



WASHINGTON STATE
UNIVERSITY
EXTENSION



STATE 4-H

Investing in the Future of Washington's Youth

BY THE NUMBERS

- Present in all 39 Washington counties.
- Engages nearly 80,000 youth annually.
- 7,000 trained adult volunteers.
- More than 1.5 million 4-H alumni.
- 92% of 4-H'ers attend post-secondary education.
- 44,500 youth engaged in school enrichment.
- 53,600 STEM Projects.
- 18,000 Citizenship Projects.
- 25,000 Healthy Lifestyle Projects.

2014

ISSUE

An effective democracy requires an active, engaged, and literate population. Regrettably, 26% of current Washington youth fail to graduate high school, and for minority youth that failure rate rises to more than 40%. Youth who fail to earn a high school diploma are creating a permanent economic underclass. McKinsey Global Institute predicts that by the year 2020, the United States will fall short of workers with college and graduate degrees by 1.5 million, but will have a surplus of nearly 6 million unemployed individuals who have not completed high school.

America faces a future of intense global competition with a startling shortage of scientists. Our youth continue to be undereducated in science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) in comparison to their global peers. An understanding of STEM is essential for young people to face the challenges of a global labor pool. Equally troubling is the widespread lack of civic engagement and civic literacy among young people. These disenfranchised youth often have neither the knowledge nor experience necessary to effectively engage in the responsibilities of citizenship.

RESPONSE

For more than 100 years, 4-H has championed the idea that youth are the single strongest catalyst for change. What began as a way to give rural youth new agricultural skills has grown into a global positive youth development movement. 4-H is our premier organization for preparing young people to be empowered citizens.

4-H is helping cultivate the next generation of leaders by tackling challenges such as building a skilled STEM-ready workforce, encouraging civic engagement, and creating a healthier society.

As the only youth program with direct access to technological advances in agriculture, life sciences, human development, social sciences, and related subjects from land grant university research, 4-H values results-driven educational opportunities that prepare young people to participate and lead in their communities and workforce. 4-H has maintained the "hope building" business by viewing young people as assets – not as problems to be solved.

Through intentional educational experiences of sufficient intensity, duration and frequency, 4-H is preparing the next generation of leaders, doctors, engineers, farmers, bankers, scientists and citizens to step up to a successful adulthood. 4-H youth are mentored in three major mission areas: STEM, citizenship, and healthy living.



QUOTES

"4-H helped me develop a good work ethic and make smart choices. I learned a lot of great decision making skills, which are helpful in athletic competitions."

— Casey Smith, USA 2014 Olympic Biathlon competitor from the Methow Valley

"Not only did 4-H give me tremendous networking and interpersonal skills but it also changed my outlook on life and my purpose in the world."

— Reina Almon, 2013 Miss Washington

"There is no finer feeling than to watch shy, unsure youth develop into outstanding, skilled, articulate and self-confident young adults capable of doing whatever they choose to do."

— Don Ballard, 4-H volunteer



IMPACTS

The results of 4-H are well documented through the decade of longitudinal research conducted by Tufts University in its 2011 "Study of Positive Youth Development." 4-H youth are more likely than their non-4-H peers to enter the workforce prepared to collaborate, think critically, solve problems, and be innovative. These are skills that lead to a competent workforce contributing to vibrant industries, which thereby strengthen our communities and state. Through participation in 4-H, youth develop skills that are important for their future careers, including leadership, organization, setting and achieving goals, financial literacy, and positive social skills such as being an effective team member.

Integrated into all phases of 4-H is civic engagement. Statewide, youth and adults contribute more than 100,000 hours annually to respond to critical community issues, thereby strengthening those local communities through civic engagement.

Through real-world experiences that cultivate self-esteem, self-confidence, and leadership, youth adopt reduced-risk behaviors and improved healthy lifestyle habits.

When compared to their peers, young people involved in 4-H are:

- Twice as likely to plan to attend college. Students who attain an associate's degree earn nearly one-third more over the course of their lifetimes than those with just a high school diploma. Students who earn a bachelor's degree earn 75% more over their lifetimes.
- More likely to pursue careers in science, engineering, or technology and therefore are better prepared for lifelong employment.
- More than twice as likely to exercise and be physically active resulting in improved public health and reduced health-care costs.
- 30% more likely to be engaged in post-secondary education and excel. In fall 2014, 4-H freshman entered WSU with a .31 higher GPA.
- Four times more likely to give back to their communities thereby building a life pattern of civic engagement.



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