



## **4-H Guiding Principles**

### **4-H focuses on positive youth development.**

4-H creates context and content for positive youth development, subscribing to a set of essential elements characteristic of high quality youth development.

4-H helps young people see themselves as unique, resilient, life-long learners who actively participate in their own future—setting personal goals and practicing self-determination.

4-H values results-driven educational opportunities and experiences that are based upon cutting edge youth development research and best practices proven to have impact.

4-H outcomes are the five C's: *Competence, Confidence, Character, Connection, and Caring*; a sixth C, *Contribution* emerges when the five C's are present. (Lerner, 2005)

### **4-H focuses on partnerships.**

4-H values partnerships.

4-H is the youth development program of the US Department of Agriculture and is implemented by the cooperative extension system through 111 land-grant colleges and universities.

4-H creates connections between public and private entities, non-profits, schools, and community organizations.

4-H funds programming through a partnership of federal, state and local governments, National 4-H Council, state 4-H foundations and other private entities.

4-H connects youth and caring adults as partners in planning and striving for individual, and community change.

4-H engages well-trained, enthusiastic professional staff who lead, advise, and partner with youth and are regularly provided opportunities for personal growth and satisfaction.

4-H recognizes volunteers as critical partners and fosters relationships that lead to positive outcomes for youth and adults.

### **4-H focuses on intentional learning experiences.**

4-H engages the broader community in supporting youth development and involves youth in building stronger communities through science, healthy living, and citizenship education.

4-H designs challenging and interesting experiences with important consideration given to the depth of the content, age appropriateness of the experience and the context in which it is delivered.



4-H integrates knowledge, skills and behaviors of formal and nonformal education strategies.

4-H builds life skills in youth and adults.

4-H youth and adults develop and evaluate intentional learning experiences.

4-H evolves to meet the interests and needs of youth and adults.

4-H staff are recognized as leaders in high quality youth development education, teaching, research and evaluation.

4-H relies on the extensive network of research from the Land Grant Universities to support positive youth development and program content.

### **4-H focuses on developing youth potential.**

4-H matches the needs, interests, abilities, and cultural norms of young people, their families, and their communities.

4-H believes that all young people, as members of families and communities, and citizens of a global society, should have the opportunity to reach their full potential.

4-H builds a culturally competent workforce engaging adults and youth from diverse backgrounds.

4-H conducts programs under the authority of the USDA and is committed to affirmative action.

4-H values the safety and well-being of youth and adults.

4-H is inclusive and embraces diversity.

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The following document has been developed by a subcommittee of the Public-Private Partnerships Working Group (P3WG) to encourage discussions about the core principles of the 4-H Youth Development Program. It is the goal of this subcommittee that system-wide discussions will result in consensus on a set of principles and guide us toward development of a system-wide strategic plan. Thanks to Lisa Hampton and Amy McCune, National 4-H Headquarters, who helped to pull together an initial document.

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**Resources used to develop this document:**

Identifying Core Elements for 4-H Youth Development and CYAFAR Programs Nationally (2011)

The National 4-H Strategic Plan (2001)

Chartering a Path for 4-H (nd)

Strategic Plan for 4-H and Youth Development (1994)

National 4-H Partnership Leadership Project to Enhance National Leadership of 4-H (1999)

How can the Federal Partner add Value to the System Programs? (nd)

Enhancing National 4-H Partnership Leadership Project (2000)

4-H Principles – P3WG meeting notes (2011)

Logic Model: 4-H Program Performance Model – UW (1998)

National 4-H Partnership Leadership Survey for Strategic Planning (1999)

A Statement of National 4-H Goals (1973)

4-H Guiding Principles (nd)

National Conversation of Youth Development (2002)

National Learning Priorities (nd)

4-H Club Work (1935)

State websites with guiding principles:

Oregon <http://oregon.4h.oregonstate.edu/sites/default/files/MissionVisionValues.pdf>

Missouri [http://extension.missouri.edu/webster/4h/forms/4-H\\_CorePrinciples.pdf](http://extension.missouri.edu/webster/4h/forms/4-H_CorePrinciples.pdf)

Wisconsin:

<http://www.uwex.edu/ces/4h/resources/about/documents/PrinciplesofPractice2008.pdf>

New York <http://ccesuffolk.org/assets/galleries/4-H-Program/Guidingprinciplesfinal002.pdf>

California <http://www.ca4h.org/Administration/Policies/Chapter1/#>



Iowa [http://4htools.cals.arizona.edu/resources/4H\\_YD\\_Experience.pdf](http://4htools.cals.arizona.edu/resources/4H_YD_Experience.pdf) and  
<http://www.extension.iastate.edu/4h/Documents/4H3036BYDevPlan.pdf>