Introduction

The Guiding Principles is an internal program planning document that provides 4-H professionals and volunteers with a framework that supports what we do, what we value, and what we hope to accomplish. These Guiding Principles will help to inform program priorities and give direction to how we accomplish the important work that we do to meet the needs of all youth throughout New York State.

New York State Mission, Vision & Values
Our Organizational Culture and Identity

Our mission, vision, and values describe our organizational culture and identity. They describe who we are and why we do what we do and where we hope to be in the future.

Mission
4-H connects youth to hands-on learning opportunities that help them grow into competent, caring, contributing members of society.

Vision
A world in which youth and adults learn, grow, and work together as catalysts for positive change.

Values
• 4-H reflects the principles of positive youth development, experiential learning, and the importance of having fun.
• 4-H encourages family involvement and support by connecting families to their communities and to one another.
• 4-H promotes the development of skills that help young people succeed in higher education, their chosen career path, and as members of their families and communities.
• 4-H is committed to achieving a community of staff, volunteers, and program participants that reflects the diversity of New York State.
• 4-H creates opportunities for youth to have a voice in the development and evaluation of the program at the local, state, and national level.
• 4-H experiences reflect local needs and culture while also preparing youth for success in a rapidly changing world.
• 4-H makes science come alive by connecting youth to Cornell University and the research-based resources of the land grant college system.
4-H: A National Movement

4-H Youth Development is an American idea that has spread throughout the globe – the world’s largest, dynamic, informal educational program for young people based on democratic principles. The official national definition of 4-H is “the youth development education program of the Cooperative Extension Service.” This includes a wide array of delivery modes, ways of learning, project and topic areas, and local adaptations. It also includes Extension youth development programs facilitated by Nutrition, Agriculture, Natural Resources, Community Development or any other CCE professional. By definition all Extension youth development programs facilitated by an Extension professional or volunteer are 4-H programs.

Since the beginning of 4-H more than one hundred years ago, Extension has empowered young people to use their head, heart, hands, and health to reach their full potential. The movement has grown from its roots engaging rural youth in hands-on agriculture projects to providing the essential elements of Positive Youth Development (PYD) to all youth. As a research-based organization, 4-H embraces the emerging research behind PYD approaches to youth programming.

Positive Youth Development (PYD)

PYD programs have three major components:

• Positive and sustained relationships between youth and adults.
• Activities that build important life skills.
• Creating opportunities for youth to apply what they are learning to improve their communities, both as participants and as leaders.

PYD approaches align the inherent strengths of young people with the resources and support systems they need to thrive. These assets can be found in families, schools, and other community based organizations and institutions. Thriving young people experience and develop the “5 Cs,” which leads to the development of the “6th C”: Contribution, and to reduced risk behaviors. In addition, PYD approaches recognize that young people of diverse backgrounds and identities (socio-economic status, race, ethnicity, sexual identity, disability status and gender identity) should have equal access to high quality youth development opportunities. For this reason, the first priority for all 4-H programs is to create a safe, inclusive space for learning, sharing, and collaboration that is welcoming to people from diverse backgrounds, cultures and perspectives.
Positive Youth Development (PYD) (cont’d)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>“C”</th>
<th>Definition</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Competence</td>
<td>Positive view of one’s actions in specific areas, including social and academic skills.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Confidence</td>
<td>An internal sense of overall positive self-worth and self-efficacy.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Connection</td>
<td>Positive bonds with people and institutions that are reflected in exchanges between the individual and their peers, family, school, and community and in which both parties contribute to the relationship.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Character</td>
<td>Respect for societal and cultural norms, possession of standards for correct behaviors, a sense of right and wrong (morality), and integrity.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Caring</td>
<td>A sense of sympathy and empathy for others.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contribution</td>
<td>Contributions to self, family, community, and to the institutions of a civil society.</td>
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Compared to their peers, the 4-H Study of Positive Youth Development suggests that youth actively involved in 4-H programs (youth who participated at least twice per month) are approximately:

- Four times more likely to make contributions to their communities
- Two times more likely to be civically active
- Two times more likely to make healthier choices
- Two times more likely to participate in Science, Engineering and Computer Technology programs during out-of-school time

The 4-H Learning Experience

Learning in 4-H is an active, intentional and reflective process where young people develop understanding, skills, and new habits. The nature of the experiences can be vastly different in 4-H but the underlying process and educational philosophy should reflect the same core principles. These principles include:

- Learning in 4-H is designed to be progressive, with experiences building on each other over time.
- 4-H learning is social and connected to a larger, real-world context that encourages and provides opportunities for youth to use what they have learned to improve their own lives and their communities.
- 4-H recognizes that learning involves the entire person and is inclusive of how the young person feels, how they see themselves, what they are doing, and who they are with.
- Learning in 4-H is an integrated process where the learner and the educator and the learning space all are changed by each other.
- Young people and adults learn together in 4-H. Learning in 4-H should be a collaborative partnership where the youth learner and the adult decide on the goals and the path together and adapting as necessary as the process unfolds.
- 4-H Learning Experiences are carried out in a variety of delivery modes, teaching methods, project and topic areas, and local adaptations.
Definitions of 4-H Engagement – Membership and Participation

A 4-H participant describes any young person who is involved in at least one 4-H activity. Participation may or may not lead to a longer commitment and a broader and deeper 4-H learning experience. Membership is the sense of belonging in the 4-H program. All youth who participate in a 4-H Learning Experience should be encouraged to think of themselves as 4-H members. While there is no set number of hours that defines the 4-H Learning Experience, the relationships and progressive nature of learning activities suggest a commitment over time. The 4-H Study of Positive Youth Development suggests that participating at least twice a month made the greatest impact on youth. Members may participate in one or several 4-H Learning Experiences, through one or many delivery modes, and in one or many project areas. They may join for a short-term experience, for several years, or throughout their entire childhood.

Growing NYS 4-H Youth Development

Our New York State 4-H program is built on a foundation of positive youth development. The graphic to the right represents our 4-H program landscape, illustrating how the variety of project opportunities and mentoring relationships interact within the context of our mission, vision and values. The graphic is one representation of how our PYD foundation, program goals, and measurable outcomes work together to support thriving youth and communities.

Our strategic plan and plan of work describes what we want to do to realize our vision and how we expect to do it for a specified timeframe. The following are the goals we’d like to reach by the year 2020.
New York State
4-H YOUTH DEVELOPMENT
Guiding Principles

Grow Vision & Capacity

The demographics and needs of NYS youth and families have changed dramatically in recent decades as have the structure of the economy and resulting workforce needs. New York State has approximately 3.1 million youth, approximately 6% of the total youth population in the United States. New York is one of nine states that together account for more than 50% of the nation’s total youth population. The 4-H program must find ways to maintain its historically strong programs, volunteers and local funding support, while expanding the reach of 4-H in urban and suburban communities. The goal moving forward is a program that is growing in reach and relevance and representative of the increasing diversity of New York State.

Anticipated Outcomes

• Create and support an organizational structure where all 4-H programs reflect core values and that sets the stage for program growth and sustainability for the next five years.
• Reach at least 300,000 youth through all of our program approaches.
• Increase the participation of currently underserved Black, Latino, Native American and Asian youth with a goal of achieving a 4-H participation profile that is reflective of the demographic diversity of New York State.
• Develop specific strategies to reach out to youth from the LGBTQ community.
• Develop strategies to better accommodate youth with physical and emotional disabilities.
• Increase the quantity and quality of collaboration between the Cornell University and CCE 4-H educators.
• Develop and project a contemporary 4-H image with consistent and effective brand promotion across the system.
• Build mutually impactful relationships that bring research to communities and community questions to researchers.
• The 4-H community club program will remain strong while we also grow in new arenas such as 4-H afterschool.
Grow Learning Experiences

Developing agricultural literacy is a critical step in helping youth understand the relationships between agriculture and the environment, energy systems, technology and can help youth make informed health decisions and explore career opportunities in agriculture and food systems. Helping youth to take positive action in their community grows the confidence needed for youth to take responsibility and leadership. Healthy lifestyle habits, including healthy eating and increased physical activity, can lower the risk of becoming overweight and developing chronic diseases associated with increased weight and obesity. Although STEM literacy is routinely identified as a key to our economic future, international comparisons reveal that U.S. student performance in mathematics and science is at or below levels attained by students in other countries in the developed world. 4-H Learning Experiences involve youth in the work of Cooperative Extension, which includes Agriculture and Food Systems, Citizenship, Healthy Living, and STEM learning opportunities. Our goal is for youth who participate in 4-H to become confident communicators, honor diversity and inclusivity, make healthy choices, be ready for work and higher education, and take the lead in 4-H and their community.

Anticipated Outcomes

5.1 Human Development: Youth Competence

(5.1a) Number of youth who demonstrate ability to express their ideas confidently and competently. (Confidence, Competence)
(5.1b) Number of youth who demonstrate intercultural competence and cultural humility. (Caring, Competence)
(5.1c) Number of youth who demonstrate improved college and career-readiness skills. (Competence)
(5.1d) Number of youth who demonstrate Science and Engineering Practices. (Competence)
(5.1e) Number of youth who demonstrate increased knowledge and skills in Animal Science fields. (Competence)
(5.1f) Number of youth who develop environmental literacy. (Competence)
(5.1g) Number of youth who demonstrate a deeper understanding and appreciation of complex food systems and their impact in those systems. (Competence)

5.2 Human Development: Youth Contribution

(5.2a) Number of youth who applied knowledge and skills in programs, projects, and activities to foster an inclusive and diverse learning environment. (Caring)
(5.2b) Number of youth who lead community service projects in partnership with adults using skills learned in 4-H. (Contribution)
(5.2c) Number of youth programs and organizations documented to incorporate youth voice in program-ming to reflect youth needs, interests, and excitement for learning.
Anticipated Outcomes (cont’d)

4.1 Healthy Eating and Active Living
(4.1a) Number of children and youth who demonstrate knowledge or skill gains related to healthy eating and active living.
(4.1b) Number parents/caregivers and other adults who demonstrate knowledge or skill gains related to healthy eating and active living.
(4.1c) Number of youth program participants documented to have applied healthy eating and/or active living recommendations.
(4.1d) Number of adult program participants documented to have applied healthy eating and/or active living recommendations.

Grow Leadership

Positive and sustained relationships between youth and adults are the most important asset in predicting positive youth development, youth contribution, and thriving. Our goal is to grow and support our team of highly trained and committed 4-H Leaders (professionals, volunteers, and youth).

Anticipated Outcomes
• Increase the skills of 4-H leaders in delivering Agriculture and Food Systems, Citizenship, Healthy Living, and STEM learning opportunities.
• Connect 4-H Leaders to one another through a variety of in-person and online relationship-building opportunities to develop a learning community within 4-H.
• Develop progressive leadership roles for professionals, volunteers, and youth leaders.
• Leaders demonstrate intercultural competence and cultural humility.

5.3 Human Development: Youth and Volunteer Leadership
(5.3a) Number of 4-H Volunteer Leaders who lead learning experiences in partnership with youth. (Guide)
(5.3b) Number of 4-H Teen Leaders who lead learning experiences in partnership with youth. (Guide)