



For more than a century, Wisconsin 4-H Youth Development has worked to engage youth participants throughout the state in leadership training, community-building experiences and experiential-learning opportunities to better their own lives and the lives of the people around them. For many youth, 4-H is the first class they take at the UW.

Current 4-H Youth Development Statistics

- **Total number of youth participants in 4-H Youth Development and other Cooperative Extension programs – 153,290**
- **4-H adult volunteers – 16,749**
- **4-H youth volunteers – 5,242**

Wisconsin 4-H Youth Development is supported by county, state and federal governments; Wisconsin 4-H returns those investments in the form of positive youth, adult and community development.

POSITIVE YOUTH DEVELOPMENT

For more than a century, 4-H has focused on preparing youth for successful careers. The original Extension youth programs prepared young people for the agricultural careers of the time. And today's innovative programs in STEM education, communications and youth leadership provide youth with the leadership, collaborative, critical thinking, decision-making and communication skills they need to succeed in careers that haven't even been invented.

4-H Grows Future Scientists

Youth explore interests from animal science to aerospace, resulting in increased interest in science at a rate three times that of non-4-H peers. Interest in science is a predictor for young people to choose science-related careers. This interest in science, along with 4-H members' 70 percent greater likelihood to go to college than youth participating in other out-of-school programs, is helping grow future scientists. Future scientists are critical to our state, national and global economy.

STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Math) Education

4-H youth learn science, technology, engineering and math implications through a variety of projects that help prepare them for the workforce of the future. 4-H girls are three times more likely to take part in science programs than their peers. These skill sets will enable growing Wisconsin businesses to better utilize our own population in our food, fiber, and technology industries.



Economic Stability

Youth participating in 4-H are more likely to enroll in post-high school education and explore career and entrepreneurship opportunities. Higher educational levels result in increased wage earning that contribute to the economic stability of their communities.

Workforce Preparation

4-H youth learn the importance of teamwork, communication and critical thinking through involvement in clubs, groups and decision-making activities. The Secretary of Commerce Commission on Achieving Necessary Skills (SCANS report) identifies the importance of developing a generation of youth with these workforce competencies to prepare for our economic future.

Safe and Secure Food Systems

The diverse animal and plant science programs of Wisconsin 4-H Youth Development offer youth the opportunity to acquire the life skills of responsibility, management, decision-making and goal-setting. They exercise independence, self-discipline and responsibility through educational programs that assure a safe, quality food supply for a growing world population.



Community Connections

Young people involved in Wisconsin 4-H Youth Development develop competence, confidence, character and compassion for others at greater levels than their peers. Youth have better and more sustained connections with peers and adults and are more likely to be civically active, making more community and civic contribution than their peers.

Healthy Living

Young people in 4-H are less likely than their peers to engage in smoking, drug use, and driving or riding in cars with those who have been drinking alcohol. They are 2.3 times more likely to exercise and be physically active and 3.4 times more likely to delay sexual activity by grade 12. These positive behaviors reduce emotional and financial costs to families and communities and result in savings to publicly-supported services.

POSITIVE ADULT DEVELOPMENT

The capacity of 4-H Youth Development and other UW-Extension, Cooperative Extension programs to reach over 153,000 Wisconsin youth is greatly increased by the efforts of more than 16,000 volunteers. The typical 4-H volunteer gives eight hours a month, according to a 2008 survey of 4-H volunteers in Wisconsin – at the Independent Sector’s Wisconsin volunteer time value of \$21.78 per hour, Wisconsin 4-H volunteers contribute \$35 million to the program annually.

Youth reap countless benefits from strong relationships with caring adults, and volunteers also gain from their involvement in Wisconsin 4-H Youth Development. Wisconsin 4-H staff prepare volunteers for their role with training in positive youth development; age-appropriate youth and adult education; club

management; and more. According to a 2008 survey of Wisconsin 4-H volunteers, working with Wisconsin 4-H:

- Gives adults an opportunity for personal and professional growth, including building teamwork, management, communication and goal-setting skills that help them in their careers and workplaces.
- Gives adults an avenue to become more connected with their communities.

POSITIVE COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

Wisconsin 4-H is preparing the next generation of leaders through experiences in decision-making and citizenship activities. Youth in 4-H Youth Development programs become actively involved and engaged in local groups, clubs and communities. 4-H youth are 3.4 times more likely to contribute to their communities compared to youth in other out-of-school programs. 4-H youth learn to address local issues and needs and actively participate in discussions and programs that benefit others.

Leadership and Service

4-H youth participate in service projects and leadership roles where they develop public speaking, leadership, and decision-making skills. These professional skills help them positively contribute to communities as responsible citizens and active public servants. On average, each community club completes five service projects per year. In 2014, more than 1,100 community clubs completed around 5,770 service projects in Wisconsin in such areas as support for the elderly, community improvement, and helping younger children, the disadvantaged and the environment.

Community Connections

By providing opportunities for youth to have experiences beyond their families, 4-H Youth Development builds a sense of community connectedness among all participants. A study of Wisconsin 4-H youth leaders showed that 83 percent felt more connected to their community because of 4-H.

Citizenship Skills

4-H gives youth direct experience with democratic practices and electoral processes. Every year, around 4,600 youth win offices in local 4-H clubs. As club leaders, they gain experience conducting meetings and leading group decision-making processes. They learn that accountability comes with elected office. In 4-H, youth begin developing the skills they will need to become future community leaders. In several sites around Wisconsin, youth have taken their citizenship skills one step further by becoming important members of county and city boards.

Additional Resources:

- **4-H: The Youth Solution:** <http://youtu.be/KnwEY9SPU-A>
- **The Positive Development of Youth:** <http://www.4-h.org/about/youth-development-research/positive-youth-development-study/>
- **Independent Sector value of volunteer time:** https://www.independentsector.org/volunteer_time