

# Washington State University

## 4-H Youth Development Program

### Strategic Plan\*



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**Vision:** Washington State University 4-H Youth Development is developing young people to become productive citizens who are engaged in positive change, meeting the needs of a diverse and changing society.

**Mission:** 4-H youth development education creates supportive environments for all youth and families to reach their fullest potential. *This will be accomplished through a systemic approach of foundation and mission driven science to meet our goals to:*

- ❑ provide formal and non-formal experiential learning,
- ❑ develop skills that benefit youth throughout life,
- ❑ foster leadership and volunteerism in youth and adults,
- ❑ build internal and external partnerships for programming and funding,
- ❑ strengthen families and communities,
- ❑ employ research based knowledge and the land grant university system, and
- ❑ embrace and expand the traditions of the 4-H Youth Program.

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

### I. Power of Youth

**Statement:** Engaged and empowered youth can transform the world. In partnership with youth, 4-H will embody a culture of empowerment where youth learn the life skills of decision making, leadership, service and self-governance.

#### Goals:

1. To strengthen youth self-governance in 4-H clubs and groups.
2. To establish meaningful youth positions on all 4-H committees, boards and councils.
3. To prepare and advocate for youth to undertake leadership positions with other community groups focused on youth issues.

#### Actions Steps:

- Prepare 4-H adults to work effectively and cooperatively with youth as partners.
- Actively prepare young people for positions of governance and increase youth.
- Encourage opportunities for youth to serve on community boards and councils.

## II. Access, Equity, and Opportunity

**Statement:** The 4-H Youth Development program will be a culture of access, outreach, community collaborations, and educational resources for all youth, adults and families.

### Goals:

1. Increase 4-H Youth programming to under-served and under-represented audiences.
2. Increase partnerships with community, service, and faith-based organizations.
3. Create a system of training and support for faculty and staff efforts in accessing youth in under-represented audiences.

### Action Steps:

- Increase the availability of adults to mentor youth across cultures.
- Build community alliances and develop communications and relationships with agencies, schools, government, and faith-based organizations to address local youth issues.
- Build the Washington State 4-H Youth Program's capacity to recruit youth, families, volunteers, and staff from under-represented audiences.
- Provide training to volunteers and youth educators to increase their ability to program for youth-at-risk.

## III. An Extra Ordinary Place to Learn

**Statement:** The 4-H Youth Development Program is always open and eager for viable community partnerships. It is known for its quality life skills program, creative learning opportunities, and excellent curriculum.

### Goals:

1. To develop meaningful programs that stimulate youth to become active life-long learners.
2. To expand the opportunities for youth to be exposed to new ideas, new places and new opportunities.
3. To increase community partnerships.
4. To provide safe places for youth to learn.

### Action Steps:

- Enrich 4-H programs to strengthen new programming, and enhance 4-H clubs.
- Provide educational experiences for youth to prepare them for the workforce and higher education.
- Create safe, accessible, and affordable places for learning, for youth and families.
- Develop systems to allow effective communication, record-keeping, and professional development within each county program.
- Provide leadership to strengthen documentation of program evaluation and reporting.

#### IV. Exceptional **People** and Innovative Practices

**Statement:** Competent and effective 4-H Youth Development staff and 4-H volunteers are the programs greatest assets. 4-H recruits and retains exceptional people by meeting their basic needs for development, support, reward and recognition.

##### **Goals:**

1. Nurture and keep healthy the dynamic partnership of 4-H faculty, staff and volunteers.
2. Provide each 4-H professional and volunteer with high quality opportunities for personal and professional development.
3. Support and enable staff and volunteers to provide quality programs; giving rewards and recognition for performances of excellence.
4. Expect and receive accountability.

##### **Action Steps:**

- Recruit, hire and retain top-notch people who have a heart for working with youth and an enduring commitment to youth development.
- Design volunteer management systems that attract, retain and energize youth and adult volunteers with a progressive and enduring commitment to youth.
- Invest in our people by providing accessible, relevant, exceptional learning opportunities for faculty, staff and volunteers.
- Advance the field of youth development through professional development programming and building additional linkage with the Department of Human Development.

#### V. Effective **Organizational** Systems

**Statement:** The 4-H Youth Development program will continue to flourish because the vision, mission and goals are timeless.

##### **Goals:**

1. To ensure our 4-H program is a culture of access, equity, empowerment and opportunity.
2. To ensure our 4-H program is an extra ordinary place for youth to learn and grow.
3. To ensure our 4-H staff and volunteer force are prepared and ready for their challenge.
4. To ensure that the 4-H program has adequate marketing, reporting, and fund raising strategies.

##### **Actions Steps:**

- Develop marketing plan and materials to promote 4-H and report impacts to the public and decision-makers in a variety of ways.
- Increase resource development from traditional sources, innovative new partnerships and entrepreneurial efforts.
- Evaluate and improve program periodically to expand our capacity and materials to better serve Washington's communities.

- Provide opportunities for Extension Professionals to share programmatic leadership and expand their and 4-H's role as a community resource.