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# 4-H Headquarters Update - Fall 2016 Edition

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Fall 2016



## From the Director

Positive youth development is based upon connections formed, relationships developed, and partnerships are essential to strengthen, to frame and support the experiences, the environment. Partnerships are a key strategy for 4-H National Headquarters as they leverage existing connections, build upon competencies, and enhance and strengthen capacity. With 4-H, partnerships are both an outcome as well as an input when people, environment, and experience conduct positive youth development programming. Partnerships also occur on several levels, between individuals, between groups, and between other entities. Partnerships create a synergistic relationship between those engaged in positive youth development, creating a greater whole than the sum of the parts.

4-H National Headquarters strives to develop meaningful and mutually beneficial collaborations across the federal landscape. Partnerships are grounded in research,

positive youth development, and NIFA's strategic plan. Learn more about the 37 current partnerships by visiting the [4-H partnerships](#) web page.

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## Program Quality and Accountability

How do we know that the work we are doing is the best it can be? Against what standard do we compare ourselves? One way to leverage existing or future partnerships with other youth-serving organizations is to examine best practices for our field. Positive youth development is a science-based field and there are many organizations who are willing to share what they've learned with us. They can help with:

- Best practices in planning, implementation and administration of youth programs;
- Lessons learned in reaching underserved audiences;
- Pitfalls to be avoided when trying new techniques;
- [Experience in data collection and analysis](#), including publicly available data sets that are applicable to our population.

More and more the field of positive youth development, both in private organizations and in the federal government, uses data to drive program planning and decision-making. Are we keeping up with that trend? Do we know what data are useful and how to tell a compelling story of 4-H success? Our positive youth development partners have many tools that we can use to demonstrate the effect of our programming. Let's partner with our positive youth development colleagues and leverage the information they have to share!

*"The goal is to turn data into information,  
and information into insight."*

– Carly Fiorina

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## Learning

Learning is a vital part of the 4-H positive youth development experience. At 4-H National Headquarters, we partner with many internal and external stakeholders to assure that we provide the best information and resources available. The 4-H Learning Working group is a collaboration of internal 4-H partners who have developed a [new learning definition and framework for 4-H](#) from a positive youth development perspective. An external example is 4-H National Headquarters' partnership with NASA to create a curriculum that will be available throughout the 4-H system and to the general public. These two examples are among many ways that 4-H leverages partnerships to stay at the forefront of learning in positive youth development.

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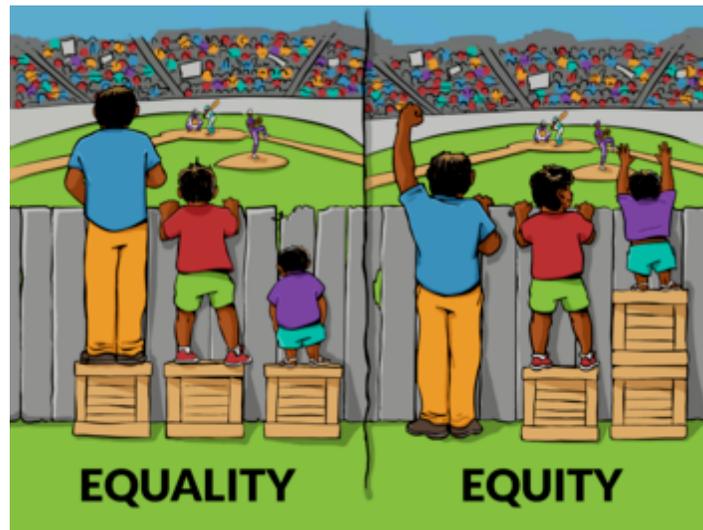
## Access, Equity & Opportunity

Leveraging partnerships is critical when considering access, equity and opportunity. When developing and implementing your programs consider questioning the following:

- Can I/the program effectively address the needs of diverse audiences?
- Are current/new volunteers prepared to serve diverse audiences equitably?
- Are you/your program skilled to identify new resource groups for partnerships for program equity?
- Am I/the program skilled to build partner relationships for equity?
- Can I/the program engage advocates or champions who have evidence equitable practice with a particular new/diverse audiences?
- Can I/the program provide opportunities to equitably build social capital to build partnerships?

- Are your/the advisory committees reflective of the diversity in your/the community of responsibility?

Having a clear awareness of what you and/or your program is able to provide can help identify partners who can fill any gaps or enhance areas of limitations.



*Interaction Institute for Social Change | Artist: Angus Maguire www.interactioninstitute.org; www.madewithangus.com.*

## Partnerships

A team of 4-H professionals, convened by 4-H National Headquarters, has been working on updating the 4-H Professional Research, Knowledge and Competencies (PRKC). The new document is expected to be released in the first part of 2017. The Partnerships section of the PRKC has been revised to focus on three primary topics: Youth as Partners, Families as Partners, and Organizations and Communities as Partners. Within each of these topics are a series of professional competencies that will lead to “engaging youth in community development, and the broader community in youth development.” Stay tuned for more information about this important resource.

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