



Mission Mandates

The mission of 4-H is to provide meaningful opportunities for youth and adults to work together to create sustainable community change. This is accomplished within three primary content areas, or mission mandates, - citizenship, healthy living, and science. The educational foundation of 4-H lies in these three mission mandates. These mandates reiterate the founding purposes of Extension (e.g., community leadership, quality of life, and technology transfer) in the context of 21st century challenges and opportunities.

Each community and state faces diverse needs in these initiative areas. Each 4-H program brings unique resources and priorities to this work. In the cooperative spirit of the Extension Service, collaboration among state 4-H programs on curriculum, training, and evaluation will strengthen each program and enhance the outcomes of each initiative.

Citizenship

Since its inception, 4-H has placed emphasis on the importance of young people being engaged, well-informed citizens. By connecting to their communities and community leaders, youth understand their role in civic affairs and expand their role in decision making processes. It's clear that civic engagement provides the foundation that helps youth understand the "big picture" of life and find purpose and meaning. The core areas of Citizenship are:

- Civic Engagement (voice, advocacy, activism)
- Service (community service, service learning, community youth development)
- Civic Education (government principles, processes and structure; personal roles & responsibilities, history & cultural heritage)
- Leadership (leadership, respect, understanding, character development)

Citizenship is interwoven into learning experiences through opportunities to engage with the community and through building relationships with both youth and adults from diverse backgrounds.

Healthy Living

Healthy food and nutrition has been addressed by the program since its inception in 1902. Having a long history of promoting healthy living among youth and their families, 4-H has become a national leader in health-related education. The 4-H Healthy Living Mission Mandate engages youth and families through access and opportunities to achieve optimal physical, social, and emotional well-being. The core areas of Healthy living are:

- Nutrition
- Fitness
- Social-Emotional Health
- Prevention of Injuries
- Prevention of Tobacco, Alcohol, and other Drug Use

Healthy living is interwoven into learning experiences through opportunities to make decisions that lead to positive well-being for the individual and the community in which they live.



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Science

The need for science, engineering, and technology education is essential for today's young people. 4-H programs prepare youth for the challenges of the 21st century by engaging them in a process of discovery and exploration. The core areas of Science are:

- Animal Science & Agriculture
- Applied Mathematics
- Consumer Science
- Engineering
- Environmental Science & Natural Resources
- Life Science
- Technology

Science is interwoven into learning experiences through inquiry based opportunities that connect knowledge, skills, and resources to practical application across multiple settings.

These three mission mandates – citizenship, healthy living, and science – all intertwine and can be integrated across project areas and activities. The content development of the mission mandates is closely tied to the research and teaching of the land grant university system, and provides the educational foundation of 4-H.