

2025-2035 Cooperative Extension Roadmap

COOPERATIVE
EXTENSION



4-H Positive Youth Development:

4-H helps youth find their spark, build real-world skills, and become resilient, adaptable, and lifelong learners.

4-H, an integral part of the Cooperative Extension System, is a United States youth development program available in every state and over 80 countries with affiliated programs. It is open to all youth aged 5-to-19 who want to learn new skills and explore the world while having fun. Young people gain confidence, compassion, and connections with caring adult mentors.

The challenges that youth, families, communities, and businesses face today differ from previous generations. Schools and teachers cannot do it alone. We must empower young leaders to shape our future.

Youth who participate in 4-H programs emerge:

- Prepared for college, military service, or entrepreneurship
- Driven to contribute to their communities with leadership, teamwork and communication experience
- Ready to drive economic growth with critical think, flexibility, adaptability and collaborative problem-solving.

Creating Youth that are Healthy, Productive & Engaged

Data shows that compared to their peers, 4-H'ers are:

- 2x more likely to have the goal of being a leader
- 3x more likely to participate in community service
- 2x more likely to report living life with intentionality and purpose



*Tufts University longitudinal study of Positive Youth Development, 2021

4-H is grounded in the belief that kids learn best by doing. Through 4-H programs, nearly 6 million youth are learning the skills and abilities to be resilient. 4-H plans to reach 10 million youth annually by 2030 to build a generation of young leaders who are *Beyond Ready* for work and life.

Extension and Research Opportunities:

4-H will work to understanding how youth discover their passions and interests to help them become responsible citizens. A few research opportunities include:

- How do we develop program environments that are optimal for youth to thrive?
- How do we build a sense of community for youth without an identified meeting space? Does that have an impact?
- How does the high turnover rate of youth development educators impact youth programming?
- How can we prepare educators and volunteers to navigate and deal with the complex needs of young people in today's world?
- What are the best ways to combine research on creating environments where youth feel empowered and research on emotional, psychological and social well-being..

Risk of Not Acting:

A generation or more of youth will be denied the 4-H opportunities to develop the skills necessary to thrive in an ever-changing world.

