

New York State 4-H : A Thriving Vision for 4-H

Program Assessment Tool

Mindful Moment

Pause for a moment to set the stage for your program assessment.

Think back to when you were a teenager. Reflect on a time when you felt valued as a contributing, important member of your family, community, or a cherished group. Remember the scents, the noises, the energy of that time. Remember how you felt emotionally, physically, intellectually. What did the adults in that memory do to help you feel important and valued? What about the activity you were doing helped you know the others' around you valued your contributions?

Now take this experience into reflecting on your 4-H program. How can we create opportunities for all youth to realize their strengths, be valued partners, and thrive? What is your program like now and what would you like it to be in the future?

Thriving Youth and Families

New York State 4-H Youth Development programs are places for every youth to thrive.

- **All Youth**

- o How are you creating opportunities for all youth to feel welcome and have the opportunity to belong in your program?
- o Which youth are you currently reaching in what kinds of program opportunities? Are the youth engaged in your program representative of your county youth demographics and population?
- o Who are potential participants? How are you building relationships with new communities?
- o What other youth opportunities exist in your county?

- **Positive Youth Development Experiences**

- o How are you helping youth to develop a thriving approach to life? How do your programs integrate the 4-H Thriving Model and PYD research base?
- o What are your program strengths - which topics, settings, relationships, etc.? What are your challenges and opportunities?
- o What opportunities are there to spark new interests for youth? For youth to participate in ongoing, progressive learning experiences? How and when are you inviting youth to participate in activities across 4-H and Extension programs? What is your balance of local, regional, and national opportunities?

- **Leadership and Voice**

- o How do you identify youth assets and needs? How well do programs match those assets and opportunities?
- o How are youth and families involved in program development and evaluation?
- o How are youth engaged in meaningful leadership roles in your program?

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Thriving 4-H Professionals and Volunteers

Relationships with caring adults are the active ingredient of positive youth development.

- What is your staffing plan, including CCE professionals and volunteers? How representative of your county demographics are your program leaders? What is the balance of full, part-time, hourly, and salary positions? How does that balance match your program vision?
- What kinds of interests, skills, and attitudes do your staff and volunteers bring to your program? How are staff and volunteers matched to program roles? What is your team's learning and development plan?
- What is your office culture? Does it match your professed values and vision? How does it integrate with NYS 4-H mission, vision, and values?
- How are professionals and volunteers involved in program development and evaluation?

Thriving Program Ecology

Thriving programs engage University, Extension, and 4-H Leadership to create nimble structures and approaches that change to meet the varied needs of youth of many backgrounds, characteristics and locations with high impact, positive youth development programming that enables youth to thrive.

- **Relationships**

- o How do the relationships amongst people and structures help youth, families, professionals, and volunteers thrive?
- o What do your partnerships and collaborations look like? How are you connected to your community? To Cornell? To Extension across program areas?

- **Reflection**

- o What are your program goals? How do they relate to state and national 4-H goals?
- o How do you know if you are successful? What is your evaluation plan?
- o How do you manage program participation and evaluation data? How do you use evidence for program decisions?

- **Resources**

- o What program models, curricula, and partnership resources do you already have? What do you need?
- o How are your programs funded? How does this influence your program sustainability? Flexibility? Room for growth and innovation?

- **Reach**

- o What is the balance of new pilot projects, replicating growing projects, and sustaining strong projects in your program portfolio? Which programs are sun-setting? How do your local programs integrate with state programs?
- o How are 4-H opportunities shared with potential participants? Which participants? Which opportunities?
- o What is your event management process within and across events?

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- **Risk Management**

- o What are your policies and practices for responsibly stewarding funds, overseeing volunteers, and ensuring youth safety?
- o How do your policies reflect and reinforce state or other relevant policies?

Resources to go deeper

[National 4-H Strategic Plan 2017](#)

[National 4-H Council Pathways Project Report](#)

[National 4-H Council Strategic Plan 2019](#)

[Cornell Cooperative Extension Program Definition and Standards](#)

NYS 4-H [Mission, Vision, and Values](#)

NYS 4-H Guiding Principles

ACT for Youth tools for [Youth Engagement in Organizations](#)