
Title: Georgia 4-H Statewide Youth Experiences: A Look Through the Lens of the National 4-H Common Measures Surveys

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Summary: Evaluation is an integral process of Cooperative Extension efforts. These efforts work to serve to document outcomes and impacts as a direct result of the programming and research-based knowledge provided by Cooperative Extension. State and County Faculty and Staff are charged to maintain records, facilitate surveys and questionnaires, and share with stakeholder groups their results. Historically with Georgia 4-H, event-based evaluations have been collected, but often little could speak to the larger influence of 4-H on a youth. Recognizing the essential nature of evaluation efforts, a framework of evaluation support, resources, and processes to support county faculty and staff was established. Securing \$81,000 in financial support through a grant from National 4-H Council and S.D. Bechtel Jr., Foundation. This financial support created the opportunity to gather data on Georgia 4-H youth experiences and further validate existing National 4-H instruments. Responses from more than 700 youth spanned five areas (citizenship, college and career readiness, healthy living, universal, and science), and indicated positive outcomes experience through the Georgia 4-H program.

Situation: Evaluation is an integral process of Cooperative Extension efforts. These efforts work to serve to document outcomes and impacts as a direct result of the programming and research-based knowledge provided by Cooperative Extension. State and County Faculty and Staff are charged to maintain records, facilitate surveys and questionnaires, and share with stakeholder groups their results. Historically with Georgia 4-H, event-based evaluations have been collected, but often little could speak to the larger influence of 4-H on a youth. Additionally, counties work diligently to collect data, but it is difficult to extrapolate the outcomes statewide. Recognizing the need for comprehensive data collection, a statewide evaluation effort was initiated.

Response: Recognizing the essential nature of evaluation efforts, a framework of evaluation support, resources, and processes to support county faculty and staff was established. Securing \$81,000 in financial support through a grant from National 4-H Council and S.D. Bechtel Jr., Foundation. This financial support created the opportunity to gather data on Georgia 4-H youth experiences and further validate existing National 4-H instruments.

The National 4-H Common Measures surveys were developed in response to Extension Directors, State 4-H Program Leaders and 4-H faculty and staff in the field identifying a need for a set of instruments to consistently evaluate our program efforts. Initially launched in 2013, the measures have undergone significant additions and revisions leading to the launch of CM 2.0 in 2017. This revision of the national set of instruments were redesigned to assess the impacts of 4-H and help describe youth's 4-H experience and evaluated the effects of 4-H programming.

Currently, six instruments exist that correspond to the outcomes areas of Science, Healthy Living, Citizenship, and College and Career Readiness, aspects of character considered to

be influenced by the 4-H experience, and youth's 4-H experience. These self-reporting instruments work to (1) describe youth's 4-H experience, (2) evaluate 4-H programming, and (3) inform professional development practices.

As a deliverable of the National 4-H grant, 110 surveys from 4 instruments (440 responses) were to be collected. Responses were requested in the content areas of Science, Healthy Living, Citizenship, and College and Career Development. With this in mind, an action plan was developed to help achieve this success in 6 months of programming. The plan involved coordinating with 4-H Program Development Coordinators, State 4-H Specialists, and the Extension Evaluation Specialist.

In this vein, data was collected at three statewide Georgia 4-H events. Youth were asked to participate, and were given incentives for their participation. These 3 events: (1) State 4-H Council, (2) State 4-H Congress, and (3) Senior Conference are offered to youth in grades 9-12. Prior to every event, logistics were coordinated with the State 4-H Specialist or Program Development Coordinator, and tried to create an environment that youth felt safe to report their feelings and opinions.

The overall goal of this data collection was to provide figures and statistics that could help articulate and support the impact of Georgia 4-H. Historically, event-based evaluations had been collected, but often little could speak to the larger influence of 4-H on a youth. Additionally, counties worked diligently to collect data, but it was difficult to extrapolate the outcomes statewide. Recognizing the potential breadth of depth of uses for this data, responses were collected from more than 700 4-H youth, nearly 200 more than was required of the grant.

Results/Impacts: Responses spanned five areas, and data was shared back with State 4-H Specialists, Program Development Coordinators, and County Faculty and Staff. In each of the five areas the data revealed:

1. Citizenship – Respondents indicated that 96% liked helping people, 98% completed a service project, and 80% talked about needs in their community during 4-H.
2. College and Career Readiness – Respondents indicated that 95% have an idea about their future college major and 94% learned how to act professionally through 4-H.
3. Healthy Living – Respondents indicated that 99% learned about healthy food choices through 4-H and 91% pay attention to the amount of water they drink a day.
4. Universal – Respondents indicated that 93% set goals for themselves, 99% show respect for others' ideas, and 94% are comfortable being a leader.
5. Science – Respondents indicates that 93% shared a science related project with others and 100% learned new things about science through 4-H.

Highlights from the data were converted into a one-page report (attached to impact statement), that worked to provide points of interest and discussion. This flyer, and the data, have been shared with new agents at trainings, donors during visits, legislators during session, and volunteers at events.

COMMON MEASURES

The Common Measures work to identify a common core of youth outcomes and indicators which can be used to improve programs, provide a process for assessment and report from a national data base, and provide state 4-H programs with resources to assist them in the planning of local, state-wide and regional evaluations.

CITIZENSHIP

- 96% Like helping people
- 98% Completed a community service project
- 80% At 4-H, talked about needs in their community

COLLEGE & CAREER READINESS

- 94% At 4-H, learned how to act professionally
- 95% Have an idea about their future college major

HEALTHY LIVING

- 91% Pay attention to how much water they drink a day
- 99% At 4-H, learn about healthy food choices

UNIVERSAL

- 93% Set goals for themselves
- 99% Show respect for others' ideas
- 94% Are comfortable being a leader

SCIENCE

- 100% At 4-H, learned new things about science
- 93% Shared a science related project with others

