

# 4-H Common Measures



## Bringing Rigor to Program Evaluation

4-H today is America's largest youth development organization, delivering positive youth development programming to more than six million youth in every county across the nation. A key driver of this success is our commitment to evidence-based program evaluation. In fact, we are one of the few youth development organizations to systematically evaluate programs and professional development training initiatives.

With programs being implemented across the country in partnership with over 100 land-grant universities (LGUs), 4-H recognized the need for a universal system to measure the impacts and outcomes of its youth programs. In 2012, in collaboration with U.S. Department of Agriculture's National Institute of Food and Agriculture, LGUs, faculty and county educators, 4-H committed to standardizing program evaluation by developing Common Measures, a framework that would document system-wide youth-related outcomes.

Using logic modeling, this team of experts identified desired outcomes and impacts of positive youth development programming overall as well as for each of 4-H's program areas: Science, Healthy Living, Citizenship, College/Career Readiness. The ability to measure these outcomes provides a base to strengthen programs and adult practitioners.

To view the National 4-H Logic Models, visit [www.4-h.org/commonmeasures](http://www.4-h.org/commonmeasures).

## 4-H Outcomes

Research confirms 4-H youth are:

- **More positive about science** learning and careers than a national sample of peers at 4th, 8th and 12th grades
- **59% would like a job related to science**
- Nearly **2 times more likely to participate in a STEM learning** program during out of school time
- 3.9 times more likely to make **contributions to their communities**

## Evidence of Impact

For years, 4-H has conducted studies to measure outcomes across our programming using increasing levels of resources and rigor over time.

### **SHORT-TERM AND MID-TERM OUTCOMES:**

Using items from the National Assessment of Educational Progress, 4-H developed the Youth Engagement, Attitudes, and Knowledge instrument (YEAKE) so that 4-H samples can be benchmarked with national youth samples.

### **LONG-TERM OUTCOMES:**

In partnership with Tufts University, 4-H conducted a longitudinal study of positive youth development with more than 7,000 adolescents surveyed over ten years.

### **BEST PRACTICES:**

To shape programs for deeper engagement, impact and sustainability, 4-H conducted a study of science programs to identify promising practices particularly in urban areas - Priming the Pipeline.

[www.4-H.org](http://www.4-H.org)

# 4-H Common Measures



## Assessing Outcomes for 6 Million Youth

Common Measures is helping 4-H continually improve programs so that we can reach even more young people with a life-changing 4-H experience. It assesses the impact of 4-H through Science, Healthy Living, Citizenship, College/Career Readiness. These evaluation measurements also assist in cross-program comparison by allowing various programs to be examined on similar outcomes and outputs.

### The goals of Common Measures are to:

1. Identify a common core of youth outcomes and indicators which can be used to improve programs
2. Provide a process for assessment and report from a national data base
3. Provide state 4-H programs with resources to assist them in the planning of local, state-wide and regional evaluations

### Benefits to the 4-H community include:

- Improved ability to write impact statements for federal, state and county reports
- Ability to describe the impact of 4-H consistently and simply
- User-friendly, readily accessible tools
- Ability to easily measure a broad range of programs

### SECURING ADOPTION BY A NATIONAL ORGANIZATION

To ensure adoption of Common Measures by an extensive field of program specialists, 4-H National Headquarters, USDA and National 4-H Council:

- **Collaborated** to write the survey questions with extension professionals from across the 4-H community including experts in content and evaluation
- **Created a library of resources** including survey instruments to assess and report outcomes in positive youth development, Science, Healthy Living, Citizenship and College/Career Readiness
- **Pilot tested** the survey instruments in multiple states during Phase I and conducted a **Psychometric Analysis** in Phase II to strengthen instruments
- **Gathered feedback from leadership** at all levels of the organization on the comprehensiveness of instruments
- **Provided extensive training** through webinars and in-person meetings to 4-H faculty and staff at all levels
- **Facilitated widespread use** by providing print versions and the online survey platform, Qualtrics

## The Evolution of Common Measures

### Phases I and II

- 48 LGU's are using Common Measures and it has been used in 9 multi-state grants in 2014.
- The initial wave of data collection in 2013 included 2,500 responses; to date, over 20,000 responses have been collected.
- Extensive training has been conducted with LGU's to build buy-in and capacity of Common Measures.
- 9 Common Measures instruments are currently available in a 4th-7th and 8-12th grade version:
  - ✓ Citizenship
  - ✓ Healthy Living
  - ✓ Science
  - ✓ Universal PYD
  - ✓ College/Career Readiness (8th-12th grade only)

**Phases III and IV** will roll out in subsequent years. LGU's will conduct an annual needs assessment to inform future development.

### COMING SOON

- Pre-test version of tools
- Reporting templates
- Tools available in Spanish

[www.4-H.org](http://www.4-H.org)