



North Dakota State University | Center for 4-H Youth Development

4-H Program Quality Framework

Providing dynamic leadership for the 4-H youth development program

The Extension office works with a team of Extension professionals and volunteers to provide dynamic program leadership for the 4-H youth development program resulting in a measurable positive impact on enhancing life skills of youth, adults and volunteers. This work will fulfill the NDSU Extension mission statement “to create learning partnerships that help youth and adults enhance their lives and communities” and the North Dakota 4-H program mission:

4-H youth development education creates supportive learning environments for all youth and adults to reach their fullest potential as capable, competent and caring citizens.

In support of this mission, NDSU Extension 4-H Youth Development programs will:

- Reach out to all segments of our diverse population
- Provide experiential learning
- Provide opportunities to develop skills and values that benefit youth throughout life
- Foster leadership and volunteerism in youth and adults
- Strengthen families and communities
- Use science and research based knowledge and the land grant university system
- Build internal and external partnerships for programming and funding

This framework includes the following components of the 4-H program:

- 4-H Club
- Volunteer Management
- Input Groups
- Learning Experiences
- Communication and Service Learning
- Recognition
- Recruitment
- Communication Methods
- Teen Leadership

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.



4-H Program Quality Framework

1. The 4-H Club program is an integral part of the county extension office and program.

- All 4-H clubs are chartered (each club consists of at least three (3) families and five (5) youth).
- New members are enrolled annually.
- Current members are re-enrolled annually.
- Clubs follow NDSU's non-discrimination policy.
- Clubs follow state and federal policies regarding: youth protection, membership, safety, participation, and finances.
- County membership recruitment goals are set and evaluated.
- Regular communication with leader/co-leaders to evaluate club progress (i.e. club visits, newsletters, Facebook, email, etc.).
- Training is provided to members and/or leaders to support club participation (i.e. club officer training, record book training, etc.).
- Leaders use appropriate materials for Cloverbud youth ages 5 to 7.
- Clubs incorporate the essential elements (belonging, independence, generosity, mastery).
- An active campaign is implemented to start new clubs.
- Other outreach efforts expand 4-H educational programs to new audiences.

2. Volunteers (teen and adult) are a vital component in program development and implementation. The ISOTURE (Identify, Select, Orient, Train, Utilize, Recognize, and Evaluate) model is used when working with and supporting volunteers.

- All enrolled volunteers are screened, trained, and appointed in accordance with NDSU Extension Youth Protection Policy.
- Opportunities are available for teens to serve as volunteers in the program.
- Enrolled adult and youth volunteers receive training to update them on programs, policies, and procedures that impact their work with youth.
- New volunteers should be utilized every year; the number of new volunteers reflects your county/unit goals to increase 4-H membership.
- Volunteers who support the 4-H program (judges, fair volunteers, etc.) receive training.
- The volunteer base reflects the diversity of your communities.
- The Volunteer Research Knowledge Competency taxonomy is utilized to determine training needs.
- Volunteer participation in regional and state training opportunities is encouraged, such as the North Central Region Leader's E-Forum and specific program area trainings.

3. Organized formal input groups are essential in planning and conducting educational events and programs, and providing other support as appropriate (i.e. resource development).

- There are active overall advisory groups (i.e. County Extension and 4-H Council).
- The groups reflect the demographics of your county and membership of groups includes youth; youth voices are welcomed and valued.
- The groups set goals and meet on a regular basis.
- The groups provide an opportunity for volunteers to be an active part of planning and implementation of programs, events, and activities.

- ___ Training is provided to support the groups in fulfilling their roles and responsibilities.
- ___ There are other program/project committees (horse, livestock, family consumer science, environmental science, fair, etc.) that provide support to specific projects and activities.
- ___ Volunteer involvement on state level advisory groups and event planning committees is encouraged and supported.
- ___ Other input groups are utilized for needs assessment and impact related to youth issues and their development (faith groups, service organizations, schools, etc.).
- ___ Teen and adult volunteers are provided an opportunity to be an active part of planning and implementation of the program, such as advisory groups and planning committees.

4. Appropriate learning experiences are conducted at the county level to support youth, clubs, project or youth development work.

- ___ **Learning experiences are offered to enhance club project work (shows and clinics, project workshops, life skill development, teacher in-services, etc.).**
 - 2-3 for counties with only 1 agent
 - 4-6 for counties with more than 1 agent
 - 6-10 for agents with full-time 4-H appointments
- ___ **The impact of learning experiences are documented using specific evaluation tools and/or teaching effectiveness forms one or more times per year.**
- ___ Learning experiences support life skill development and incorporate one or more of the essential elements.
- ___ Learning experiences are planned and conducted in coordination with volunteers.
- ___ The documented impact and level of participation justify the time and effort the paid 4-H staff and volunteers spend on the events.

5. Communication skills development and service learning opportunities for 4-H members are key components of the county program.

- ___ Clubs encourage each member to give a communication presentation at least once per year.
- ___ Clubs conduct at least one service learning project.
- ___ At least one presentation event is held every year (i.e. communication arts, project expo, etc.).
- ___ Members have opportunities to participate in county, district, or state service learning project(s) and state presentation events.
- ___ Support and assistance is provided to youth eligible for district/state/national presentations.
- ___ A specific form of public presentation training for youth and adults is held.

6. Recognition (through events, publicity, and other methods) is given to youth and adults for their accomplishments.

- ___ **An annual 4-H event (i.e. fair, achievement days) is held to showcase accomplishments of 4-H participants and their exhibits.**
- ___ **An annual event (i.e. achievement night) is held during which 4-H participants/clubs receive recognition.**
- ___ **An annual event is held to recognize adult volunteers for their service (may be same as youth recognition).**
- ___ **Information about recognition, award winners, etc. are communicated to the public (i.e. news releases, newsletters, website, other social media).**

- ___ The National 4-H Recognition Model is utilized to recognize participants for their accomplishments.
- ___ Personal letters recognizing members and leaders for special accomplishments are sent as appropriate.
- ___ Elected officials, NDSU Extension administrators, and other stakeholders are invited to assist in providing recognition to youth and/or adults (this may include attending events, providing certificates, or resolutions, etc. when appropriate).

7. Youth and adults are recruited to participate in 4-H through a coordinated marketing and promotions plan.

- ___ 4-H promotional materials are developed and/or distributed (i.e. flyers, brochures, etc.).
- ___ A recruitment plan and/or event(s) for recruiting club members is in place (bring a friend, etc.).
- ___ A recruitment plan and/or event(s) for recruiting volunteers is in place.
- ___ A marketing plan for 4-H is in place.
- ___ Regular news releases are sent to available local media outlets.
- ___ The county 4-H program has representation at community events such as youth fairs, parades, back to school nights, and other local events which may provide exhibit space or an opportunity to speak.

8. A viable communication system (4honline, newsletter, e-mail listserv, county extension website, social media, etc.) is used to communicate on a regular basis with members and volunteers.

- ___ **A 4-H newsletter for members, leaders, and/or parents is consistently published and distributed.**
- ___ **Specific information to targeted audiences is shared to alert them to educational opportunities and special events.**
- ___ **4hOnline enrollment database is kept up-to-date to ensure communication to current program participants.**
- ___ **A website maintained and other forms of social media are used as a communication tool for program participants.**
- ___ **Staff members are accessible and available to volunteers, members, and parents through face to face, phone contact, and email.**
- ___ **Forms of social media kept current as a communication tool for program participants.**
- ___ An annual calendar of events is distributed to parents, leaders, and members.
- ___ The www.ndsu.edu/4h website is utilized.

9. Specific leadership and personal development programs and activities for teens are implemented.

- ___ **There are ongoing opportunities for teen leadership and personal development.**
- ___ Teens serve as youth leaders in their 4-H clubs.
- ___ Teens take an active role in planning and implementing county-wide educational events or training programs (i.e. officer training).
- ___ Specific training is provided for teens in support of their leadership roles.
- ___ There is an active teen/ambassador group, which meets regularly, has bylaws and officers.

Adapted with permission from Rutgers Cooperative Extension, Department of 4-H Youth Development