



United States  
Department of  
Agriculture

National Institute  
of Food  
and Agriculture

4-H National  
Headquarters

# DIVISION OF YOUTH AND 4-H

## BACKGROUND

**The Division of Youth and 4-H (DY4-H)** strengthens and promotes healthy youth development to give young people the capacity to act as responsible citizens and agents of community change. By understanding the complex experiences that youth face and promoting high quality youth leadership development, DY4-H helps youth meet the challenges of adolescence and transition to adulthood. Through youth-adult partnerships, DY4-H connects youth and adults to their communities, preparing them for work and life. DY4-H engages both youth and adults in intentional, experiential, and inquiry-based learning and also provides emerging research and policy to highlight positive youth development. 4-H partners with the Land-Grant University System to support America’s youth.

## OUR PORTFOLIO FOCUSES ON THE FOLLOWING GOALS:

1. **Serve as the federal experts in positive youth development**
2. **Build 4-H’s capacity to develop and implement high-quality youth programs**
3. **Build 4-H’s capacity to evaluate effectiveness and impacts**
4. **Build 4-H’s capacity to prepare youth with 21<sup>st</sup> century work and life skills**

## PRIORITY PROGRAM AREAS

### *PARTNERSHIP*

Develop meaningful and mutually beneficial collaborations within USDA, federal partners, land-grant universities, and community partners. Partnerships are grounded in research, positive youth development, and NIFA’s strategic plan.

### *LEARNING*

Lead, inform, and educate 4-H and other land-grant university youth development professionals about learning principles, trends, resources, methods, and delivery techniques that incorporate relevant learning into positive youth development programs.

### *PROGRAM QUALITY AND ACCOUNTABILITY*

Identify best practices, establish standards, and provide resources for positive youth development and the national 4-H program. Ensure programs are culturally relevant and inclusive through adherence to research-based principles.

### *ACCESS, EQUITY, AND OPPORTUNITY*

Incorporate stakeholder input— from identifying relevant issues and solutions, to evaluating and sharing results— while ensuring adherence to federal regulations. Develop strategies for providing positive youth development services to all populations.

## A UNIQUE PUBLIC-PRIVATE PARTNERSHIP

**The 4-H Youth Development Program** is the youth outreach program of the land-grant universities’ Cooperative Extension Services and USDA. 4-H serves as a model program for the practice of positive youth development. 4-H National Headquarters is housed within the Division of Youth and 4-H at USDA’s National Institute of Food and Agriculture. Additional support is provided by National 4-H Council (a private non-profit organization) and land-grant University extension 4-H offices. To learn more about 4-H, visit the [website](#) or email [4hHQ@nifa.usda.gov](mailto:4hHQ@nifa.usda.gov).

4-H National Headquarters	University Extension 4-H Offices	National 4-H Council
Provides system administration and leadership.	Provides program development and delivery.	Provides fundraising and marketing.

