

CHAPTER 1

Fitting It All Together: 4-H and the Extension Organization

OUR FEDERAL PARTNER

CSREES: Cooperative State Research, Education, and Extension Service

Cooperative State Research, Education, and Extension Service (CSREES) is positioned for the 21st century as a dynamic change agent and international research and education network. CSREES expands the research and higher education functions of the former Cooperative State Research Service and the education and outreach functions of the former Extension Service. The result is better customer service and an enhanced ability to respond to national priorities.

CSREES links the research and education programs of the U.S. Department of Agriculture and works with land-grant institutions in each state, territory, and the District of Columbia.

Mission

In cooperation with our partners and customers, CSREES provides the focus to advance a global system of research, extension, and higher education in the food and agricultural sciences and related environmental and human sciences to benefit people, communities, and the nation.

The CSREES mission emphasizes partnerships with the public and private sectors to maximize the effectiveness of limited resources. CSREES programs increase and provide access to scientific knowledge; strengthen the capabilities of land-grant and other institutions in research, extension, and higher education; increase access to and use of improved communication and network systems; and promote informed decision making by producers, families, communities, and other customers.

Focus

The heart of the CSREES results-oriented vision is to improve economic, environmental, and social conditions in the United States and globally. These conditions include improved agricultural and other economic enterprises; safer, cleaner water, food, and air; enhanced stewardship and management of natural resources; healthier, more responsible and more productive individuals, families, and communities; and a stable, secure, diverse, and affordable national food supply.

National 4-H Youth Development Program

Programs

CSREES research, extension, and education leadership is provided through programs in Plant and Animal Production, Protection, and Procession; Natural Resources and Environment; Rural, Economic, and Social Development; Families, 4-H, and Nutrition; Partnerships; Competitive Research Grants and Awards Management; Science and Education Resources Development; and Communications, Technology, and Distance Education. For further information: <http://www.reeusda.gov>

The 4-H Mission

4-H Youth Development Education creates supportive environments for culturally diverse youth and adults to reach their fullest potential. In support of this mission, we will:

- Provide formal and non-formal community-focused experiential learning.
- Develop skills that benefit youth throughout life.
- Foster leadership and volunteerism in youth and adults.
- Build internal and external youth/adult partnerships for programming and funding.
- Strengthen families and communities.
- Use research-based knowledge and the land-grant university system.

Achievement of this mission will result in capable, competent, and caring citizens.

The 4-H Vision

Becoming a world leader in developing youth to become productive citizens and catalysts for positive change to meet the needs of a diverse and changing society.

The 4-H Pledge

I pledge:

- my **Head** to clearer thinking,
- my **Heart** to greater loyalty,
- my **Hands** to larger service, and

- my **Health** to better living, for my club, my community, my country, and my world.

The 4 'H's'

Head - clearer thinking and decision making; knowledge useful throughout life.

Heart - greater loyalty, strong personal values, positive self concept, concern for others.

Hands - larger service, workforce preparedness, useful skills, science and technology literacy.

Health - better living, healthy lifestyles.

The 4-H Value Set

We believe that *youth development* is the focus of everything we do.

We believe *youth/adult partnerships* are essential to successful youth development.

We believe that *volunteerism* is fundamental.

We believe in the strength attained from diversity across the entire range of 4-H experiences.

The 4-H Motto

To make the best better.

Source: National 4-H Strategic Plan, 2003

Washington State University Extension

Origin

The Smith-Lever Act of 1914 gave each land-grant university a mandate to extend results of research and experience-based knowledge to the people of the state in order to improve the quality of their lives and enterprises. The provisions of this act create a unique partnership of governments called Extension. Extension is a nationwide network that combines federal, state, and local expertise and resources to bring non-credit, practical education to the people.

Mission Statement

Washington State University Extension engages people, organizations, and communities to advance economic well-being and quality of life by connecting them to the knowledge base of the University, and by fostering inquiry, learning, and the application of research.

Vision

Washington State University Extension is the world-class outreach and engagement enterprise of the University, serving the people of Washington and the global society in which we live. We are the best choice in the nation for complete and culturally appropriate educational and developmental programs that link the University's research and knowledge bases to society's needs and issues.

Our close relationships within communities allow us to deliver personalized education that challenges and inspires individuals to achieve their highest goals. We create, interpret, and deliver knowledge to society that improves the health and well-being of individuals and the environment, fuels out state's economy, and enhances and enriches our communities.

WSU Extension is a unique partnership of higher education, local government, and a federal agency. It is the educational arm of the United States Department of Agriculture, the primary public service unit of Washington State University, our state's land-grant university, and part of county government.

Extension Professionals

Extension is organized and structured to extend the resources of Washington State University to the residents in all communities. Extension faculty and staff serve in a variety of positions on the WSU campus, in Research and Extension Centers, and in county Extension offices. They serve in administrative and program roles as Extension professionals. The variety of position descriptions reflects the ability of Extension to focus staff expertise toward very specific or very general program needs, depending upon the local situation.

Volunteers

Empowerment of volunteers is an important goal of Extension. Involvement of clientele in program decision making is accomplished primarily through advisory councils and committees. Volunteers are the strength of the Extension program delivery system in both adult and youth programs. In Washington, nearly 8,000 volunteers serve in the 4-H Youth Development program each year. These volunteers play an important role, interacting with Extension professionals and nearly 60,000 young people. 4-H volunteers serve in leadership and management roles to provide vital support to 4-H clubs, special interest groups, and school enrichment programs.

Youth

It is the philosophy of the Washington 4-H Youth Development Program to involve 4-H youth in leadership opportunities whenever possible. This involvement provides a growth opportunity for the youth and strengthens program decisions. Participation on 4-H councils and committees will help adolescents develop a sense of identity that, in turn, helps them contribute to decision making. Young people are concerned about issues affecting their communities now and in the future and should be involved in the Extension program planning process, implementation, and evaluation.

4-H Facts in Brief

4-H is the Extension System's dynamic, informal educational program for today's young people. The program combines the cooperative efforts of youth, volunteer leaders, state land-grant universities, state-local governments, and the Cooperative State Research, Education, and Extension Service of the U.S. Department of Agriculture. The mission of the Extension System in conducting 4-H programs is to assist youth in developing knowledge, skills and attitudes that will enable them to become self-directing, productive, and contributing members of society.

4-H programs are conducted in nearly all the 3,150 counties of the United States, District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, Virgin Islands, Guam, American Samoa, Micronesia, and Northern Mariana Islands.

4-H alumni (enrolled participants in 4-H since its beginning) now total more than 70 million!

4-H-type programs are truly international, with some 82 countries having similar programs which enroll approximately 5 million youth.

4-H has a 100-plus year tradition of voluntary action for the public-private partnerships at federal, state, county, and community levels. These partnerships reflect broadly both fiscal and human resources. Private sector partners invest almost \$300 million annually in 4-H, through their local and state 4-H foundations, and the National 4-H Council.

Importance of Life Skills-- Essential Elements and Mission Mandates

Youth development is a process of mental, physical, and social growth during which young people prepare to live productive and satisfying lives within the customs and regulations of their society. People who develop programs and curricula for youth are in the business of providing educational opportunities through which youth can learn the information and develop life skills.

Youth development experiences of high quality don't just happen. The best ones are carefully planned: (a) to encourage life skill development while delivering subject matter content; and, (b) to achieve specific results. It has become increasingly important to be accountable for resources expended by documenting program impact. By clearly stating desired changes as program objectives, youth development experiences can be evaluated more effectively to determine if the program succeeded in making the intended difference in the lives of youth.

A skill is a learned ability to do something well. Life skills are defined as skills that help an individual be successful in living a productive and satisfying life. In the Targeting Life Skills (TLS) Model, categories of life skills are identified and divided on the basis of the familiar four 'H's' from the 4-H Clover that represent Head, Heart, Hands, and Health.

The goal of youth programming is to provide developmentally appropriate opportunities for young people to experience life skills, to practice them until they are learned, and be able to use them throughout their lifetime. Through the experiential learning process, youth internalize the knowledge and gain the ability to apply the skills appropriately.

In the 4-H Youth Development Program we call the fundamental pillars of 4-H the 'Essential Elements.' These are: belonging, mastery, independence, and generosity. We also have a focused set of 4-H priorities call the 'Mission Mandates,' created in the earliest beginning of the 4-H movement:

- Science, Engineering, and Technology Literacy

- Healthy Living
- Citizenship

Fitting together the Essential Elements and the Mission Mandates in the framework of life skills is best termed the *4-H approach to Youth Development*.

Approaches to 4-H Youth Development

Youth Development experiences become transformational when we create high context environments and provide high content opportunities for young people to:

- Belong
- Master skills through experience
- Influence others
- Learn the meaning of service

Context—circumstances and conditions which surround an event or individual; the circumstances or setting which determine, specify, or clarify the meaning of an event.

Content—information and experiences created by individuals, institutions, and technology to benefit audiences in venues that they value.

