“Making the Best Better” — Our Statewide Program Objectives

4-H is a youth organization committed to building outstanding leaders with marketable skills to succeed in today’s global society. 4-H provides the pathway for youth to view learning as relevant to the world around them, to connect with their communities, and to become intentionally concerned and contributing citizens of their communities and the state of North Carolina.

Healthy Eating, Physical Activity and Chronic Disease Risk Reduction

“The greatest wealth is health.”—Virgil

The health and well-being of youth in North Carolina have changed significantly in the past decade. The diets of many youth are too high in calories and too low in fruits, vegetables and whole grains. Portion sizes, foods eaten away-from-home and the consumption of sugar-sweetened beverages continue to rise. As a result, 26 percent of our state’s youth are obese, even though 64 percent of youth report participating in vigorous physical activity three or more days a week.

4-H creates opportunities where adults and children of all ages and abilities eat smart and move more wherever they live, learn, work, and play. NC 4-H is working toward the common good to achieve a healthier, more productive North Carolina.

Preparing Youth for an Employable Future and Economic Success

“Small opportunities are often the beginning of great enterprises.”—Demosthenes

We are living in a new economy powered by technology, fueled by information, and driven by knowledge. 4-H programs provide opportunities for youth to learn about the breadth of career paths available in our global economy and develop critical skills in resume writing, interviewing, financial management and public speaking. These skills solidify their chances of securing a job and creating a viable career plan.

NC 4-H’ers participate in a variety of career development programs aimed at helping them individualize the career discovery process. These programs provide valuable insights about themselves, and enable youth to find a career that makes the best use of their natural talents, skills and interests – whether that is as an entrepreneur, scientist, librarian, musician, biologist or software developer.

Building Community through Volunteerism

“Life’s most urgent question is: What are you doing for others?”—Martin Luther King Jr.

Across North Carolina, 4-H youth are solving some of the most pressing issues in their communities, and their track record is impressive. In partnership with adults, 4-H’ers have saved wetlands, created daycare centers, gathered oral histories from their elders, established entrepreneurial businesses that bolster local economies, and testified before town councils and state legislators on a multitude of civic issues.
NC 4-H has one volunteer leader for every eleven youth members. Volunteers come from all walks of life, including scientists, nurses, fire fighters, bankers, realtors, stay-at-home moms and everything in between. Volunteers are the backbone of any strong community-based 4-H program.

Building Citizen Leaders

“Eagles don't flock—you have to find them one at a time.” —H. Ross Perot

Great leaders move us. They ignite our passion and inspire the best in us. NC youth have powerful aspirations and the potential to strengthen fragile communities, transform rural public education, inform public policy, and better our state’s future.

4-H’ers work as equal partners in our educational endeavors. They develop strong teamwork, communication and problem solving skills while learning to adapt to change and individual differences. 4-H cultivates, inspires and motivates young people to be their authentic selves – to be the leader that others willingly follow.

Developing Life Skills

“Making good decisions is a crucial skill at every level.” —Peter Drucker

The true value of 4-H comes not from short-term results or even the effects over a few years. It comes from the programs’ influence on lifelong pathways of development. Just as inoculations protect children from harmful diseases, 4-H programs have similar inoculation effects.

NC 4-H’ers participate in healthy life programs, such as Health Rocks!, that focus on developing key life skills, including decision making, communication, critical thinking and stress management, while increasing accurate health knowledge.

K-12: Academic Achievement and Educational Success

“Education is not filling a bucket but lighting a fire.” —William B. Yeats

Once upon a time, a person did not need a college education to fully participate in the economy. A high school diploma was good enough to get a decent job that could support a family and provide a decent pension — that is no longer the case. Today, high school is the pathway to higher education, career success and a productive adulthood. Nationally, 70 percent of all students in public high schools graduate, and only 32 percent of all students leave high school qualified to attend four-year colleges.

A recent national study on the effects of 4-H participation found that youth who participated in 4-H twice a month had better grades in school, expected to go to college and were more active in their communities than their peers who were not participating in 4-H.