incident.
  + A copy must be on hand at all Shooting Sports events, activities, and meetings by the certified project leader.
* Accident Insurance
  + Basic accident/injury insurance is provided through a statewide policy purchased by Iowa State University Extension and Outreach. The policy provides excess coverage or secondary to a person’s individual health insurance, subject to policy limits. All SESS members and approved volunteers are included in the insurance coverage. SESS volunteers should be familiar with the accident/injury incident and claim reporting procedures. Contact your County Extension Office or State SESS Coordinator for additional information.
  + Facilities or sites where the club regularly practices may ask for a certificate of or proof of insurance. This is issued by the insurance company through which your County Extension Office is insured and merely provides proof to the facility that your club has liability insurance for this specified activity. This certificate can be obtained by contacting your County Extension Office.
* Equipment Insurance
  + A yearly inventory must be conducted and submitted to the County Extension Office (see appendix — Equipment Inventory and Memorandum of Understanding). The County Extension District may choose to carry additional insurance.
  + Liability of trailers. Current liability insurance extends coverage to trailers that are parked. However, if trailers are in tow, state law dictates that insurance falls to the individual driving the car towing the trailer.

### Emergency Procedures

An emergency plan of action should be written and followed for each training site and/or activity. This plan should consider:

* Potential risks analyzed, and procedures planned.
* Minor incidents/first aid — who treats, determines procedures (e.g., first aid kit).
* Access to emergency medical treatment (telephone on site, phone numbers to call, transportation, etc.).
* Two-deep leadership (at least two adults on hand) who both know the plan and procedures in an emergency.
* Natural-disaster or catastrophe procedure (fire, tornado, lightning, etc.).
* A completed “Site Safety Information Sheet” should be completed for each site (see appendix).

### Incident Report

The 4-H Event/Activity Incident Report should be completed for any incident. Incidents include but are not limited to illness, injury, lost/stolen valuables, accidents, property damage, safety, behavioral or other rule violations. Other issues of concern may merit an Incident Report. All incidents should be reported to the County SESS Coordinator, the County Extension Office, and the Extension Youth Program Specialist immediately. Incidents involving accidents/injuries also require an insurance claim form. See procedures under “Accident Insurance.” The written report should be kept on file at the County Extension Office. Extension staff should take appropriate action and advise the State 4-H Office of the incident. See 4-H Form 3039D “Iowa 4-H Program Incident/Injury Form” appendix.

## Equipment and Resources

### Policies for Managing 4-H Resources

* All information on 4-H club finances can be found at <https://www.extension.iastate.edu/countyservices/4-h-club-financial-management>
* All fundraisers must be approved in advance by the County Extension Council or designee.
* Equipment and supplies donated in the name of 4-H are to be used only for 4-H purposes and do not become the possession of the individual.
* Should a 4-H club disband or cease to function, any funds, donated equipment and supplies become the property of the County Extension Council. It is inappropriate and illegal to transfer funds or equipment to individual members or leaders.

### Inventory

* A memorandum of understanding will be maintained between the County Extension Office and the County SESS club, regarding equipment and inventory.
* A yearly inventory will be conducted and submitted to the County Extension Office.
  + The inventory must be as detailed as possible (donor, date of donation, brand name, model name/number, and serial/identification number if available)

(see appendix — Equipment Inventory and Memorandum of Understanding).

* Only approved, current instructors may sign out program equipment from inventory.

### Firearm Storage and Transportation

The National 4-H Shooting Sports Committee suggests the following standards for adoption by state programs in the storage and transportation of firearms and ammunition.

#### General Storage Principles

1. All storage areas should require multiple keys or combinations for access on at least two levels (i.e., locked storage inside locked locations).
2. Control of all keys and combinations must rest with those responsible for the equipment being stored and restricted to those individuals authorized to access the equipment.
3. Authority for access rests with the appropriate level within the Extension System — state, regional, district, county, or local — depending upon the level at which the equipment is being used.

#### Storage of Firearms and Air Guns

1. All firearms and air guns should be stored in commercial firearm safes or similarly secure circumstances.
2. Access to secure storage areas and to all keys and combinations should be limited to duly authorized persons, as determined at the appropriate level of Extension organization.

#### Storage of Archery Equipment

1. Archery equipment should be stored in a secure safe, chest, locker, or similar area having environmental control over excessively high temperatures and away from sources of ozone or other oxidants.
2. Access to secure storage areas and to all keys and combinations should be limited to duly authorized persons, as determined at the appropriate level of Extension organization.

#### Storage of Muzzle-Loading and Reloading Supplies

1. Storage of all muzzle-loading supplies should follow both fire code and manufacturers’ instructions.
2. Percussion caps should be stored separately from both the firearms and black powder or its substitutes.
3. Primers and powder supplies should be stored separately under lock and key.
4. Powder supplies should be stored in their original containers in a cool, dry environment.
5. Where amounts dictate, powder supplies should be housed in magazines, as stipulated in fire codes.
6. Access to these supplies should be limited to duly authorized individuals with multiple layers of keys or combinations required.

#### Ammunition

1. All ammunition and projectiles should be stored separately from firearms and air guns.
2. Ammunition should be stored under cool, dry conditions with multiple keyed or combination access required.
3. Access to ammunition should be limited to duly authorized persons.

#### Transportation of Equipment

1. Firearms being transported should be secured in cases.
2. Gun cases should be locked and secured so they are not readily visible from outside the vehicle.
3. Vehicles transporting equipment should not be left unattended.
4. All state and local laws must be considered when transporting equipment.

### Personal firearms

* Any firearm or bow that is not the club’s property must be inspected and approved by the certified instructor before it can be fired at a SESS club activity.
* The certified instructor will determine if it is safe or unsafe and can require a check by a gunsmith.

### Purchasing/Ownership of Firearms

* If you can partner with a local sportsman’s club, that would be preferred — develop an MOU with the organization.
* If not, it is recommended to purchase just a small inventory of starter equipment.
* A club or organization cannot “own” a firearm.
* Recommended method for purchasing a firearm:
  + Fill out the federal paperwork and sign with individual’s name; it should be an official volunteer (coordinator, discipline instructor) or designated county extension staff.
  + Directly underneath, write the name of the club.
  + This creates a paper trail for ATF (Alcohol, Tobacco, and Firearms).
  + Develop an MOU between the County Extension Office and the volunteer, clearly stating ownership of the firearms.

### Reactive Targets

* Targets which make use of or are composed of (1) live ammunition; (2) explosives, chemicals, or flammable substances; or (3) pressurized containers are never to be used at any 4-H event or activity.

### Ammunition

* Only factory ammunition is used during 4-H Shooting Sports practices, activities, and events.

## SESS Clubs/Learning Communities

### Youth Eligibility and Expectations of Participation

* 4-H SESS programs are open to all youth in 4–12 grade who are at least 9 years old as of January 1 of the current year.
* Youth must be currently enrolled in 4-H and show active membership in 4HOnline.
* If a youth is a member of another 4-H club, they do not need to pay the program fee again.
* Youth must be at least 11 years old to participate in shotgun but 12 years old to be involved in competition.
* Youth must be at least 12 to participate in muzzleloader and have completed 10 hours of instruction to compete.
* Youth must abide by the Participation Policy and the Code of Conduct.
* Youth must complete the curriculum for the discipline to compete in any 4-H-designated competition and be an active member of their club or program.
* Youth will maintain appropriate shooting/project records.
* A 4-H member may only be enrolled in a 4-H Shooting Sports club if it is led by a 4-H-Certified Shooting Sports volunteer. There is NO exception to this policy for a parent working with his or her child.
* Parental Permission/Waiver of Liability

### Activities and Events

* A county shall not sponsor or schedule any SESS activity conducted by anyone other than a 4-H-trained-and-certified SESS Instructor of the appropriate discipline.
* Only a certified 4-H shooting sports leader may lead any member in a shooting sports project and must lead all activities where youth are shooting (non-certified instructors can demonstrate). All live fires are to be conducted in the presence of a certified SESS instructor.
* Competitive shooting events are optional and individual.

### Simulated Combat Sports

* Regarding simulated combat sports — including but not limited to air-soft, laser guns, archery tag — pointing any type of gun including air-soft guns, laser guns, paintball guns, archery tag bows and arrows, or sighting devices at any person or humanoid-shaped target is inappropriate in any 4-H program activity and is prohibited in 4-H SESS programs and activities.

### Meetings

* Complete a Site Safety Information form for each venue.
* All live-fire activities are to be done under the direct supervision of a certified 4-H shooting sports instructor.
* Proper and adequate eye, ear, and foot protection are to be worn when on the line of fire or shooting at any shooting event.
* The organization or individual owners of the meeting site may require additional forms (certificate of insurance, individual waivers, and/or Memorandums of Understanding).
* The organization or individual should check with their insurance provider.

### Open Houses and Invitationals

* A sign-in sheet/waiver must be used (see appendix — Parental Permission agreement and Waiver of Liability).
* Youth must be at least 9 years old by January 1 and in 4th grade to handle a firearm or archery equipment.
* A certified instructor must be present.
* Rules must be displayed.

### Partnering Organizations

* Interagency cooperation/collaboration and participation through use of facilities and equipment as well as cooperative programming is strongly encouraged.
* It is advised to obtain an MOU with each organization that will be partnering with the club.

## Process for Updating This Plan

The Iowa 4-H SESS Policy and Procedures plan will be updated as an ongoing process, with current revisions communicated to all volunteer instructors, county, area, and state staff.

An in-depth review will be done every two years and updated as needed.