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EMPLOYABILITY

GROWING CHALLENGE

Despite reports from the [U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics](#) that the projected number of people working or looking for work will be 163.8 million by 2024, the ManpowerGroup's latest [Talent Shortage Survey](#) indicates that 32 percent of U.S. employers report difficulties filling jobs. [Ready by 21](#), an initiative of the Forum for Youth Investment, states that only 4 out of 10 youth are ready for employment, and 2 in 10 youth are deeply underprepared or off track. The [Campaign for Youth](#) estimates that 5.25 million young people ages 16-24 are not involved in an academic program nor involved in the workforce. This accounts for nearly one-third of those unemployed in the United States.

EMPLOYABILITY

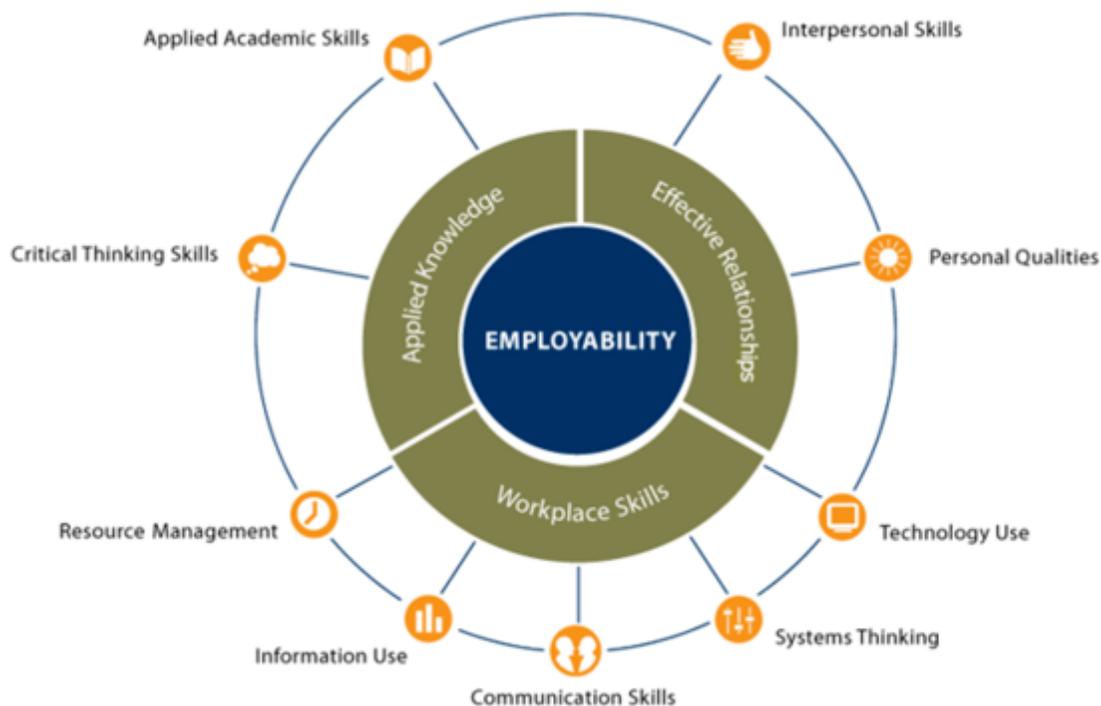
It is absolutely critical that youth have the knowledge and skills to be employed and can productively contribute to their community. [Employability](#) has been defined as the capability of getting and keeping satisfactory work. Yet, it is more than just getting a job. Employability is the capacity to function successfully in a work environment, the ability to transition between roles and situations, and to continually grow these capacities and abilities throughout one's life.

EMPLOYABILITY SKILLS FRAMEWORK

Through led by an initiative of the Office of Career, Technical, and Adult Education, U.S. Department of Education, a unifying framework that cuts across the workforce development and education sectors was developed. The [framework](#) is comprised of nine key skills is organized into three broad categories.

1. Applied Knowledge – The thoughtful integration of academic knowledge and technical skills, put to practice for use in the workplace.
2. Effective Relationships – The interpersonal skills and personal qualities that enable individuals to interact effectively with others.
3. Workplace Skills – The analytical and organizational skills and understanding that are needed to successfully perform work tasks.

This framework, designed as a one-stop-shop for employability information, includes a [checklist](#) for youth and adults to track the development of employability skills.



THE 4-H SOLUTION

As a positive youth development program, [4-H](#) offers youth the opportunity to experience and practice employability skills. Positive youth development ([PYD](#)) can be summed up as positive experiences with positive relationships in positive environments. This closely correlates with the employability skills framework and demonstrates the importance 4-H can have in addressing the need for youth to be prepared for employment. Through 4-H, youth can engage in a wide variety of intentional learning experiences, develop strong relationships and support networks, build a portfolio of transferrable skills, and prepare for lifelong employability success.

EXAMPLE EMPLOYABILITY PREPARATION PROGRAMS

[Michigan 4-H](#). Youth entrepreneurship gives young people the opportunity to chart their own destinies. Even if they don't start a business, youth involved in entrepreneurship programs gain skills and become more innovative and effective employees. MSU Extension provides cutting-edge curriculum and training to volunteers and teachers to deliver programs where youth can develop these important skills.

[Nebraska 4-H](#). Career Explorer helps youth connect the dots between choices made every day and the opportunities in the future. In this interactive game, youth make ongoing decisions about education and future career opportunities. Youth are able to enter the workforce, get additional education, or explore training programs. There is access to more than 450 careers with up-to-date salary information and summaries for each.

[New York 4-H](#). Career Explorations is a three-day event for youth on the Cornell University campus. The purpose of this program is to provide youth with exposure to academic fields and career exploration, to develop leadership skills, to provide hands-on experience in a college setting and to introduce youth to Cornell University.

CALL TO ACTION

The economic future of the United States depends on the next generation of young Americans becoming ready for work and life. Experiences in 4-H are designed for social interaction, to connect to larger, real world contexts. This approach ensures that youth have the knowledge and skills to be employed and can productively contribute to their community. Let's tell the story of how 4-H prepares youth for employability together. Send your 4-H employability success stories to ImpactStories@nifa.usda.gov or #NIFAimpacts.

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