
Title: Georgia 4-H Tech Changemakers Surpass Record Outreach Numbers

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Summary: The 2021-2022 cohort of Georgia 4-H Tech Changemakers sought to bridge the digital divide by providing hands-on technology related programming to adults around the state. Together, 15 counties and the state office surpassed previous record outreach numbers by reaching over 5,400 adults in a 9-month time frame.

Situation: According to the Georgia Tech Research Institute which seeks to address rural broadband access issues, “approximately 1.6 million Georgians lack access to high-speed internet service.” Without access to appropriate internet speeds and bandwidth, communities are susceptible to digital distress in which their inhabitants are unable to reap the benefits of new technologies. Rural areas in the state are among the most affected by high levels of digital distress. These areas are characterized by having community members lacking in digital literacy skills, who in turn are less likely to utilize high-speed internet even if it were to become available to them. In an increasingly modern world of technology use, communities need to not only expand access to internet services but also increase technology-based education so that their members are empowered to use these services.

Response: 4-H Tech Changemakers is a national grant funded project coordinated by National 4-H Council and the Microsoft Corporation, seeking to address the digital divide across the nation. At the foundation of the program, youth make positive and meaningful impacts within their communities by equipping adults to adopt and utilize technology to improve their economic mobility and opportunities. With a model of youth leading and teaching adult audiences, this program has a unique opportunity to spread digital literacy education, as today’s youth have innate technology skills they can share with others. 4-H Tech Changemaker teens are trained with their counties to seek out local technology needs, plan for outreach events, and host educational sessions to address these needs. Teens work closely with their county agents and other volunteers in youth-adult partnerships to gain the skills needed for programming. Counties are encouraged to create and maintain partnerships with local entities such as city/county governments, school systems, non-profits, and more to continue in meaningful engagement even after the grant cycle concludes. In the 2021-2022 grant cycle, Georgia 4-H Tech Changemakers participated for the third year in this grant program and sought to reach its highest goal yet - 5,000 adult participants.

Results/Impacts: Despite a shortened grant cycle of only 9-months, counties not only met their individual outreach goals, but Georgia 4-H Tech Changemakers statewide surpassed their highest goal yet by reaching a combined total of 5,448 adult participants. Counties adapted their programming to meet the needs of their audiences by hosting in-person and virtual outreach events throughout the cycle. Through partnerships with their local school systems, local chamber of commerce, technical colleges, businesses and more, 4-H Tech Changemakers established lasting connections within their communities. These youth leaders covered topics such as online job hunting and resume building, online professionalism, how to utilize Microsoft programs, Canva for Educators, among others. Participating counties held a combined total of 91 individual outreach events with over 143 hours of instruction time.

Approximately 86 youth Tech Changemakers actively taught and led lessons and grew in their public speaking and engagement skills. One 4-H agent states, “Our Tech Changemaker has grown in his presentation and teaching abilities with this program. Teaching others about a topic can be nerve-racking, but this program gives students a chance to practice these skills. Having adults that are excited about youth teaching helped him gain confidence.” However, the youth weren’t the only ones to gain from this program. Adult participants surveys showed 95% of participants listed that they learned new technology skills from their sessions and 96% of participants responding that what they learned would help in their work/life. One county shared the following about an adult in their community, “Ms. S. was really having problems getting a job due to not being able to complete an efficient resume. Even though there are websites online for resume building, many ask for money or are hard to navigate. Using our resume template, she was able to help make a resume that suited the job she was applying for and even secured an interview for that job.” Another county was able to create a local connection with a corporation that is looking to continue programming after the grant ends. They shared that, “this interaction has been an excellent connection for a group of 4-H students [with a] major community corporation to create a partnership that will hopefully continue to flourish with future activities.”

After much success in 2021-2022, Georgia 4-H returned to Tech Changemakers for the fourth year in 2022 and is on track to impact an even larger number of participants.



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The University of Georgia 4-H program is the largest youth leadership organization in the state.

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