



4-H Youth Development Facts in Brief – 2003

4-H, U.S. Department of Agriculture and Cooperative Extension System’s nationwide K-12th grade youth development program, celebrated their **101st year in 2003**. 4-H, the largest nonformal U.S. youth development program, began as a way of involving the heads, hearts, and hands of farm youth in practical, hands-on education in agriculture- and home economics-related subjects relevant to their everyday lives. Early Extension agents and progressive educators introduced new technology and improved ways of doing things for rural communities by first teaching their youth.

By 1960, more than half of 4-H participants were non-farm youth. Today, 43 percent are from rural areas and towns of up to 10,000; 57 percent are from larger cities, their suburbs, and from large inner cities. Thirty one percent of 4-H’ers are from racial and ethnic minorities.

Residence	% 4-H Youth	% US Youth in 4-H
Farm - <10k	45	43.5
10k - 50k	23	14.8
Suburbs >50k	9	4.6
Cities >50k	24	24.9

The 4-H program combines the cooperative efforts of nearly 7 million youth; 572,834 volunteer leaders; about 3,600 FTE’s of professional staff; 106 state land-grant universities; state and local governments; private-sector partners; state and local 4-H foundations; the National 4-H Council; and the National 4-H Headquarters in the Cooperative State Research, Education and Extension Service (CSREES) of the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

4-H programs are conducted in 3,051 counties of the United States, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, Virgin Islands, Guam, American Samoa, Micronesia, and Northern Mariana Islands. 4-H alumni now total about 60 million. 4-H-type programs are truly international, with 4 million youth in more than 60 countries in similar programs.

YOUTH IN 4-H

7,090,920 youth, principally K-12 grades, participated in 4-H last year.

1,572,235 were members of **89,636** 4-H clubs.

2,380,717 were members of **102,594** 4-H special interest groups.

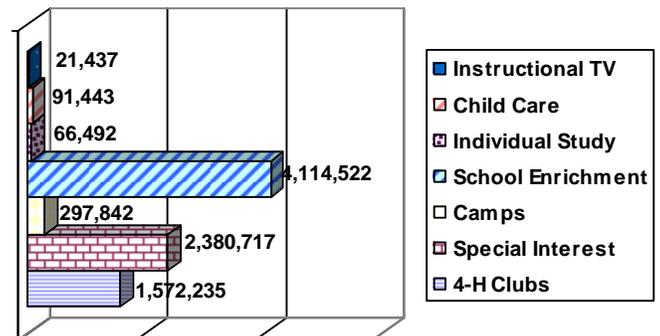
4,114,522 were in **145,582** 4-H school-enrichment groups.

66,492 were in 4-H individual study programs.

21,437 enrolled in 4-H instructional TV.

91,443 were in **5,889** school-aged child care.

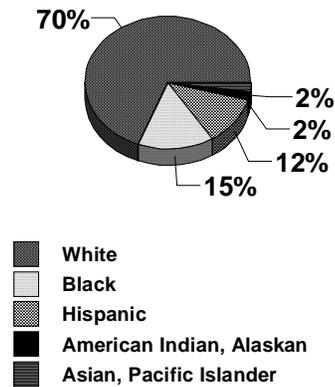
297,842 attended 4-H-conducted camps



RACE AND ETHNICITY

- 70% (4,912,607)** - white, not of Hispanic origin
- 15% (1,049,054)** - black, not of Hispanic origin
- 12% (843,486)** - Hispanic
- 2% (137,699)** - American Indian, Alaskan
- 2% (147,945)** - Asian or Pacific Islander

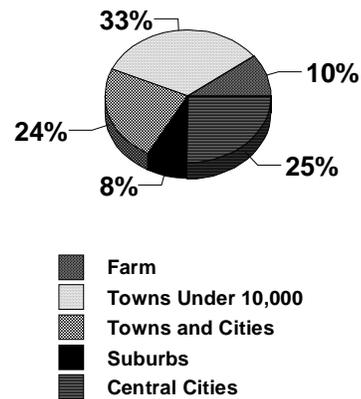
Of the total number of youth in 4-H, 31 percent are of minority racial/ethnic groups.



RESIDENCE

Of the 7,090,920 youth in 4-H last year:

- 10% (734,576)** - lived on farms
- 33% (2,338,642)** - lived in towns under 10,000 and open country
- 24% (1,676,654)** - lived in towns and cities 10,000 to 50,000
- 8% (562,729)** - lived in suburbs of cities of more than 50,000
- 25% (1,778,319)** - lived in central cities 50,000 or larger

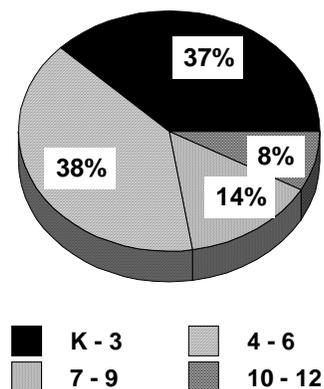


GENDER

- 53% (3,536,667)** - girls
- 47% (3,214,420)** - boys

SCHOOL GRADE

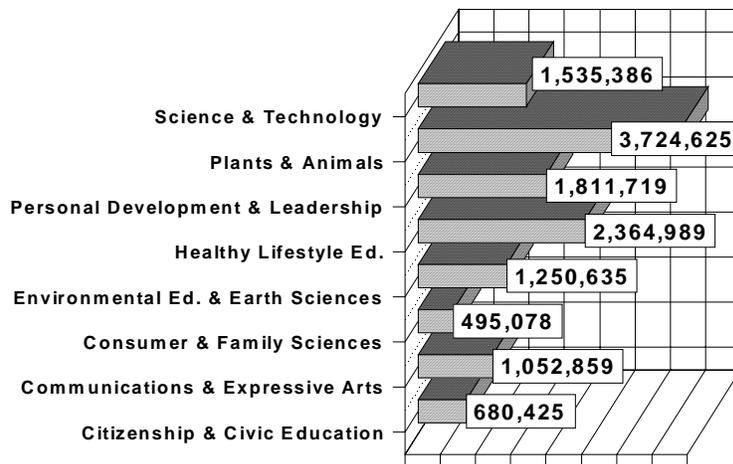
- 37% (2,589,350)** - grades K-3
- 38% (2,724,743)** - grades 4-6
- 14% (991,401)** - grades 7-9
- 8% (545,997)** - grades 10-12
- .8% (59,535)** - post-high school
- 2% (129,719)** - out of school
- .7% (50,175)** - special (of any age)



EDUCATIONAL CONTENT

4-H educational content has expanded with the times, and with changing demographics. Many 4-H participants choose more than one subject area “project” in a given year. Major categories of educational content, and 4-H participant enrollment in each, are:

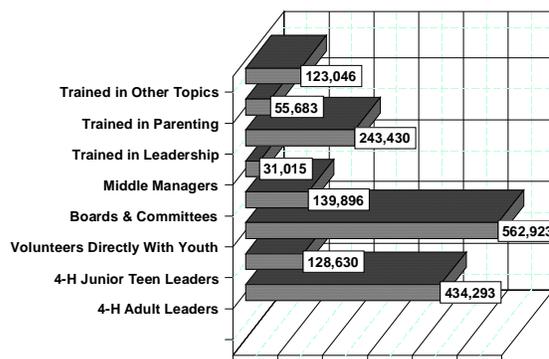
680,425	Citizenship and Civic Education
1,052,859	Communications and Expressive Arts
495,078	Consumer and Family Sciences
1,250,635	Environmental Ed. & Earth Sciences
2,364,989	Healthy Lifestyle Ed.
1,811,719	Personal Development and Leadership
3,724,625	Plants and Animals
1,535,386	Science and Technology



VOLUNTEERS IN 4-H

Volunteers are essential to the successful delivery of 4-H programs to youth. The value of the time, mileage and out-of-pocket expenses that the 572,834 volunteer leaders contribute to 4-H annually exceeds \$2 billion—five times the combined county, state, federal and private sector support.

434,293	4-H adult leaders
128,630	4-H junior teen leaders
562,923	Volunteers working directly with youth
139,896	Boards and committees
31,015	Middle managers working with youth and adult volunteers
243,430	Volunteers trained in leadership
55,683	Volunteers trained in parenting
123,046	Volunteers trained in other topics



The 4-H Mission

4-H empowers youth to reach their full potential, working and learning in partnership with caring adults.

The 4-H Vision

A world in which youth and adults learn, grow and work together as catalysts for positive change.

The 4-H Pledge

I pledge:

- ▶ my **Head** to clearer thinking,
- ▶ my **Heart** to greater loyalty,
- ▶ my **Hands** to larger service
- ▶ and my **Health** to better living,
for my club, my community, my country, and my world.

The Four H's

Head—clearer thinking and decisionmaking, knowledge useful throughout life

Heart—greater loyalty, strong personal values, positive self-concept, concern for others

Hands—larger service, workforce preparedness, useful skills, science and technology literacy

Health—better living, healthy lifestyles

The 4-H Value Set

We, the youth and adults of the 4-H movement, value:

- Youth as powerful members of society
- Youth and adults as caring partners
- Learning as a lifelong commitment
- Diversity and social conscience
- Doing our best and making it better

4-H Youth Development Core Capabilities

- Exceptional human capacity
- Strategic resource-development partnerships
- High-quality educational programs
- Nationwide, community-focused network

The 4-H Motto

To Make the Best Better.

Positive Youth Development

Youth development is the natural process of developing one's capacities. While it occurs through youths' daily experiences with people, places and possibilities, it is far too important to be left to chance.

Positive youth development occurs from an *intentional* process that promotes positive outcomes for young people by providing opportunities, choices, relationships and the support necessary for youth to fully participate. Youth development takes place in families, peer groups, schools, neighborhoods and communities.

4-H youth development programs provide just such opportunities, relationships and support for youth to help them acquire the life skills necessary to meet the challenges of adolescence and adulthood. 4-H Youth Development uses experiential, research-based educational opportunities that help youth become competent, caring, confident, connected and contributing citizens of character. These experiences immediately yield new knowledge, which leads to changed behavior, and through prolonged participation gradually promotes attitudes, characterizations and outcomes of:

Competence - advanced skills in some important subjects of interest.

Character - clear, consistent moral precepts that effectively guide behavior.

Caring - willingness to respond to the needs and concerns of others.

Confidence - willingness to take on new challenges, and to expect success.

Connections - establishing and maintaining relationships at many levels.

Contributions - making a difference in the lives of others through service.

4-H has traditionally expressed these outcomes in its definition of the H's in the 4-H Clover.

Relationship of Positive Youth Development to Prevention:

The broader, more holistic view of helping youth to realize their full potential has not replaced the focus on preventing problems, but rather created a larger framework that promotes positive outcomes for all young people. Both positive youth development and problem prevention are valuable and necessary, but, in practice, the distinction between the two is often blurred.

Prevention is defined as "an active process of creating conditions and fostering personal attributes that promote the well-being of people." Prevention efforts reduce risk and enhance protective factors or "assets," the supports, opportunities and relationships that help people develop resilience as they deal with negative circumstances. At one time or another, all youth will need focused support to overcome obstacles placed in their way by current culture.

Features of Positive Development Settings:

The 2001 National 4-H Impact Assessment demonstrated that eight critical needs of youth are consistently met in 4-H youth development programs. The importance of these critical elements

has been verified most recently by the survey of existing research included in the 2002 *Community Programs to Promote Youth Development* from the National Academy of Science.

- Positive relationships with caring adults, good emotional and moral support;
- Feeling emotionally and physically safe;
- Structure and limits that are developmentally appropriate and that recognize adolescents' increasing social maturity and expertise;
- Feeling a sense of belonging, in an inclusive environment;
- Exposure to positive morals, values and positive social norms;
- Opportunities for skill building and mastery, including learning how to form close, durable human relations with peers that support and reinforce healthy behaviors, as well as to acquire the life skills necessary for school success and successful transition into adulthood;
- Opportunities to value and practice service to others, to do things that make a real difference and to play an active role in the organizations themselves;
- Opportunities for self-determination, and engagement in learning, and;
- Opportunities to see oneself as an active participant in the future.

When these conditions are in place in a good 4-H youth development program, participating youth are highly likely to demonstrate the six C's cited above.

Strategies for Including Stakeholders

4-H has a long tradition of involving its stakeholders in decisions. 4-H Program Advisory Committees operate at county and state levels, involving many thousands of citizen stakeholders. County 4-H Councils in most states have involved teen-aged 4-H participants and volunteer leaders in determining and managing local programs for nearly a century. Planning committees for state and national 4-H events have included 4-H'ers for many decades.

Beginning in 1997, one youth from each state is annually invited to participate in the National 4-H Youth Directions Council (N4-HYDC), which spends National 4-H Conference in training and preparation for carrying out national leadership roles. The N4-HYDC meets once during the year in addition to National 4-H Conference and holds a monthly conference call. Many of its members serve on national 4-H planning and management groups. Two interns who had been N4-HYDC members the previous year provide support and leadership to each new N4-HYDC.

As a direct outgrowth of the 1991 National 4-H Strategic Plan, youth/adult partnerships in 4-H are being emphasized. Youth and volunteers constituted the majority of those developing the 1991 and 2001 National 4-H Strategic Plans. Youth and volunteers continue to be important elements in the National 4-H Strategic Directions Team, which oversees the implementation of the Strategic Plan and its continuous evolution. The National 4-H Strategic Directions Team also functions as the Base Program Strategic Team for the CES Base Program of 4-H Youth Development. The goal is to include youth and volunteer stakeholders as full partners in program planning, implementation and oversight in every 4-H program and at all levels - local, state and

national. In 2001, two youth were included as full members in the new National 4-H Leadership Trust, and one youth joined the Experiential Learning Design Team. Most of the National 4-H Competitive Event Management Committees are now including full-fledged youth members.

4-H is an audience specialization, which encompasses nearly all of the Cooperative Extension System subject-matter areas. Its programs are developed in collaboration with specialists representing all the extension base programs and initiatives. Research results in many fields are introduced to the youth public through 4-H. Increasingly, 4-H'ers collaborate with researchers in carrying out research projects.

Assuring Quality in 4-H Programs

4-H Criteria for Youth Development Curricula

In 1993, more than 400 4-H staff, from practically all states and territories, participated in assuring quality in 4-H programs by participating in developing a set of 14 National 4-H Criteria for Youth Development Curricula. A national juried curriculum review system was established in 1994, which now includes 11 curriculum juries, with 66 expert jurors. Several hundred youth development curricula have been reviewed against these criteria, and 127 curricula that met all criteria have become the National Collection of 4-H Youth Development Educational Materials. Only these are recommended for use in all states, counties and territories. Usage of these extremely high-quality materials is increasing rapidly.

4-H Cooperative Curriculum System

Forty-one land-grant universities have now collaborated in the 4-H Cooperative Curriculum System (4HCCS) to use multistate design teams in creating high-quality, exciting youth development educational materials for nationwide distribution. One hundred sixty educational materials have been produced by 4HCCS to date, with more being developed each year. These exceed the quality that individual states could produce. Gross volume of 4HCCS business now exceeds \$1.3 million. Savings realized from producing materials in high volume are reinvested in the development of additional new series.

As these *Programs of Excellence* illustrate, states and counties are increasingly using a wide variety of measures to demonstrate their outputs, outcomes and impacts. Because 4-H subject matters and delivery modes are so diverse, and the age range of the audience so broad, it is difficult to limit and standardize the measures used to evaluate programs.

How 4-H Impacts Are Communicated

The 4-H program relies increasingly on websites for broad and rapid communications.

- National 4-H Headquarters, www.national4-Hheadquarters.gov
- National 4-H Council: www.fourhcouncil.edu
- Strategic Plan: www.national4-Hheadquarters.gov/strategic.htm
- NAE4-HA: www.nae4ha.org
- 4-H Centennial: www.4hcentennial.org
- National Portal: www.4h-usa.org (listing of all 4-H websites)
- 4-H Technology Leadership Team: www.4-h.org
- National Public Service Ad Campaign “Are You Into It?”: www.areyouintoit.com
- CSREES/USDA: www.csrees.usda.gov
- Children, Youth, and Families Education and Research Network (CYFAR):
<http://www.csrees.usda.gov/cyfar>
- National 4-H Congress: www.national4-Hcongress.com
- National 4-H Conference: www.4-H.org/2004conf
- Program Leadership Committee: www.cesprograms.org/plc/default.htm
- National 4-H Supply Service: www.4hmall.org

The National 4-H Headquarters website includes viewable and downloadable full text of the 1998, 1999, 2000, 2001 and 2002 *4-H Programs of Excellence* reports, as well as the April 1998 24-page document *4-H Innovations and Impacts*. All of these have been distributed as printed documents to all state 4-H program leaders, state Extension directors, and CSREES deputy administrators. Copies have been shared with the Program Leadership Committee (PLC) and Extension Committee on Policy (ECOP). They have been shared by partners and collaborators, and with many other youth-serving agencies. Youth visiting their Senators and Representatives share copies. Copies are made available to visitors to F4-HN/CSREES National 4-H Headquarters.

In the spring of 1998, the National 4-H Strategic Directions Team produced a 13-page summary of accomplishments of the National 4-H Strategic Plan from its inception in 1991 to 1998. This document is also available for downloading from the National 4-H Headquarters website and has been widely distributed in print as well, as described above.

The website constructed by the 4-H Technology Leadership Team includes an ever-expanding series of impact and success stories written by 4-H participants themselves.

National 4-H Council continually produces and disseminates impact statements that relate to its focused programs, including *Community Service Learning*, *Environmental Stewardship*, *Workforce Preparation* and *Bridging the Gap of Isolation*. These are available both in print and on their two websites. Each year several are woven into news articles in national media.

Nearly all states and territories have their own 4-H home pages, generally on the land-grant

university websites. Many of these have been created and are being maintained by 4-H'ers. Most of these are interconnected to the national websites via hotlinks. Increasing numbers of counties, and even 4-H Clubs, are creating their own websites. Most states annually produce reports and other printed documents that include instate impact information. Many states have made videotapes of their more spectacular accomplishments, and some of these have been used on broadcast TV, as well as at many state and national meetings.

The Children, Youth, and Families at Risk website, CYFERnet, includes many hundreds of reports of 4-H impacts from its funded local community projects in more than 600 locations. Youth participants in CYFAR projects are full participants in the 4-H program. The CYFAR program is currently completing a comprehensive 3-year national evaluation study.

4-H annually produces a 46-page National 4-H Enrollment Summary that details the demographics of the nearly 7 million 4-H participants, their subject-matter enrollment, participation in national initiatives and program sources. This is widely distributed internally and externally, both in print and via website. A threefold brochure annually summarizes this information, and it is distributed even more widely.

All 4-H programs are reported under Government Performance Review Act (GPRA) Goal 5, *Enhanced Economic Opportunity and Quality of Life Among Americans*.