

Positive Youth Development

4-H is based on positive youth development approach that recognizes all youth have interests, abilities and strengths that can be enhanced by participation in 4-H programs. Research from Oregon State University suggests that participating in high quality 4-H programs helps youth thrive and thriving youth achieve important developmental outcomes, like academic motivation and success, social competence and high personal standards.

Vision

All youth experience a positive, thriving trajectory of development that leads to an adulthood marked by health and well-being, economic stability, social success and civic engagement.

Mission

4-H provides young people with intentional, high quality learning experiences that promote positive interactions with adults and peers, sustained and active participation across time and opportunities to make meaningful contributions to the world around them.

Core values

4-H is based on the current theory, research and practice of positive youth development

- 4-H promotes healthy growth and development in the context of families, schools and communities.
- Facilitating the development of a young person's interests is essential to the 4-H approach.
- Volunteers who serve as teachers and mentors to young people are essential to the success of the 4-H program. High quality volunteer training and engagement is essential to ensuring this success.

- Youth development programs are marked by opportunities for young people to experience mastery, independence, belonging and generosity.
- Youth voice, youth engagement and youth action in their communities are critical components of the 4-H program.
- Experiential learning forms the basis of the “learn by doing” approach to 4-H programming.
- The 4-H program values and respects all forms of human diversity.
- Believing that thriving is possible for all young people, the 4-H program provides access and opportunity for all youth.

Outcomes

- Youth will identify a personal passion or “spark” that fuels a positive trajectory for further learning and growth.
- Youth will possess a thriving orientation, marked by indicators of a pro-social orientation, hopeful purpose, positive emotionality, openness to challenge and discovery and spiritual development.
- Youth will achieve identified developmental outcomes that include academic motivation, academic success, reduction in risk behaviors, positive goal setting, goal achievement, healthful choices, social competence, personal standards and connection with and contribution to others.
- Long term, youth will experience a successful transition to adulthood, marked by health and well-being, economic stability, social success and civic engagement.