

4-H Youth Development Program

The Value of the Program

University Research-Based

4-H youth development faculty and staff provide a direct link to Louisiana State University AgCenter expertise and research. Because of this university affiliation, counties have access to community assessment tools, program evaluation expertise, a statewide network of youth development professionals, a source of professional development and program development, and a gateway for youth to access Louisiana State University.

Outstanding Reach

The Louisiana 4-H program reaches over 240,000 youth with the support of staff and over 6,000 4-H adult volunteers. The 4-H movement supports young people from elementary school through high school with programs designed to shape future leaders and innovators. Fueled by research-driven programming, 4-H'ers engage in hands-on learning activities in the areas of science, citizenship and healthy living.

Localized Support

In Louisiana, the parish 4-H youth development agent is the only co-curricular organization in the parish. A 4-H Agent is an important resource for community groups and an active participant in youth-focused alliances. The 4-H youth agent brings professionalism, knowledge, skills and university connections to local community youth programs.

Positive Youth Development Impact

As the youth development program of the state's land-grant universities and the Cooperative Extension System, 4-H fosters an innovative, "learn by doing" approach with proven results. The 4-H Study of Positive Youth Development, a longitudinal study conducted by the Institute for Applied Research in Youth Development at Tufts University, shows youth engaged with 4-H are:

- Nearly two times more likely to get better grades in school;
- Nearly two times more likely to plan to go to college;
- 41 % less likely to engage in risky behaviors; and
- 25 % more likely to positively contribute to their families and communities.



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Program Impacts

- In a two-year evaluation examining positive youth development, Louisiana 4-H'ers indicated that they had a sense of belonging on all measurements.
- In Character Development, 91% of the youth were tolerant of the differences in others.
- In service-learning projects, 91% of the youth had a better understanding of the problems facing their community.
- At the Louisiana Outdoor Science and Technology Camp, 76% of the youth were curious about the world in which they live.
- With Youth Wetlands Week Programs, scores from pre and post tests completed by participating students showed an increase on average of 28% across grades 4-12 ($p < 0.001$).
- With Smart Bodies, youth made significant increases in their activity levels, knowledge of the health benefits of eating fruits and vegetables.
- Of 4-H youth participating in statewide contests, 77% of youth reported their experiences in 4-H helped them learn to mentally organize their thoughts before speaking.



Louisiana 4-H is an educational program of the LSU AgCenter