



United States
Department of
Agriculture

National Institute
of Food
and Agriculture

4-H National
Headquarters



4-H Healthy Living: An Overview

Mission of 4-H:

A world in which youth and adults learn, grow, and work together as catalysts for positive change.

The Challenge:

Providing developmentally appropriate learning opportunities that promote optimal physical, social, and emotional well-being for youth and their families is critical to reversing the rising issues of obesity, diabetes, and other childhood diseases and issues that plague our country.

The Solution:

Through 4-H Healthy Living strategies and programming, youth will...

- Increase their knowledge, attitudes, skills, and aspirations to promote optimal health habits.
- Be able to identify community resources that effectively address their physical and social-emotional well-being.
- Will increase their adoption and mastery of healthy behaviors that lead to a healthy lifestyle.
- Increased their use of 4-H Healthy Living knowledge and skills to address community health issues in regards to physical, social, and emotional well-being.

The Partnerships – The following examples show how partnerships contribute to the work of 4-H Healthy Living.

- **National 4-H Mission Mandates Working Group:** 4-H National Headquarters, National 4-H Council, and land-grant universities work together to identify and address the needs of the 4-H Healthy Living program.
- **Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC):** As the nation's leading health protection agency, CDC saves lives and protects people from health threats. 4-H helps develop materials to educate youth on these health threats and educates the public at fairs and other venues.
- **Medical Reserve Corps (MRC):** MRC is a national network of volunteers, organized locally to improve the health and safety of their communities. 4-H youth and adults may serve as volunteers or collaborate with MRC volunteers to address local health issues.
- **Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP):** America's children and teens are better equipped to excel in school and in life when they get the health care services they need. CHIP provides affordable coverage that covers doctor and dental visits and other important health services. 4-H helps to make families aware of these health care services.

The Results:

- According to a [Tufts University study](#), 4-H'ers are nearly twice as likely to make healthier choices.
- After a severe outbreak of influenza occurred, primarily in children with animals during 4-H agricultural fairs, 4-H and the CDC worked to prevent future outbreaks. Combining public and animal health disease experts with youth development professionals, [educational materials](#) were produced reduce zoonotic diseases in youth. 4-H youth now take more preventative action against these diseases and educate the public on how to interact with animals in a health conscious manner.
- [Media-Smart Youth \(MSY\)](#) Teen Leaders Program is a 10-lesson curriculum for youth ages 11 to 13 that explores media, nutrition, and physical activity. National Institute for Health created MSY through a partnership with 4-H and based on recommendations from youth delegates attending National 4-H Conference.

The 4-H Youth Development Program is the youth outreach program from the land-grant institutions' Cooperative Extension Services, and the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA). 4-H serves as a model program for the practice of positive youth development. 4-H National Headquarters is housed within the Division of Youth and 4-H at USDA's National Institute of Food and Agriculture. Additional support for 4-H programming is provided through National 4-H Council. For more information email 4Hhq@nifa.usda.gov.