



National 4-H Learning Priorities 2007-2012 Extension Leadership Update –Summer 2009

Rationale

Five National 4-H Learning Priorities were identified in 2007 to focus on professional development for 4-H salaried staff. The goal was to provide learning opportunities for 4-H professionals that will enhance program quality, which leads to positive outcomes for young people and improves the long-term success of 4-H. This goal is clearly aligned with the **CSREES strategic objective 3.2**, to provide research, education and extension to improve the quality of life in rural America; and Knowledge Area 806, Youth Development. The Priorities were identified to reflect needs expressed from the field, the National 4-H Strategic Plan, and were closely aligned with the goals and on-going work of eXtension. They are grounded in 4-H Professional Research Knowledge and Competencies (4-H PRKC, 2004) to encourage high quality programming.

The five content areas are:

- Building Effective Organizational Systems
- Volunteer Development for the Next Generation
- Essential Elements of Youth Development
- Expanding Outreach to New and Underserved Audiences
- Evaluating for Impact



Financial Support Provided by
National 4-H Council



Key efforts and impact of the National 4-H Learning Priorities Steering Committee, centered on creating access to consistent, high quality, relevant professional learning opportunities based on the Priorities content areas. Core principals of the Steering committee applied to all of the content teams. Content team co-leaders created working teams that included educators, specialists, and program leaders who were recognized for their excellence in the field of youth development. These content teams were asked to review existing resources and design learning opportunities that would be suitable for and accessible to all 4-H youth development professionals, regardless of their role, location, or experience. Content teams identified appropriate resources from a variety of sources, and now offer professional development and learning solutions through face-to-face training, distance education, continuous self-study, online resources, mentoring, and knowledge sharing.

The steering committee and related content teams formed in November of 2007 with funding provided by National 4-H Council to accomplish goals and objectives and produce final products for the system. The teams are now (Summer, 2009) concluding the initial phases of identifying existing suitable content and learning opportunities, creating syllabi of suitable content that will enhance the professional development efforts of individuals and organizations, and designing new content delivery models.

To date the following **key products** have been made available to professionals throughout the nation:

- National 4-H Learning Priorities General Overview - http://www.csrees.usda.gov/nea/family/in_focus/youthdev_if_professional_dev.html
- Understanding Youth Development: Implications for the Future – webinar delivered January, 2009, archived and available for review at <http://www.uvm.edu/extension/youthdevelopment/>
- Quality Youth Development Practice – webinar delivered April, 2009, archived and available for review at <http://www.uvm.edu/extension/youthdevelopment/>
- National 4-H Learning Priorities: Evaluating for Impact Educational Content for Professional Development – Expanded syllabi available at http://www.national4-hheadquarters.gov/comm/NLP_Impact_9-2008.pdf
- National Learning Priorities: Volunteer Development for the Next Generation Knowledge and Skill Rubric and Syllabus – available at http://www.national4-hheadquarters.gov/comm/Volunteerism_Rubric_fnl_121908.pdf
- National 4-H Learning Priorities: Equity, Access, and Opportunity – Expanded Bibliography and resource list, available at http://www.national4-hheadquarters.gov/comm/NLP_Diversity.pdf
- Essential Elements of Youth Development Training Curriculum – 10 Train-the-Trainer modules packaged as a comprehensive professional development experience. In publication, will be introduced in a pre-conference at NAE4-HA, October, 2009, Rochester, New York. This curriculum has been reviewed and approved by National 4-H Headquarters Curriculum Review team for national distribution.



Key Participants on the National 4-H Learning Priorities Steering Committee:

- ✓ Mary Williams, University of Florida
- ✓ Ryan Schmiesing, USDA/CSREES, National 4-H Headquarters
- ✓ Robert Richard, Louisiana State University
- ✓ Ellen Rowe, University of Vermont
- ✓ Kendra Wells, University of Maryland
- ✓ Beverly Hobbs, Oregon State University
- ✓ Manami Brown, University of Maryland
- ✓ Lori Purcell Bledsoe, University of Georgia
- ✓ Craig Dart, Utah State University
- ✓ Elaine Johannes, Kansas State University
- ✓ Mary Arnold, Oregon State University
- ✓ Suzanne LeMenestrel, USDA/CSREES, National 4-H Headquarters
- ✓ Sue Pleskac, University of Wisconsin
- ✓ Sherri Seibold, University of Illinois
- ✓ Doug Swanson, University of Nebraska
- ✓ Pam Garza, National 4-H Council

Each team has conducted numerous training sessions for various audiences around the nation to deliver content in face to face seminars, workshops, or other delivery models:

- Evaluating for Impact Learning Circles were convened in each region, bringing evaluation experts into direct communication with field faculty seeking to improve their skills in evaluating 4-H and youth development programming.
- Strengthening Your Facilitation Skills – Preconference delivered at Children, Youth, and Families At Risk (CYFAR) National conference, Baltimore, MD. 2009
- Essential Elements content team conducted regional and state based pilot tests of their curriculum at 6 locations throughout the country before submitting to headquarters for official review.
- Volunteer Development for the Next Generation co-leaders also planned and coordinated the Extension Volunteer conference, April 2009. The Skill Rubric served as the framework for the conference.
- Volunteer Development team received notice of funding from National 4-H Council to purchase access to “Everyone Ready”, <http://www.energizeinc.com/everyoneready/> for all field extension educators, to be available fall of 2009.
- Team members and Project Manager facilitated Round Table discussions at 15 annual professional conferences including CYFAR, Epsilon Sigma Phi, NAE4-HA, Southern Region Specialists conference, State Program leaders meetings, and other Extension Leadership meetings.
- Learning Priorities content team members have coordinated efforts and communications with National 4-H Council, CCEP, eXtension, National 4-H Curriculum Review, NAE4-HA committees, and other professional development delivery agencies. All the content developed by these teams will support the 4-H Mission Mandates of Science, Engineering and Technology, Healthy Lifestyles, and Citizenship.

In summary, this team identified strategic opportunities to design and deliver high-quality professional development resources to 4-H faculty and staff throughout the nation. These resources are available to all extension professionals and apply to all youth development program areas. They are meant to support and expand but not to replace the professional development training provided by individual institutions.