



The Link between UW Extension and 4-H Councils

4-H is the youth development program of the United States Department of Agriculture and the Cooperative Extension System of the nation's land-grant universities. 4-H Youth Development programming in Wyoming has a dual focus - providing educational programs for youth, and youth development leadership for communities. 4-H groups are created solely to extend and support Extension's youth educational programs, and are considered a formal component of Extension's educational efforts. 4-H groups and organizations are accountable to Extension for their activities and finances. Their continuing existence is dependent upon Extension's authorization and oversight. This oversight is provided at the local level by the 4-H/Youth Educator.

The 4-H/Youth Educator Role

The 4-H/Youth Educator is charged with overall leadership and oversight for all 4-H/Youth programs and groups in the county. This includes guidance and support for the 4-H community club program, 4-H outreach programs, and serving as a community leader in youth development. The 4-H/Youth Educator works with the county 4-H Council as:

Educator

- Provides leadership and support for the county 4-H/Youth program.
- Serves as the link to the larger 4-H/Youth and UW-Extension system.
- Provides knowledge of state and national resources, new programs, policies and sources of training.
- Brings state and national materials, educational opportunities, policies and advice to the county.
- Provides resources and information for 4-H groups in organizational decision making.
- Teaches content in youth development, organization building, and volunteer development through informal conversations, phone calls, newsletters, group presentations, participation in meetings and development of educational materials.

Educational Administrator

- Responsible for assuring that all programs bearing the 4-H name and emblem are consistent with the mission and goals of Extension's 4-H program.
- Ensures compliance with state and national 4-H policies, procedures and expectations.
- Ensures that local 4-H program decisions comply with federal and state nondiscrimination laws and policies.
- Provides education and management for financial accountability for county 4-H clubs and groups so they meet federal and state tax requirements and receive ongoing approval of tax-exempt status.

4-H Volunteer Manager

- Implements the Wyoming 4-H/Youth New Leader Orientation and Risk Management Policies.
- Establishes and maintains a comprehensive 4-H volunteer development and management system that includes selection, orientation and training, utilization, recognition, and evaluation of volunteers.
- Provides educational leadership and support to volunteers in delivery of the 4-H community club program.

Youth Development Leadership

- Facilitates the positive development of young people through 4-H clubs and activities
- Supports youth engagement in 4-H-sponsored opportunities
- Provides opportunities through the 4-H community club program for older youth to assume leadership roles and responsibilities

4-H County Council

Organized at the county level, the 4-H County Council works closely with the 4-H/Youth Educator. The organization brings together volunteers to serve as a venue for volunteer leader training and an organizing mechanism in providing volunteer and financial support for county level educational opportunities for 4-H members and 4-H volunteers. The organization consists of 4-H volunteer leaders and may include 4-H members, who are the voting members. Meeting frequency varies from monthly to annually. This countywide organization exists in many, but not all counties. 4-H County Councils are not responsible for the hiring and supervision of 4-H/Youth staff or the selection and supervision of volunteers. The role of the 4-H County Council is:

Assist to Conduct Supplemental County Level Programs for Youth

- Works with the 4-H/Youth Educator to assess the needs of the county 4-H program. This should be done through a yearly needs assessment held in September or October.
- Establish educational opportunities for youth beyond the club level, such as camp, member exchanges, county fair, or project activities.
- Support volunteer development and education through training, financial support and promotion of opportunities.

Raise Funds and Manage a Budget to Support 4-H Youth Development Work

- Develop and manage a budget that supports 4-H Youth Development work.
- Fundraise to support these budgets.

Coordinate County Level Recognition

- Develop meaningful recognition for young people and volunteers.

Advocate for 4-H Youth Development

- Maintain personal contact with stakeholders including elected officials for understanding of the benefits of 4-H
- Advocate the value of 4-H Youth Development Programs in the County
- Market and promote 4-H programs.

Provide input on new 4-H Youth Development opportunities and youth and volunteer needs

- Explore new 4-H youth development opportunities and challenges
- Provide advice on youth and volunteer needs and issues
- Work to ensure that all youth participating in Extension youth groups have equal access to 4-H Youth Development programs including 4-H community clubs, after-school groups and others

Committees

4-H committees bring youth and adult volunteer leaders together to focus on a specific purpose, event, activity or project. 4-H committees can be formed through the 4-H club, county 4-H program, the 4-H County Council, or even at a state or regional level. The work of 4-H committees is important for 4-H clubs and the 4-H county program for joint decision making, planning and carrying out 4-H experiences. They provide opportunities for developing leadership, citizenship, teamwork, decision-making, planning, organizational and evaluation skills.

- All committees are ultimately accountable to the 4-H/Youth Educator.
- There are variations among counties in organizational and committee structures, but communication between committees, county organizations, members, and the 4-H/Youth Educator is necessary and should be clearly defined.
- Standing Committees (committees that meet on a regular basis) should have by-laws or operating guidelines in place. Guidelines are to be distributed to each member of the group or committee and reviewed annually with the group.
- Voting members on committees are 4-H volunteer leaders and youth members/leaders.
- Committee meeting minutes are to be accessible to all committee members including the 4-H/Youth.
- Seeks advice from the 4-H Youth Development Educator.