

## UF/IFAS Extension 4-H Youth Development Program

### **4-H Program Standards & Expectations**

#### **Background and Purpose**

The primary purpose of this document is to clarify standards for effective county-based 4-H Youth Development programs and to help focus the roles of 4-H faculty and staff in developing and maintaining effective programs that contribute to the mission and highest priority needs of Florida 4-H. A key goal is to standardize core functions to provide consistency of county 4-H programs statewide; which represents about two-thirds of the overall 4-H program and the subsequent efforts of faculty members leading 4-H programs. This will not only assist in maintaining compliance with laws and policies (such as those related to youth protection and funds handling) but also free 4-H faculty from re-inventing the routine and allow them instead to focus their expertise and creativity on developing innovative programs and meeting unique local needs. It will also allow increased emphasis on the scholarship of youth development and volunteerism and provide clarity for plans of work, reports of accomplishment and, subsequently, performance appraisals. Lastly, it will help provide guidance to IFAS faculty without 4-H job titles contributing their expertise to the 4-H Youth Development Program.

Although this document will provide guidance for developing annual plans of work by faculty leading 4-H programs based on Initiative 7 of the Extension Roadmap, many aspects of Standards and Expectations are considered “outputs” of a logic model. Ensuring that these outputs result in achieving positive outcomes and impacts requires the creative efforts of faculty.

#### *Florida 4-H Mission*

The UF/IFAS Extension 4-H Youth Development Program uses a learn-by-doing approach to help youth gain the knowledge and skills they need to be responsible, productive citizens. This mission is accomplished by creating safe and inclusive learning environments, involving caring adults, and utilizing the expertise and resources of the University of Florida and the nationwide land grant university system.

#### **There are five major categories of expectations of all county 4-H programs:**

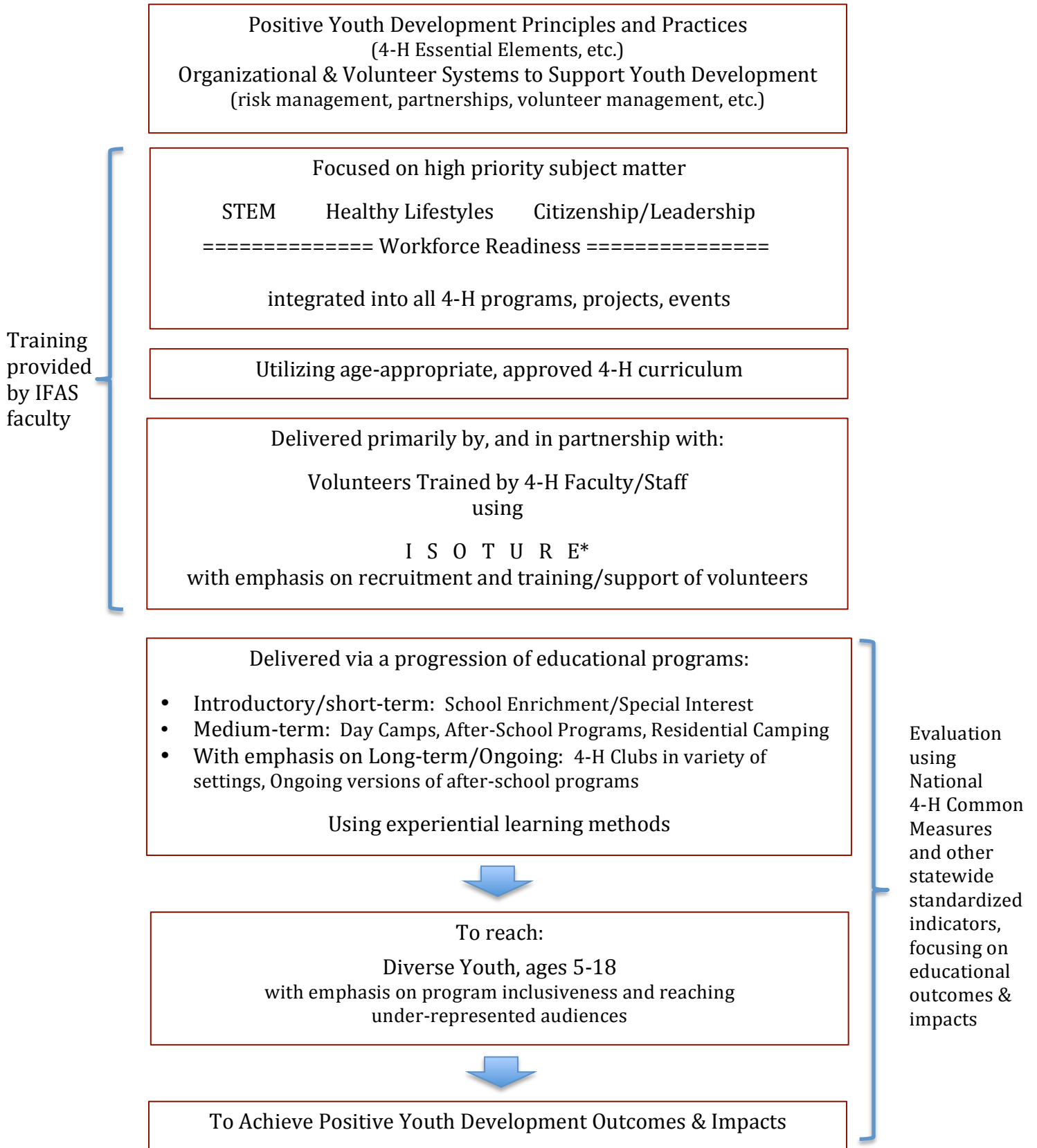
1. County 4-H Programs will offer educational programming that supports the mission of 4-H and the priorities of Initiative 7 of the Extension Roadmap.
2. All 4-H programs will aim to promote diversity and emphasize inclusiveness of youth and volunteers from all backgrounds.
3. Faculty will train volunteers to deliver programs.
4. Emphasis will be placed on medium- and long-term educational experiences.
5. County 4-H Programs will maintain management systems and leadership structures and offer common programs that strengthen the 4-H program locally and provide consistency statewide.

Details about each major category are contained on the following pages. The included Model for 4-H Program Delivery (summarizing Initiative 7 logic models) depicts the integration of key elements and processes. Specific tools and training will be provided to help IFAS/Extension faculty meet expectations and achieve standards via orientation, in-service training, online resources, EDIS publications, etc.

# Model for 4-H Program Delivery

## Based on Initiative 7 of the Extension Roadmap

*The 4-H Program Aims to be "Youth-Focused, Agent-Led, Volunteer-Delivered"*



\*A model and process for volunteer management and development.

**1. County 4-H Programs will offer educational programming that supports the mission of 4-H and the priorities of Initiative 7 of the Extension Roadmap.**

- ❑ Emphasis will be placed on a combination of subject matter (STEM, Healthy Lifestyles, Citizenship/Leadership, with integration of Workforce Readiness) that meets local needs with guidance from local advisory groups (e.g. County 4-H Association). These will be integrated into all 4-H programs, projects, events, etc. when feasible.
- ❑ Programs that don't support Initiative 7 priorities should receive extra scrutiny and be considered prime candidates for being delegated to trained volunteers or phasing out.
  - See Making Program Choices When Resources Are Limited: Using a Self-Assessment Tool with Stakeholders (<http://www.joe.org/joe/2002august/tt3.php>)
- ❑ The statewide Initiative 7 plan of action and its sample objectives should be the basis for plans of work (POWs) submitted by Extension 4-H faculty. See <http://pdec.ifas.ufl.edu/roadmap>.
- ❑ Evaluation using National 4-H Common Measures and other statewide standardized indicators, focusing on educational outcomes and impacts, will be conducted.
- ❑ Approved, age-appropriate 4-H curriculum materials (from UF or other Land Grant University sources) utilizing experiential learning methods will be utilized and promoted.

**2. All 4-H programs will aim to promote diversity and emphasize inclusiveness of youth and volunteers from all backgrounds.**

- ❑ Program participation that represents the eligible youth population is expected. This requires not only marketing 4-H to underrepresented audiences but also offering a wide range of fun, educational programs of interest to those audiences.
- ❑ Whenever possible, rules and decisions will be made that are inclusive instead of exclusive. (Care should be taken that they do not readily favor or disadvantage any eligible 4-H audience.)
- ❑ Use targeted short-term programs (such as school enrichment/special interest programs) to reach under-represented audiences but aim to fully integrate them into the ongoing 4-H program.
- ❑ Utilize an intentional plan to carry out the Expansion and Review function of the County 4-H Association to target new audiences.

**3. Faculty will train volunteers to deliver programs.**

- ❑ In general, the county 4-H program should be youth-focused, agent-led, and volunteer-delivered.
- ❑ Focus on providing 4-H educational experiences that allow youth to be involved with a caring adult (typically trained 4-H volunteers).
- ❑ Faculty/staff will focus on recruiting and training volunteers and providing train-the-trainer programs. Volunteers will receive orientation and training. The 4-H Leader Training Series will be the basis for training. A combination of in-person and online training will be utilized.
- ❑ The majority of the time and effort (perhaps as high as 75 percent) of a County 4-H Agent needs to be dedicated toward maintaining a volunteer management system using the ISOTURE model for volunteer management and development (with emphasis on recruiting and training/supporting volunteers) and partnering with other organizations to accomplish the 4-H mission. This will require a shift from working directly with youth but is consistent with the Initiative 7 plan of action. “Train-the-Trainer” should be the predominant model for program delivery. This has the potential to reach the same or more youth with greater efficiency.
  - Opportunities to work directly with youth should be concentrated on youth leadership functions such as County 4-H Council and training camp counselors. These are good examples of train-the-trainer methods.
- ❑ The majority of youth participating in a county 4-H program should be the a result of teaching and leadership by volunteers recruited and trained by faculty. The faculty member remains responsible for the overall 4-H program, the outcomes achieved, and the results reported.

**4. Emphasis will be placed on medium- and long-term educational experiences.**

- ❑ Although 6 hours involvement is the minimum to be reported as participation in a 4-H delivery mode, increased dosage and duration is more likely to result in positive youth development as revealed in research such as the Tufts University Study of Positive Youth Development.
  - Differentiate audience “contacts” from educational program members/participants. This is especially important when non-Extension IFAS faculty are delivering 4-H programs. 4-H faculty are instrumental in creating value-added partnerships with other IFAS faculty so that “contacts” are elevated to educational, positive youth development programs (not just activities) of 6 hours or more.
- ❑ Youth and volunteers are encouraged to participate in multiple 4-H educational events and activities beyond the 4-H club.

- ❑ Focus on offering educational experiences that are in-depth and/or ongoing. Short-term experiences should be used as a means to introduce youth to longer-term and ongoing 4-H educational opportunities. These basic definitions and examples provide a guide:

#### Short-term

- School enrichment and special interest programs lasting at least 6 hours.

#### Medium-term

- Day camps or other special interest programs lasting at least 20 hours, such as weekend, weeklong, and/or overnight educational experiences.
- Residential camping such as 4-H Summer Camp and other overnight educational programs that last at least five days.

#### Long-term/ongoing

- Day camps, special interest programs, and after-school programs that engage the same youth regularly for six months or an entire school year.
- 4-H clubs in community, after-school, in-school, or military settings that essentially meet year-round.

#### Target participation numbers

An effective 4-H Youth Development program results from a balance of quality educational programming and significant number of participants who reap the benefits of program offerings. (In other words, “numbers” *and* “quality.”)

- ❑ Enrollment in 4-H medium/long-term enrollment should be at least 50 percent of total 4-H enrollment in a county.
- ❑ Target numbers for number of volunteers, 4-H clubs, 4-H club membership, camp counselors, summer camp attendance, etc. should be determined annually by county 4-H faculty in consultation with the 4-H Regional Specialized Agent and County Extension Director (and District Extension Director). Current enrollment, size of population, size and experience of staff (including available support staff) should be considered to determine suitably challenging goals. These goals should be part of the faculty member’s plan of work. Develop a plan to fill in the [ ] with specific numbers.
  - Total enrollment in the county will be at least [ ] youth or [ ] percent of the eligible youth population.
  - There will be at least [ ] 4-H clubs and at least [ ] 4-H club members.
  - There will be [ ] volunteers to be recruited and trained, including [ ] 4-H club leaders.

**5. County 4-H programs will maintain management systems and leadership structures and offer common programs that strengthen the 4-H program locally and provide consistency statewide.**

- ❑ Maintain an effective County 4-H Association.
  - Refer to “County 4-H Association Assessment” tool posted at <http://florida4h.org>.
- ❑ Maintain an effective County 4-H Council.
  - Refer to “A Guide to the Florida 4-H Council” (an EDIS document at <https://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/4h315>).
- ❑ Offer a “4-H County Events” program that features public speaking and other events representative of the 4-H project enrollment in the county, and provides an opportunity for youth to advance to district or state 4-H events.
- ❑ Offer and promote awards and recognition opportunities for youth and volunteers at the club, county, state, and national levels. They should be a balance of competitive and non-competitive opportunities.
- ❑ Every county is expected to offer a 4-H Summer Camp program at one of the four UF/IFAS Extension 4-H residential camps. All youth of eligible age will be provided the opportunity to attend 4-H Summer Camp, not just those who are currently 4-H participants or 4-H club members. Minimum training for all counselors will be provided annually according to 4-H policy and using standard 4-H counselor training curriculum across Florida.
- ❑ Every county is expected to participate in 4-H University (formerly Florida 4-H Congress). All youth of eligible age will be provided the opportunity to attend, not just award winners or current 4-H participants or 4-H club members.
- ❑ Targeted use of technology and social media for reaching clientele may also be of benefit.
- ❑ Fund raising, finances, grants and contracts, and tax reporting will conform to UF/IFAS Extension policies (including those at <http://florida4h.org/policies>)
  - Annual County 4-H Association financial reviews will be conducted and submitted to 4-H State Headquarters. The appropriate IRS Form 990 will be filed with the IRS by the deadline and a copy submitted to 4-H State Headquarters. See Annual 4-H Financial & Tax Reporting Guide and other current information at <http://florida4h.org/staff/taxexempt>.
- ❑ Comply with all laws and UF/IFAS Extension policies pertaining to youth protection, including background screening of prospective volunteers, and other training as required.
  - Adhere to UF IFAS Youth Protection Policy.
  - Official source of statewide 4-H policies is <http://florida4h.org/policies>.
  - Keep volunteer screening and training records up-to-date.

- ❑ Identify and promote all IFAS youth programs as UF/IFAS Extension 4-H Youth Development, following the IFAS Branding Guide. Refer to <http://ics.ifas.ufl.edu/branding.shtml>.
- ❑ Accurately, completely, and promptly report all 4-H youth and volunteer participation according to current definitions, via the 4HOnline enrollment system (<https://florida.4honline.com>).
  - Adhere to procedures in UF IFAS Youth Protection Policy.
  - The names and other information about 4-H participants must be promptly, completely, and accurately entered in 4HOnline. Group enrollment without that information should be used sparingly and limited to situations where it is difficult if not impossible to get information about individual youth (such as when teaching in school classrooms in certain school districts).
  - Paper enrollment forms should only be used at the convenience of clientele, such as when they do not have Internet access.
  - Keeping up-to-date information about 4-H participants is important for the annual federal “ES237” enrollment report as well as for compliance with State of Florida statutes and UF policies. The UF Office of Youth Conference Services (OYCS) will expect to receive reports periodically from 4HOnline (to be generated from 4-H State Headquarters based on the enrollment data entered by counties).
- ❑ Programs will be evaluated regularly to determine knowledge gained, skills acquired, practices changed, and other educational outcomes and impacts. Appropriate programs will be evaluated using National 4-H Common Measures or other statewide standardized indicators.
- ❑ Partnerships with other organizations that support the mission of 4-H Youth Development will be defined with common agreements delineating what each partner will contribute.
  - A standard Joint Programming Memorandum of Agreement template will be utilized. (See Grants and Contracts section of <http://florida4h.org/policies>.)
- ❑ Sharing expertise of limited faculty across county lines enables cross-training and minimizes the need for every 4-H agent to be an expert in everything. 10-20 percent of an agent’s time should be explicitly dedicated to sharing across county lines of neighboring counties. (This can be done via technology.)
- ❑ Optimizing the contribution of other Extension agents to ensure that the minimum five (5) percent 4-H responsibility matches Extension faculty members’ expertise with the highest priority needs of the 4-H program (based on Initiative 7 of the Extension Roadmap) will improve the ability to meet program goals. It also enables IFAS/Extension faculty without 4-H titles to utilize their talents to support 4-H volunteers (and directly with youth when appropriate).
- ❑ Participation in annual professional development is expected of IFAS Extension faculty and staff. Examples include Extension in-service training (ISTs), Extension Professionals Association of Florida (EPAF) state conference, Youth Development Institute (YDI), etc.

## IMPLEMENTATION, OVERSIGHT, & BEST PRACTICES

### **1. A system of consistent oversight for ensuring these standards are met will be implemented.**

- Statewide policies will be consistently communicated and implemented via <http://florida4h.org>, Weekly Update electronic newsletter, etc.
- Checklists or other tools will be utilized to promote consistent implementation. County Program Reviews may include such checklists to determine program effectiveness.
- Roles of 4-H faculty, 4-H Regional Specialized Agents, County Extension Directors, District Extension Directors, and others in monitoring and compliance have been clarified as follows:
  - 4-H RSAs and State 4-H Specialists will provide education and guidance.
  - County Extension Directors and DEDs will be responsible for monitoring and compliance.
- Standards in this document represent minimum statewide expectations. Any requests for local exceptions must be approved in writing from the respective District Extension Director and the State 4-H Program Leader after consultation with the County Extension Director and 4-H Regional Specialized Agent.

### **2. The major goal of state 4-H faculty and staff will be to provide leadership and direction for the 4-H Youth Development Program.**

*State 4-H staff, 4-H Regional Specialized Agents and State 4-H/Extension Specialists will:*

- Provide guidance and support to county 4-H faculty and other IFAS/Extension personnel to achieve effective county 4-H programs.
- Develop and maintain programs and curricula that support Initiative 7 priorities of the Extension Roadmap. See <http://pdec.ifas.ufl.edu/roadmap>.
- Engage county Extension faculty, staff, volunteers, and youth in program and curriculum development processes whenever possible.

### **3. The major goal of state 4-H programs and events will be to contribute to effective county 4-H programs by providing advanced opportunities for project learning and leadership development.**

- County faculty, staff, volunteers, and youth will be engaged in program planning and delivery utilizing a youth-adult partnerships philosophy.
- Uniform systems for enrolling 4-H youth, registering 4-H volunteers, and registering and collecting fees from event participants will be utilized. The 4HOnline system is central to these purposes as well as for keeping track of completion of training by volunteers and others.



**4. All IFAS educational programs that involve minor youth will be labeled as 4-H Youth Development and comply with UF Office of Youth Conference Services (OYCS) requirements for youth protection and reporting.**

- When programs are not led by an Extension faculty member with a 4-H Youth Development appointment, 4-H programs offered by IFAS faculty without 4-H job titles can be identified and promoted in one of the following ways:
  - A UF/IFAS 4-H Youth Development Program sponsored/offered/presented by the [Department of XX, the XX Research & Education Center, the XX grant].
- All youth participating in programs supervised by IFAS must be reported via the 4HOnline enrollment system in lieu of registering with OYCS.
- This improved linkage aims to foster some stronger partnerships across research, teaching, and extension. IFAS gains the expertise in youth development, experiential learning, age appropriateness that 4-H Youth Development faculty can provide. 4-H gains broader technical expertise such as STEM and many technical subject matter experts. In the process, UF/IFAS broadens its base to reflect the current needs of Florida youth and families and remain relevant with diverse audiences.
- See the IFAS branding guide (<http://ics.ifas.ufl.edu/branding.shtml>) for proper use of graphic elements and use of 4-H name & emblem (or <http://florida4h.org>).

**5. 4-H Youth Development programs will make all reasonable efforts to follow best practices and offer programming that is consistent with its mission, goals, and values (in other words, practice what we preach).**

For example:

- In support of Healthy Lifestyles, nutritious food choices will be provided at 4-H functions
- In support of programs that foster Citizenship and improving communities, environmental stewardship will be practiced (reduce waste, recycle, utilize biodegradable choices and products using recycled materials, etc.)

Remember, “youth are paying attention to the actions of adults.”

This document will evolve over time. The most recent version can be found at <http://pdec.ifas.ufl.edu/roadmap> and <http://florida4h.org>.