

Tennessee 4-H Youth Development Program Review May 2019

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Introduction

4-H is the youth development program of the land grant universities that has provided opportunities for youth to grow and succeed. It is the best youth development program in the world. To prepare youth for future lives of engagement and success, the 4-H program in each state must be dynamic and proactive. Tennessee has a tradition of a strong and active 4-H program that has fostered the positive development of thousands of youth.

To continue that strong presence and effectiveness, the University of Tennessee Extension requested a review of the Tennessee 4-H program. A team of outside professionals came together to review provided documentation and engage in conversations with various groups of agents, volunteers, alumni, students, specialists, department heads, and administration for University of Tennessee and Tennessee State University.

The review team carefully evaluated the materials provided and synthesized the conversations. We recognize that Tennessee 4-H has many positive attributes and continues to provide meaningful and fulfilling opportunities for youth. We present our observations and conclusions to provide areas of consideration and some possible recommendations or strategies for strengthening the program.

Leadership

Tennessee 4-H has experienced a period without permanent or consistent leadership. The impact of this was a common theme with many of the groups with whom we visited. Although, no group particularly suggested a desired organizational structure, it was clear that there is a desire for a clear leader for 4-H who is visible and forward thinking. It was also clear that in many instances, the leadership issue was not a result of the merger of ALEC and 4-H. We believe that it could be challenging for one individual to serve adequately or well as both a department head and as a state 4-H program leader.

Session participants raised concerns around leadership regarding 4-H program efforts and responsibilities. County agents look to state 4-H faculty and Extension Specialists to provide leadership in multiple ways around programs and events. It is evident systemic issues exist with the lack of adequate and effective communication as shown throughout this review.

Recommendations

As leadership is determined for the ALEC/4-H unit, clearly defined organizational responsibilities are necessary.

A state 4-H leader, however defined, must have the responsibility, visibility, and authority for leading the Tennessee 4-H program.

4-H faculty and Extension Specialists must have the clear opportunity, authority and responsibility for leading defined portions of the Tennessee 4-H program.

It is imperative to communicate to the entire organization, including volunteers, partners and stakeholders the defined leadership responsibilities to ensure strong partnerships and programs.

Communications

After listening to many comments from 4-H staff at the county, regional, and state level along with other University of Tennessee subject matter specialists and stakeholders it is obvious that the communication between the administration of the University of Tennessee and Tennessee State University is very good and that there is one united Tennessee 4-H Program. Communications is the key to success in program delivery in a program as large and diverse as Tennessee 4-H. There are some perceived challenges that would indicate that communications could be improved between the county, regional and state offices.

Recommendations

State and regional staff need to be on the same page and need to have regularly scheduled meetings to discuss issues facing the 4-H program and develop details for policy and procedures together. These meetings need to be held in different locations around the state. Regional staff should bring county 4-H staff input to be considered when discussing programmatic and policy changes. This meeting should be convened by the state 4-H program leader.

Once clear expectations of Tennessee 4-H staff are established, the message should be delivered to everyone in a timely manner and people need to be reminded often of the message.

Find a time once a year to bring all county, regional, and state staff together to communicate updates in the 4-H Program.

The roles of the state 4-H staff should be clearly defined (who is responsible for which program areas) and posted on the Tennessee 4-H web site. As changes are made, county staff should be updated.

Each region should be delivering the same message that is agreed upon by the state and regional staff's meetings mentioned above.

Contest rules and registration information need to be provided at least four months prior to the activity. (Calendar for next program year well in advance)

Changes in contest guidelines or rules need to be determined and communicated two to three months before August, which is the beginning of the 4-H Program Year.

As a better communication system is established, county 4-H staff need to make sure they communicate 4-H opportunities and changes in guidelines for participation in events to youth and parents as quickly as possible.

State and regional staff need to visit county offices and spend a day or two each year with a 4-H agent to obtain a better understanding of their environment, which will improve communications.

Communications can be greatly improved by ensuring that all information on the 4-H web site is updated and easily accessible.

Communication between 4-H staff and other specialists could be improved.

Professional Development

Developing a successful 4-H program begins with setting expectations for all staff, and it is extremely important that new county 4-H staff understand their roles. Less experienced agents need more direction and seem to be asking what are we supposed to do. They need to know the priorities of the Tennessee 4-H program. While training programs do exist there does not appear to be a plan as to how new agents will be brought into the system.

Recommendations

Some current training programs appear to be inconsistent, or do not meet current needs. A needs assessment to guide training programs is recommended.

The National 4-H Professional Development Research and Knowledge Core Competencies Model should be utilized when planning professional development opportunities.

Determine three to five program areas that are key for every 4-H agent to conduct. In-school delivery and camping are two areas that each county currently does.

State and regional staff need to develop a training program for new agents. During these trainings, 4-H agents can learn their expectations, be introduced to the state staff, and know whom to call when they have questions. Experienced agents can also deliver information through the mentoring process.

“Ages and stages of youth” needs to be included in the training for new agents.

Training updates need to be provided on a regular basis. This may be done annually or every other year. This also would be a good time to bring all 4-H agents together at one of the 4-H camps, deliver trainings that have been requested by agents, and bring in motivational speakers or other youth development experts to broaden agents' perspective.

Consider the use of technology to provide training. Training resources should also be made available via the web site.

Provide training for 4-H agents on how they recruit, train, and manage volunteers so that Tennessee 4-H can build capacity to serve more youth.

Expectations

According to the TN 4-H Youth Development Program Evaluation Input Report, newer agents are more likely to be unclear about their job expectations. Of the 38 agents with less than 5 years of experience surveyed, 64% do not believe their role as a 4-H agent has been clearly defined for them (pg. 26). Of the 23 agents with 6 to 10 years of experience surveyed, 39% do not believe their role as a 4-H agent has been clearly defined for them (pg. 27).

According to the TN 4-H Youth Development Program Evaluation Input Report, 33% of 114 agents providing feedback to an online survey disagreed or strongly disagreed the job expectations for their role as a 4-H agent have been clearly defined for them (pg. 26). Of those who reported feeling this way, nearly half (47%) of them were agents with 0 to 5 years of experience. Nearly a quarter (24%) of those who reported this were people who has served in their role 6 to 10 years. Even for those who felt like they were clear about expectations, the expectations articulated varied greatly by individual, county, and region during conversations the evaluation committee had with agents and specialists. There appeared to be a disconnection between specialist and administration performance expectations as well.

According to the TN 4-H Youth Development Program Evaluation Input Report, 32% of 114 agents providing feedback to an online survey disagreed or strongly disagreed they are mentored and coached in their current position (pg. 27). Though the Tennessee 4-H Youth Development: 2018 Program Review Background Report lists coaching as part of the responsibilities of the regional personnel (4-H Specialists, ANR/FCS Program Leaders), 27% of 114 agents surveyed do not agree that their regional program leaders know what they do in their roles as a 4-H agent. This includes 44% of agents serving 0 to 5 years and 55% of those serving 6 to 10 years, and 33% of those serving 21 years or more. In addition, there was mention of a mentoring program, but during conversations with agents there was some indication that they only had to meet twice over a year and it could be a five minute conversation each time. The mentoring

program appears to lack the structure and accountability necessary to adequately support agent onboarding goals.

Recommendations

Establish Standard Annual Performance Goals

- For agents may include, # of clubs developed, # of chartered clubs, # of youth reached, # of evaluations collected, amount of financial resources secured to support county program, # of kids prepared for contest, # of kids taken to camp, # of club meetings attended/facilitated, ratio of in-school and out-of-school clubs, # of volunteers recruited and utilized, variety of deliver modes, demographics mirror county population, success of recruiting youth from the school programming, etc.
- For specialists may include, # of grants submitted, amount of financial resources secured to support statewide programs, # of fact sheets, # of curriculum developed, # of peer reviewed presentations/extension publications, county support, # of trainings for agents.
- Program Impact

Develop standard onboarding: Establish goals related to topics covered, trainings received, connect to mentors, etc.

Strengthen mentoring program: Add additional structure to include monitoring and accountability, topics covered, evaluation of experience, etc.

Resources

Tennessee 4-H is a great resource to youth and families of Tennessee. 4-H is also a great resource for The University of Tennessee to disseminate useful information and training to citizens of our state. Important and needed resources are currently inaccessible to those who need it or nonexistent. It is made clear through the review process the material provided in project books is missed. Lack of useful curriculum for projects, school programs and out-of-school programs is a missing resource for county agents. Modern and cutting edge technology is desired and encouraged to be incorporated in all possible places.

Recommendations

Intentional communication of existing agent resources on state and regional levels will benefit agents while adding purpose and appreciation to state and regional staff.

A user-friendly and accessible state website is necessary and will be a big positive step to improving communications and resource availability. The website needs to include

curriculum, lists of projects, project guides, event dates, contest deadlines and important forms to name a few.

Members and parents are hungry for project guidance. Grade-appropriate activities, suggestions and project ideas can be provided online with no printing costs. One-page project sheets were helpful when provided, however; more info and guidance as previously included in Project Books are sought by agents, youth and parents.

Modern technology should be incorporated in contests and projects where possible. It is commendable portfolios are now digital and modernized. Struggles remain with this transition, and feedback from users should be sought to enhance the system. Training is important for increased and smooth adoption. Members need to be able to build on a portfolio from year to year rather than recreate it annually. Limiting member portfolios to four years' experience stands to penalize those who have been more involved in 4-H. Scoring should be reviewed and reflect weight of importance per section.

Consider Prezi or PowerPoint for demonstrations. The cardboard display with stenciled wording is antiquated, cumbersome and not interesting to most youth. Digital presentations are real-life skills that can benefit participants for years to come.

Counties should be aware and utilize the important resources that the 4-H Foundation provides.

Curriculum

Curriculum provide a critical foundation to 4-H learning experiences in Tennessee. Curriculum is a dynamic written document that provides an instructional map and educational materials for use by 4-H Agents, Camp Staff, 4-H Specialists, Educators, Volunteers and 4-H Members in multiple delivery modes to 4-H members' knowledge and skill acquisition. According to foundational work by Tyler (1949), curriculum should 1) be based on defined learning objectives; 2) incorporate learning experiences that focus on meeting those objectives; 3) organize those learning experiences so that they build on each other; and 4) include evaluation to determine the effectiveness of the curriculum. Although Tyler's work is well over half a century old, it still serves as a foundation in curriculum development as does the work of John Dewey (1902) focusing on "learning by doing."

The State 4-H Office has a written plan for curriculum along with structures developed to write curriculum. A great deal of work has been put into developing the TIPP's curricular framework. Outcomes were developed for project areas. State Department of Education standards have been aligned with curriculum and events. The State 4-H Office has reached out and is collaborating with Subject Matter Specialists to write curriculum and project sheets. A variety of curricula including lesson plans and project sheets have been developed. The newly developed curricula have been loaded on

Word Press with the electronic platform appearing to be more functional than the old SharePoint system. The timing of the migration of the University of Tennessee Institute of Agriculture system to Word Press is wearisome with the demand for 4-H curriculum.

Academic Department Heads and Subject Matter Specialists are aware of performance expectations to support the 4-H Youth Development Program. As part of the support for the 4-H Youth Development Program, some Subject Specialists have developed innovative curricula that have reached a significant number of youth, educators, leaders, volunteers, and 4-H Agents as well as made a positive impact on life skill development and gains in subject matter knowledge. Department Heads and Subject Matter Specialists voiced some apprehension over getting credit for scholarly activity when writing 4-H curriculum; therefore, it's important to familiarize the Department and Institute Promotion and Tenure Committee about the value of writing in 4-H curriculum development. Highly specialized in their field, some Subject Matter Specialists shared uneasiness about having the background knowledge to write 4-H curriculum that is developmentally appropriate and appealing to 4-H members.

Listening sessions with 4-H Agents, Regional Specialists, Camp Staff, and Regional Program Leaders, revealed a need for meaningful curricula that was aligned with Department of Education Standards. Most of these 4-H professionals seek curricula from outside the University of Tennessee system. These 4-H professionals seemed unaware of the current curricula development efforts underway.

Recommendations

Curriculum writing teams should be made up of feasible groups of 4-H State Specialists, Subject Matter Specialists, Area 4-H Specialists, Regional Program Leaders, 4-H Agents, 4-H Volunteers, Educators, and/or Career Professionals. The curriculum should be pilot tested at multiple sites mirroring the target population and modified prior to being finalized.

Curriculum leads should partner with representatives of the target audience. For example, if a curriculum is being developed for an in-school 4-H club meeting, it is recommended that the curriculum developer work along a 4-H Agent who will deliver the curriculum in an in-school 4-H club setting. In the case of school enrichment, the curriculum developer needs to work with teachers from the targeted grade of the curriculum.

The State 4-H Youth Development Program should continue to work with University of Tennessee Institute of Agriculture Administration and Department Heads to support 4-H through the engagement of academic faculty in curriculum development, educational programs, grant writing, and innovative scholarly activities.

Administration should continue to work with Department Heads and faculty promoting 4-H curriculum development and other innovative pursuits as recognized scholarly achievement within the Promotion and Tenure process.

Curriculum onboarding efforts with Subject Matter Specialists and other interested professionals should be conducted.

Outstanding curriculum efforts should be recognized and shared with others.

An in-person or virtual curricula fair could be held to introduce new or existing 4-H curricula.

State 4-H Specialists and/or Subject Matter Specialists could schedule virtual office hours at the beginning of the school year to advise 4-H Agents who are looking for a particular type of curriculum or subject matter.

Project outcomes should have curriculum and/or activities to support them.

The utilization of technology such as Chromebook, Google interface, and gaming, should be integrated into curricula experiences.

A curricula guide could be developed that outline all of the curricula available with information about topic, type of publication, delivery mode, and target age.

A school enrichment marketing guide including information about subject matter, content, state education standards, outcomes, and grade level could be developed to promote and educate school systems on the benefits the 4-H Youth Development Program has to offer.

Additionally, work with the Tennessee Department of Education to allow certain events as excused absences that have educational merit.

To support and enhance your relationship with the schools, impact studies should be conducted that associate the completion of curriculum and youth outcomes. The impact studies can range from outcome evaluations to research studies on the impact of 4-H instruction related to testing, grades and/or other topics that would benefit students, schools and the 4-H Youth Development Program. Significant findings should be reported through infographics and reports targeted to school officials. Evaluation and research projects provide an ideal opportunity to engage graduate students in conducting high quality research that can be utilized far beyond the 4-H Youth Development Program.

To be efficient in the development of curriculum, a process should be developed to scan the larger system and take advantage of curriculum developed at other institutions.

Camping/Facilities

Tennessee 4-H is fortunate to have three existing locations for 4-H youth to attend summer camping programs. Master plans for a fourth facility have been developed and Lone Oaks will be available for programming as funding is secured. The summer

camping program has been given high priority by Tennessee Extension Administration. Campers are required to pay a fee and adult chaperones attend at no cost at a ratio of one adult to every eight campers. Camping programs help increase retention of 4-H members and provide experiential learning. The committee visited Clyde-York 4-H Camp in Crossville, TN and found the facility to be clean, comfortable, and well managed.

Recommendations

Develop a school year program that will better utilize the facilities during the school week from September through May. This can enhance positive school relationships with public, private, and home school groups and increase revenue for the facilities. Increase marketing efforts to encourage non 4-H youth groups to utilize the facilities.

4-H facility staff should meet together annually to share ideas and help each other resolve facility issues. This meeting should be convened by the state 4-H leader and the 4-H Camping Specialist. This can also be a forum in which camp managers can share their needs and concerns with 4-H leadership.

4-H Center staff should consider a training on positive customer service. Help camp staff evaluate who their audience and customers are. County agents are customers *and* the salespeople for each facility.

The summer camp program should consider the following;

- Develop an online registration system so the camp manager can better plan.

- Consider a non-refundable camp deposit that is retain by the facility.

- Can the 4-H facilities be better used for 4-H conferences and events other than summer camp.

- State and regional staff should provide examples of successful county fund raising activities to share with all agents.

- Ensure that camp counselor training is documented and contains UT policy, risk management, ages and stages of youth development, first aid and CPR, emergency procedures, and child protection information. Any information and polices of the respective facility should also be include in the counselor training.

- A handbook with all the above mentioned information would be beneficial.

The state 4-H office should increase its support of the camping program by reevaluating the role of the 4-H Camping Specialist and how that position supports the camping program and the facilities.

Intentional effort at developing scholarships and other support for the program to ensure participation by limited resource and underserved youths.

Explore specialty camps for Junior High and Senior High youth.

Consider a cost recovery model for volunteers attending camp.

Consider open camping opportunity choices across the state. Allow counties to choose location and dates that best suit their needs. Changing locations for counties willing to travel can provide a fresh experience for campers and increase retention. Accomplishing this may require a culture change where chaperones and agents are responsible for campers from other counties.

Events

Tennessee 4-H is a strong events driven organization. Multiple opportunities for all ages of youth to participate in contests, specialty events, Congress, Round Up, Academic Conference, and others. A common theme was that there are a lot of events, however, when pressed, no events were recommended for elimination. The emphasis on events may impact the ability of specialists and agents to be proactive and potentially create current events, programs, and projects. Agents felt that they were required to have youth at all events, whether or not it was of interest to the youth in their county. It is also important to consider that some events may not be attractive or of interest to underserved or new audiences of youth.

Recommendations

Evaluate the entirety of events conducted, considering timing, participation and expected outcomes. Perhaps develop a matrix on how to add or delete events.

To make available a listing of all events and the ages for those events.

Registration and any other information regarding events need to be communicated well in advance to allow adequate planning on the part of agents and volunteers.

Any changes to events also need to be communicated prior to the beginning of the 4-H program year.

Engage the organization in a futuring exercise to consider what possible new events should be considered, and what current events should be refreshed or updated. E.g. robotics contests

Prioritize events based on possible replacements or additions and develop a timeline for elimination of old and adoption of new.

Events should be thoroughly evaluated on a periodic basis to ensure they are current and meeting the desired outcomes.

Consider where events/contests could be combined.

Incorporate the use of current technology in contests (e.g. power point vs poster) and events.

Volunteer Development

Over the past ten years, there has been a decline in adult and youth 4-H volunteer leader enrollment in Tennessee. In the SWOT analysis, 4-H agents, youth, parents, volunteers and alumni identified volunteer recruitment and development as a weakness. In listening sessions, 4-H Agents voiced a reluctance to recruit and utilize volunteers for a wide variety of reasons from lack of quality control of the 4-H Program to voicing school system concerns to losing touch with the youth to dealing with problem volunteers.

Engaging volunteers can add great value to the Tennessee 4-H Youth Development Program. Volunteers offer more diverse range of skills, experience and knowledge complimenting the skills and knowledge that are currently offered. Often volunteers can provide critical support for projects and programs. Volunteers extend the reach of the 4-H Youth Development Program. Through volunteer engagement, the 4-H Youth Development Program builds and extends the relationships within the community often linking the 4-H Youth Development Program to human and fiscal resources. Volunteers can raise awareness for the 4-H Youth Development Program and its profile within the community and/or school system. With the current workload of 4-H Agents, volunteers are critical to support and expand the 4-H Youth Development Program.

Recommendations

A repository could be developed to ensure appropriate documentation and training for volunteers.

A consistent volunteer management model should be adopted throughout the state to promote volunteer management best practices.

Each county could develop a volunteer management plan that aligns with and supports their current program needs and program expansion plans. Ideally, the volunteer management plan would be part of a 4-H Agent's plan of work.

Based on feedback from county and regional 4-H staff, the background check process and cost should be investigated to see if there's a better process that is more cost and time efficient.

Volunteer development should be an area of consideration in a 4-H Agent's performance evaluation.

Volunteer development onboarding training should be offered to new 4-H Agents to provide a solid foundation for volunteer management.

4-H Volunteer Training targeted at building volunteer development administration competency based the 4-H Professional Research and Knowledge Competencies should be offered to 4-H Agents.

Volunteer development communities of practice should be offered to help 4-H Agents build high functioning volunteer programs together. These communities should meet on a regular basis sharing ideas that work, learning about critical issues in volunteer development, problem solving challenges, and promoting high quality volunteer programs. Depending on the situation, these communities of practice can be offered at multi-county, regional or state levels where cohorts of 4-H professionals meet in person or virtually.

Subject matter training, patterned after the Shooting Sports Training Model, should be offered to support emerging programmatic needs and interests to support 4-H program support and expansion. This focus should be developed by the State 4-H Volunteer Specialist, State 4-H Staff, Department Content Specialists, 4-H Agents, Area 4-H Specialists, Regional Program Leaders, and Volunteers to address emerging needs and interests within the 4-H Youth Development Program.

Based on a needs assessment survey and agent input, volunteer trainings should be identified and offered in locations that will reach a wide range of volunteers. These volunteer trainings should be offered via a variety of methods utilizing online, virtual, community of practice, and face-to-face trainings.

Opportunities for 4-H Agents and volunteers to work and train together would be beneficial. Subject matter training would be a great way to build the agent-volunteer team. This can be as simple as opening agent training opportunities to volunteers.

Recognition should be given to 4-H Agents and Specialists who have outstanding 4-H volunteer management systems.

Diversity

According to stakeholder feedback provided in the Tennessee 4-H Youth Development: 2018 Program Evaluation Input Report increasing 4-H enrollment and retention is seen as an opportunity, but increasing diversity and changing culture (family structure/lifestyle of potential target audiences) are viewed as possible threats (pg. 29, 32-33). While the state population increased over 10 years, 4-H enrollment declined. The Tennessee 4-H program has had no geographic shifts in terms of their membership, with their primary audience being rural residents. Tennessee 4-H is able to reach diverse racial/ethnic audiences through its focus on in-school programming near parity with state demographic data. However, it appears additional efforts are needed to serve more African-Americans and possibly Asians at this time. Since Hispanic populations will double, additional services will likely be needed to more effectively engage the families of these children.

At the 2010 Census, the population of Tennessee was 6.34 million. Current growth estimates put the population at 6.78 million, a rate of .86% It is estimated that the population of the state increased by 440,000 between 2010 and 2019. While the state has seen population growth, the Tennessee 4-H program has seen a decline in enrollment by 50,000 between 2007 and 2017 (pg. 20).

UT's Center for Business and Economic Research projects the state's population to reach 8.5 million by 2040. Over the next 25 years, Tennessee's demographic profile is expected to follow national trends as the population continues to become more urbanized. CBER—a research center within UT's Haslam College of Business—projects that the largest changes in county population will occur primarily in metropolitan counties. Approximately 69 percent of the population growth in Tennessee from 2010 to 2040 is expected to occur in Rutherford, Davidson, Williamson, Knox, Shelby, Montgomery, Wilson, Hamilton, Sumner, and Sevier Counties. Review Background Report, over the last 10 years there has not been a dominate shift in 4-H members' place of residence. The majority of members live in rural, non-farm towns with populations under 10,000 followed by those living in areas (towns, cities, adjacent suburbs) with a population of 10,000 to 50,000 residents (pg. 18).

According to information provided in the Tennessee 4-H Youth Development: 2018 Program Report, the program is comprised predominately of white and black or African American youth. In 2017, 85% were white non-Hispanic, 12% were black non-Hispanic, 5.5% for Hispanics, and 2.5% for other races. This appears slightly high for whites and low for blacks, while being on par for Hispanics and other races. Tennessee 4-H program is currently near parity with state race and ethnicity demographics, but has room for growth. According to CBER, the Hispanic/Latino population will more than double to 11.2 percent, the population characterized as “non-white, non-black, non-Hispanic” is expected to increase to 7.9, and black non-Hispanic persons will remain at 17.2 percent by 2020.

In 2015, there were 168,938 persons with limited English proficiency in Tennessee. This is roughly 3% of the population. There were 110,114 persons speaking Spanish or Spanish-Creole, 7072 speaking Arabic, 6643 speaking Vietnamese, and 6374 speaking Chinese. Nearly 50% of Spanish-speaking persons are located in Davidson and Shelby Counties, while the others are spread across three other counties (Hamilton, Rutherford, and Knox). More than 80% of the Arabic speaking population is located in Davidson County, the remaining Arabic speaking populations are located in three other counties (Shelby, Knox and Rutherford). Two-thirds of the state's Vietnamese-speaking population are located in Shelby and Davidson Counties, another 16% are located in Knox County. Chinese speaking audiences are located in Shelby, Knox, Rutherford, and Hamilton Counties. According to information provided in the Tennessee 4-H Youth Development: 2018 Program Report, there is an enrollment form in Spanish, but project materials are not. There have been efforts to hire agents and program assistants that are bilingual (pg. 22) but there is no status on the success of those efforts.

Recommendations

Public Notification

- Develop a plan for public notification that identifies grassroots organizations that serve those traditionally underserved by 4-H. Send them information about programs and services.

Outreach

- As part of some form of strategic planning, establish goals related to reaching diverse audiences in a state outreach plan. These should be SMART goals. They should be specific, measurable, assignable, realistic and relevant, and have a timetable established to reach goal.

LGBTQ Youth

- Best practices or guidance for Tennessee should be developed including conversations with UT Legal Affairs and following state and university policies. Findings indicate that situations are handled on a case-by-case basis, guidance indicating procedures may be helpful.

Limited English Proficiency

- Particularly as it relates to camping and out-of-school programs, there should be a plan for reaching communities with Limited English Proficiency. This can begin with understanding the top 3 languages spoken in the state and where those persons are located across the state. Then your plan and process can identify the following: 1) Agencies that serve these communities you can partner with 2) Important materials that need to be translated 3) Resources for interpretation services (school district is a good place to start and 4) Staff that can be trained to serve as translators.

Hiring Practices

- Conduct an analysis of current staff (race and gender) at each level of the organization. Identify areas where there is more homogeneity than desired and set goals to increase diversity. Work with HR to identify additional recruiting sources and monitor effectiveness of new sources/strategies implemented.
- Revise position descriptions to reflect a value for those with experience serving diverse audiences. Common assumptions evident in hiring practices is that a person with a subject matter background can learn to work with diverse audiences and can be taught to value diversity. Start with the assumption that a person who values diversity and has experience working with diverse backgrounds can be taught subject matter. Consider a job description and ranking matrix that values experience working with population equally to 4-H experience or agriculture degree. Have someone on hiring committee that can

see/review a non-traditional applicant's resume and understand the skills the person brings without them having to spell out each of them.

Professional Development

Identify a number of opportunities for ongoing professional development for staff around diversity issues. These may include trainings on cultural sensitivity or competency working with youth with disabilities, trauma-informed youth programming, engaging limited resource audiences, extension programs designed specifically for vulnerable youth populations (i.e. immigrant, incarcerated, minority, etc.), understanding the cultures of racial and ethnic minority populations in the US. Specific trainings for consideration that have been endorsed or widely used across the Cooperative Extension System are Mental Health First Aid, USDA-NIFA Limited English Proficiency training, Coming Together, Cambio de Colores conference.

Resources

- Iowa State University Guidance on LGBTQ Inclusion (case-by-case) at https://www.extension.iastate.edu/4h/files/page/files/lgbtq_inclusion_may_2018.pdf
- Limited English Proficiency: A Federal Interagency website at <https://www.lep.gov/>
- Oregon State University 4-H Youth Development Programs webpage on Inclusive Resources for Staff related to LGBTQ at <http://oregon.4h.oregonstate.edu/info/staff/inclusive/lgbtq>
- US Department of Agriculture Departmental Regulation 4300-003 on Equal Opportunity Public Notification Policy at <https://www.ocio.usda.gov/sites/default/files/docs/2012/DR-4300-003%20Equal%20Opportunity%20Publication%20Notification.pdf>
- University of California Division of Agriculture and Natural Resources 4-H Youth Development Program Policy Handbook, Chapter 3 on Affirmative Action and Civil Rights at <http://4h.ucanr.edu/Resources/Policies/Chapter3/#II>
- [University of Maryland, Increasing Cultural Awareness and Equity in Extension Programs at https://campus.extension.org](https://campus.extension.org)
- University of Tennessee Center for Business and Economic Growth, Population Projections For The State Of Tennessee 2010-2030 at <https://www.tn.gov/content/dam/tn/tacir/documents/Population2010.pdf>
- University of Tennessee News at <https://news.utk.edu/2015/08/27/study-tennessee-track-steady-population-growth/>
- University of Wisconsin Extension Language Access or LEP Plan at https://articles.extension.org/sites/default/files/LanguageAccessPlan2017_10-20.pdf or <https://blogs.extension.wisc.edu/languageaccess/overview/>

Marketing/Public Relations

Throughout the different stages of the Tennessee 4-H Youth Development Program Review, it was made clear 4-H is not visible nor known by many in the public including parents, potential members and possible supporters. Some noted that a vast multimedia promotion campaign would be great yet, all agreed there is vast room for improvement with little cost. The goal will be to raise awareness of 4-H as a whole, increase interest in 4-H by youth, and expose more adults to the opportunity for support and youth involvement.

It is important to keep focus on current members and their experience in the 4-H program as we also try to recruit new members and supporters. A quality, fun and meaningful personal experience builds advocates who will, in turn, publicize 4-H to others. The overall capacity of 4-H programs are limited by staff, resources and facilities. Administration should be mindful of limitations and work to balance resources where most needed.

Recommendations

Potential exists to restructure current contests such as 4-H Poster into a member-driven PR contest to expand the reach of Tennessee 4-H. Social media video contests or similar could engage youth in meaningful, modern activities while also being the key promoters of the organization in which they are involved.

Youth officers and the new Ambassador Program can be utilized to represent 4-H on social media, local TV, Radio and partner visits.

Develop a unified plan regarding social media presence by various 4-H related entities.

Develop an overall 4-H marketing plan.

Education Centers have more potential and can be marketed to schools, groups and others as a location for events, meetings and educational activities.

Projects, competitions and events need to be regularly reviewed and evaluated then adjusted to meet needs of customers, remain fresh, be relevant and attract participation. The number of events and competitions limit capacity of the program due to demands on agents' time. Tradition is valued and a key to the success of Tennessee 4-H. Modernization of contests and events builds on that tradition to strengthen the program and keep 4-H relevant and interesting for today's youth.

Part of marketing is education. Members, parents and agents need to be informed in a timely manner. Marketing programs on the state 4-H website with a list of event dates, deadlines and project opportunities will increase involvement, learning and satisfaction. Such information is needed by agents and parents at least six months in advance with a preference of twelve month lead time.

Establish and provide to agents a school relations guide to assist them to market 4-H strategically to school teachers, principals and officials. Such a guide would include stats and benefits encouraging schools to incorporate 4-H. This guide could also show agents effective ways to promote out-of-school participation in 4-H.

Tennessee 4-H currently does a good job branding 4-H. It is wise to keep a clear effort on branding 4-H in all facilities, activities, events, resources and communications.

Build a database of alumni, winners, ambassadors, etc.

Conclusion and Summary Recommendations

In summary, Tennessee has a strong 4-H program that continues to have significant positive impact upon the youth of the state. It is a program worthy of strengthening for those positive benefits.

There are several areas that we suggest the University of Tennessee and Tennessee State University Extension consider for strengthening the program. In general, we recommend:

- Establish a clear, fulltime leader of the state 4-H program.
- Evaluate and enhance all communication and decision-making strategies for the 4-H program.
- Enhance employee onboarding and mentoring
- Encourage the recruitment and development of volunteers to expand the reach of the 4-H program.
- Evaluate the events (contests, etc.) for relevance, participation and potential modernization.
- Explore mechanisms for enhancing the diversity of youth and employees involved in 4-H
- Expand visibility of the 4-H program through targeted marketing and related efforts, build on alumni and volunteer databases.

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