



Understanding the 4-H Workforce



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Understanding the 4-H Workforce: Staffing, Structure and Salaries was a project of National 4-H Headquarters and National 4-H Council to collect baseline data about 4-H staffing structures in which 4-H professionals work and salaries ranges as reported by state Extension 4-H directors. All 50 states responded to the survey and results are reported in eight areas-- (1) profile of respondents; (2) current 4-H staffing structures; (3) staffing trends and changes since 1990; (4) academic degree requirements; (5) compensation levels; (6) academic and other preparation; (7) ideal staffing models; and (8) current and future challenges.

- ✿ Total FTEs (both hard and soft-funded positions) at the state office level for all respondents was 399.35. The average number of FTEs per state office is about 8, while the median was 7
- ✿ 58 percent of the states replying indicated that their state staff was smaller than in 1990
- ✿ 28 percent of the states indicated that they had more FTEs now than in 1990
- ✿ Nine percent had remained the same

When asked how many total county or parish FTEs are dedicated to 4-H programming, the national total was reported as 2,801.66 because many agents have multiple programmatic responsibilities of which 4-H is just one of several responsibilities. This number can be compared to the 3,066 counties in the nation.

In response to how current county staffing levels compare to those in 1990, some states reported having more agents because of increased funding, but other states reported having fewer agents because of funding cuts.

- ✿ Forty-eight percent of states have seen a decline in the number of FTEs dedicated to 4-H programming
- ✿ 28 percent have seen an increase in the number of 4-H FTEs since 1990
- ✿ Fifteen percent reported that they have stayed the same
- ✿ 17 percent were not sure

When surveyed about the number of para-professional positions,

- ✿ In 56 percent of the states, the number of para-professional positions has increased at the county level since 1990
- ✿ In 13 percent of states the number of such positions had stayed the same
- ✿ In another 13 percent of states there has been a decline in such positions
- ✿ 17 percent weren't sure about the shift in such positions

The survey also revealed that the academic training of 4-H professionals and compensation for 4-H youth workers was higher compared to their counterparts in youth work elsewhere. While funding for 4-H positions has remained stable, there is also an increase in the utilization of para-professionals in program delivery. Further study is needed regarding satisfaction and retention of 4-H youth development professionals and in examining the link between the academic preparation and training of 4-H youth workers and positive youth development outcomes.

For a copy of the full report, please contact Barbara Stone at bstone@csrees.usda.gov