

2007 Southern District Innovative Grants Program

1. Project Coordinator Information:

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Other Team Members: Amy Mitchell, Crawford County 4-H Youth Development Agent, and Sue Fredrich, Rock County 4-H Youth Development Program Advisor

2. Statement of Need:

Older youth are a key asset of the 4-H Community Club program, but these same youth become increasingly busy as they progress through middle and high school. Vibrant youth groups are needed to keep older youth members active and interested in the 4-H program. Southern District Leadership Team (SDLT), a team of older 4-H youth (7th grade and older) from the southern district, also identified the trend of decreased 4-H involvement from older youth. In 2004, SDLT identified "increasing active participation by older youth in the 4-H program," as one of their goals. This led to the creation of a 4-H Fall Youth Leadership Conference in 2005. The conference was such a success that it was repeated in 2006. The conference has outgrown its original location, the Great Wolf Lodge in Wisconsin Dells, and is moving in 2007 to the Chula Vista Resort in Wisconsin Dells. In 2007, the maximum number of youth participants will increase from 75 to 125.

In 2005, a \$3,000 grant was secured from the Southern District Resource Management Team. This grant allowed the planning committee to organize a youth leadership conference with a professional atmosphere. The additional funding allowed the conference participant fee to only be \$15 while the actual cost per participant to operate the conference was \$62. In 2006, \$1,000 in grant funding was secured from the Wisconsin 4-H Foundation. Because this amount of funding was decreased from 2005, the registration fee was raised to \$35 and youth conference planning committee members paid a fee of \$30. Some conference amenities such as meals for the planning committee, limited morning refreshments for conference participants, and travel reimbursements for presenters were eliminated from the budget. These decreases resulted in an actual cost per conference participant of \$47.50. In 2007, the planning committee would like to seek additional funding to help reinstate some conference amenities that were cancelled in 2006 and also have the option of decreasing the participant registration fee.

3. Project Goals or Objectives:

The Southern District Leadership Team (SDLT) is planning to host a Fall Youth Leadership Conference in Wisconsin Dells. This one-day conference will be held on Saturday, November 17, 2007. Older youth from the southern district and quad counties will be actively invited to participate in this conference, and youth from other areas of Wisconsin will also be eligible to participate. In spring 2007, older youth will be invited to serve on the conference planning committee. This committee will meet two times face-to-face and continue the remainder of the conference planning via a web group. The conference will consist of a key note address, opening program, break-out sessions, closing program, and passes for the indoor water park.

The main objectives of this conference include:

- Providing a district wide older youth event.
- Energizing older youth to become more actively involved in their local 4-H programs (county and clubs).
- Providing an opportunity for older youth to learn and practice leadership skills through participation on the conference planning committee and leadership focused break-out sessions.
- Promoting a renewed interest and dedication to 4-H.
- Teaching older youth about 4-H opportunities available to them on the district, state, and national level.
- Fostering an atmosphere of idea sharing between conference participants.

4. Personnel:

Overall leadership for the conference planning process will be provided by three 4-H Youth Development Educators: Jessica Jens, Sauk County; Amy Mitchell, Crawford County; and Sue Fredrich, Rock County. Additional UWEX Educators (county-based and state specialists) will be actively solicited to provide leadership for a number of break-out sessions. Youth planning committee members will also facilitate some break-out session. The 4-H Wisconsin Youth Leader Council will be asked to participate in the leadership conference and facilitate both small and large group activities. Other 4-H State Teams (such as Showcase Singers) will also be asked to participate.

In 2006, 11 of the Southern District counties sent older youth to the conference. As noted earlier, the UWEX Quad Counties are also personally invited to participate in this conference. When the UWEX districts were restructured, the Quad County 4-H programs lost access to a number of district events. In 2006, there were 11 participants from Milwaukee County, two from Racine County, and three from Waukesha county.

5. Budget and Dollars Requested:

We are requesting \$1,513. The money will be used for the following:

1. Meeting Room Rental: \$325
2. Key Note Speaker: \$250
3. Afternoon Refreshments: \$688 (125 people @ \$5.50 each)
4. Three Month Follow-Up Phone Survey: \$250
(We would like to hire an intern from a local UW-Colleges Campus, probably either UW-Baraboo/Sauk County or UW-Rock County, to conduct a phone survey of the conference participants. We are estimating that 25 hours of work, at \$10 per hour, would be needed to contact 125 youth.)

An additional grant application for \$1,000 was submitted to the Wisconsin 4-H Foundation. We have not yet heard from the foundation on the status of our application. If received, that money would be used to fund the participants' lunches and morning refreshments.

Conference participants will be charged \$25 each. Conference planning committee members will be charged \$40 each. This income is used to pay for indoor water park passes, conference t-shirts, conference material (nametags, program supplies, folders, etc.), and overnight accommodations for the conference planning committee.

Obtaining the \$1,470 from the Southern District Resource Management Team would allow us to provide the older youth with a professional conference atmosphere and improved conference content. With this funding, we could obtain a key note speaker that requires a stipend, provide an afternoon break prior to the closing session (very helpful for those participants who have a long drive home), and obtain additional break-out rooms to increase the number and variety of available workshops. The additional funding would also allow us to complete an effective post-conference evaluation.

If outside funding sources are not secured, the conference participant fee would increase to \$35 or \$40 per participant, refreshments would not be included, and a volunteer key note speaker would be secured. The post-conference evaluation would be conducted, but it would be a mailed evaluation (this would dramatically reduce the response rate).