

4-H Healthy Living Program National Report 2016



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The 4-H Youth Development Program is the youth outreach program of the land-grant universities' Cooperative Extension Services and USDA. 4-H serves as the 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 is provided by National 4-H Council (a private non-profit organization) and land-grant University extension 4-H offices.

Introduction

Dear 4-H Community,

For the past several years, the 4-H Healthy Living Management Team (HLMT) has had the honor of providing national leadership to the 4-H Healthy Living program. During this time research has been conducted on identifying best practices and program sustainability, evaluation measures have been designed and tested, several national curricula have been developed and published, and a communication network has been established through state liaison positions.

With this strong foundation now in place, the HLMT will sunset in the summer of 2016 along with the STEM and Citizenship Mission Mandate Teams. We believe that healthy living programming and support has risen to a level where the momentum for growth and collaboration can be sustained through local and state efforts of the Cooperative Extension System. National programmatic leadership is expected to continue under the direction of the Program Leadership Working Group. It is with great enthusiasm for the future that the 4-H HLMT shares this final report with strategic direction for the future built on the accomplishments of the past.

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The 4-H Healthy Living mission engages youth and families through access and opportunities to achieve optimal physical, social, and emotional well-being.

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Historical Perspective

In 2008 the National 4-H Healthy Living Task Force was formed to demonstrate 4-H's recommitment to the importance of the fourth *H* – Health. In an effort to stem the national health issues of the 21st century, we must ensure that our nation's youth and their families learn how to make healthy decisions related to the personal behaviors in which they engage.

The purpose of this leadership team, which changed its name to the National 4-H Healthy Living Management Team (HLMT) in 2010, was to assist state Extension systems to organize and strengthen their 4-H Healthy Living educational opportunities as well as stimulate new innovative learning experiences by providing a national framework of program goals and evaluation tools. One way to ensure that youth needs were met was to incorporate youth leaders onto the HLMT. The HLMT has guided Extension professionals and volunteers as they design, implement, and evaluate 4-H Healthy Living programming at the local, state and national levels. Leadership for healthy living has been provided in seven key areas:

- program development and design,
- professional development,
- educational materials,
- evaluation and research,
- marketing and communications,
- funding, and
- Partnerships and collaborations.



Over recent years new program models have been created, new training resources have been developed, new curricula have been released, new evaluation tools have been implemented, new partnerships have been established, and National 4-H Council has acquired new funding streams. A few of these impressive achievements will be described in the Highlights and Achievements section of this report.

It should be noted that the efforts of the HLMT align with and support the Cooperative Extension's *National Framework for Health and Wellness* (released by ECOP in 2014). As the schema for the Cooperative Extension System, the Framework is broader in scope than the work of the HLMT. It is based on the belief that the Cooperative Extension System has the assets that will allow it to do for the nation's health what it did for agriculture at the turn of this century. The 4-H program and its Healthy Living Mission Mandate are recognized as two of those assets. Positive Youth Development is also one of the six program priorities outlined in the Framework. Areas of compatibility between the two efforts are partnerships, outcomes, professional development, resource development, and marketing and communication. The 4-H HLMT has the additional focus of working with volunteers and developing curriculum.

Highlights and Achievements

The 4-H Healthy Living Mission Mandate has made huge strides over the last 5 years, both nationally and in individual states as the power of the 4-H Clover in changing youth behavior has garnered attention.

The foundation for current 4-H Healthy Living programming was laid in 2008-2010 and included:

- Creating a 4-H Healthy Living definition focused on programs in the domains of healthy eating, physical activity, safety, social-emotional, and ATOD (alcohol, tobacco, and other drugs) avoidance.
- Commissioning a White Paper on the status of 4-H Healthy Living Programs, written by Dr. Laura Hill et al. of Washington State University.
- Creating an initial Strategic Framework that served as the basis for national efforts.
- Developing basic logic models in each of the 5 domains.
- Conducting an evaluation of 4-H Healthy Living curricula to assess needs and gaps.

Accomplishments since 2011 included:

- Adding youth to the National 4-H Healthy Living Management Team.
- Retiring older curriculum from the National 4-H Healthy Living Curriculum Collection. A program with state affiliates has enabled the collection to be updated/expanded with states sharing in profits.
- Completing *A National Professional and Volunteer Needs Assessment*, authored by Dr. Joseph Donaldson, with need at all levels for training and communication identified.
- Generating a *4-H Healthy Events Checklist* to help with event planning at all levels, from local 4-H clubs through multi-state events, which can be used to assess the general healthiness of the event for youth.
- Conducting a *National 4-H Environmental Scan and Evaluability Study* in all 5 healthy living domains, assessing healthy living programs for evidence based and replicability.

Also during this time, the following accomplishments were realized, although not under the 4-H Healthy Living Management Team's direct leadership.

- A national 4-H impact assessment system, Common Measures, was developed. It includes measures of nutrition, safety, and physical activity; there were also related tools developed in career and workforce prep. Social-emotional tools are under development.
- The National Youth Summit on Healthy Living was initiated in 2014 with increasing attendance each year.
- The *4-H Study of Positive Youth Development*, released in 2013, shows that youth in 4-H are twice as likely to exercise and be physically active.
- *Riding It Forward* in 2014 drew attention to the need to be physically active.
- *Revolution of Responsibility* included stories of youth impact through healthy living.
- President Obama entertained seven teen leaders with leadership and healthy living expertise from across the country in the Oval Office in 2015.

Strategic Goals and Objectives

The following goals have been identified by the 4-H Healthy Living Management Team.

Goal 1: Program Development and Design

Increase knowledge, skills, competencies, and adoption of healthy behaviors of youth and their families by promoting developmentally appropriate programs that address their physical, social, and emotional well-being.

Objective a: Intentionally integrate healthy living principles and activities into all local, regional/district, and state programs and events.

Objective b: Provide opportunities for family involvement in activities that promote and teach strategies for improving healthy behaviors.

Goal 2: Professional Staff and Volunteer Development

Create and maintain a shared professional development infrastructure that allows Extension staff, volunteers and teen leaders to be well-prepared to offer healthy living learning opportunities to a variety of audiences through multiple delivery methods.

Objective a: Provide training and resources on healthy living principles and activities to those implementing 4-H programs and events.

Objective b: Share training templates and resources on integrating healthy living principles and activities with colleagues through local/state networks, NAE4-HA, eXtension, and other sharing platforms.



Be SAFE



Choose Health: Food, Fun, and Fitness



Cooking



Food, Culture & Reading



Food Science



Food Smart Families



Foods



Health and Fitness



Health Rocks



Kitchen Chemistry



Microwave Magic



STEPS to a Healthy Teen

Goal 3: Educational Materials and Experiences

Provide a wide variety of healthy living curricula, activities, and research resources. Place an emphasis on public health, and provide basic and advanced training opportunities.

Objective a: Encourage the use of high quality 4-H curriculum by those facilitating healthy living learning experiences.

Objective b: Seek out opportunities to provide advanced learning through the development of job shadowing, internships, and other healthy living career experiences for youth.

Goal 4: Evaluation and Research

4-H programs at the local, state, and national levels will implement and evaluate health practices and policies consistent with current research and recommendations (e.g., Dietary Guidelines for Americans, Physical Activity Guidelines for Americans, etc.).

Objective a: Develop healthy living measures of community, environment and organizational level change.

Objective b: Conduct and share evaluation and research studies to assess the outcomes of 4-H Healthy Living programs.

Goal 5: Marketing and Communications

Make sure that local officials know what is happening in their areas by telling the local story of 4-H successes.

Objective a: Create a shared space where local programs can place stories of their youth in healthy living programs; share this space with your colleagues if no personal identifiable information is posted.

Objective b: Connect to national marketing campaigns to increase the impact of local stories.



Goal 6: Funding

Develop a variety of public and private funding sources to support 4-H Healthy Living programs and initiatives.

Objective a: Strive for diverse funding sources (grants, sponsorships, individuals, businesses, etc.)

Objective b: Utilize staff and volunteers to assist in developing funding sources.

Goal 7: Partnerships and Collaborations



Forge formal and informal partnerships within Extension and with others interested in the promotion of physical, social, and emotional well-being of youth and their families.

Objective a: Collaborate with other LGUs around the country to establish relationships, build partnerships and share resources.

Objective b: Partner with other youth serving organizations to strengthen relationships as well as increase 4-H reach as it relates to healthy living.

Call to Action

Healthy living presents great challenges and great opportunities.

What can you do to advance the 4-H Healthy Living Mission Mandate?

- Use the products generated by the National 4-H Healthy Living Management Team (e.g., logic models, Evaluability Assessment, *4-H Healthy Event Checklist*).
- Integrate these goals and objectives into your work at the local, state, regional, or national levels.
- Establish multi-generational teams focused on advancing healthy living.
- Use teens as teachers, role models, mentors to continue to develop leadership in 4-H Healthy Living.
- Encourage colleagues to integrate 4-H Healthy Living best practices into all 4-H programming regardless of subject matter.
- Share these goals and objectives with relevant committees and administrators.
- Ensure programs are research-based and practices are consistent with healthy living recommendations.
- Develop policies consistent with healthy living research and recommendations.



Resource Links

[4-H Healthy Living Logic Models](#)

[4-H Healthy Living Curriculum and Learning Materials](#)

[4-H Healthy Living University and Partner Resources](#)

[“4-H Healthy Living Programs with Impact: A National Environmental Scan”](#). Laura Downey, Donna Peterson, Suzanne Le Menestrel, JoAnne Leatherman, James Lang. **New Directions in Youth Development**. No. 143. Fall, 2014. Pp. 13-24.

[“Programmatic Environmental Scans: A Survey Based on Program Planning & Evaluation Concepts”](#). Laura Downey, Donna Peterson, Suzanne Le Menestrel, JoAnne Leatherman, James Lang **Journal of Human Sciences and Extension**. No. 3, No. 3. 2015. Pp. 143-150.

The following reports are on the [4-H website](#):

- *Professional and Volunteer Needs Assessment: An Adelphi Approach* by Dr. Joseph Donaldson et al, 2014
- *Teens Take on Health*, 2014
- *4-H Healthy Living and Environmental Scan* by Dr. Laura Downey & Dr. Donna Peterson, 2013
- Common Measures analyses for healthy living programs funded through National 4-H Council

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