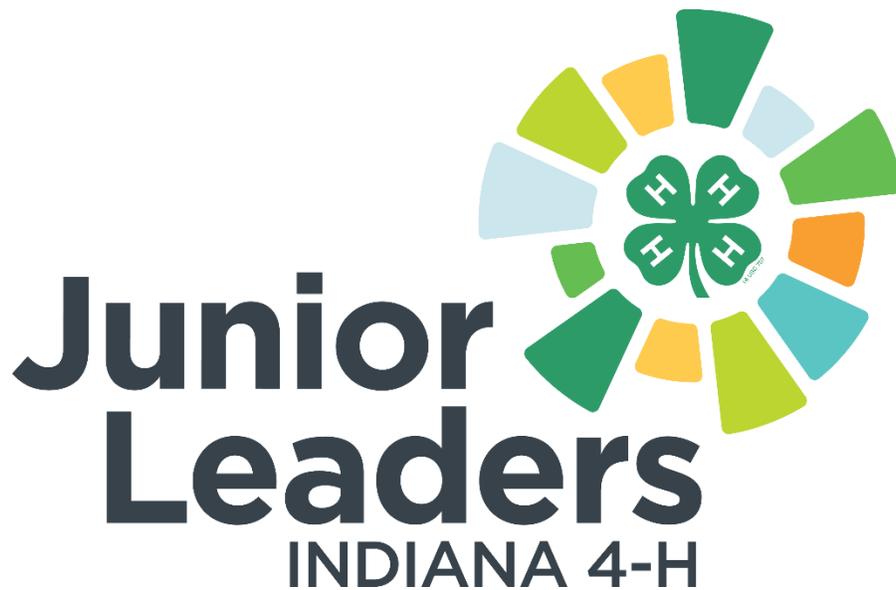




PROMISING PRACTICES FOR INDIANA 4-H JUNIOR LEADER PROGRAMMING

A Guide for 4-H Junior Leader Advisors



SEPTEMBER 21, 2020



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Credits:

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**Growing 4-H Jr. Leaders into the Future
Promising Practices for Indiana 4-H Junior Leader Programming**

Confer with local stakeholders regarding teen leader needs and past expectations.

The Indiana 4-H Junior Leader program is designed to teach 4-H members in grades 7-12 about leadership development. Youth who participate in 4-H Leadership opportunities gain experiences that better equip them to enter the workforce and/or pursue higher education. Employers will be confident that 4-H Junior Leader participants have developed skills in areas such as communication, organization, self-responsibility, respect for others, civic engagement, and teamwork, among others.

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BACKGROUND

Characteristics of the Indiana 4-H Junior Leader Program

It is anticipated that each 4-H Junior Leader Program in Indiana will include the following characteristics:

- Connection to University system
- Research-based information
- Positive Youth Development
- Hands-on, experiential learning
- Workforce development
- Community-based
- Diversity, inclusion, and belonging
- Opportunities at county, regional/area, state, and national levels
- Youth-Adult partnerships
- Youth-led, age-appropriate instruction
- Essential elements of positive youth development

Let's take a closer look at some of these characteristics and see how they align with the Indiana 4-H Junior Leader Program.

Positive Youth Development

Positive youth development is an intentional, pro-social approach that engages youth within their communities, schools, organizations, peer groups, and families in a manner that is productive and constructive; recognizes, utilizes, and enhances youths' strengths; and promotes positive outcomes for young people by providing opportunities, fostering positive relationships, and furnishing the support needed to build on their leadership strengths. (Federal Interagency Working Group on Youth Programs, 2014).

Positive youth development started as a way to examine the role of resiliency—the protective factors in a young person's environment— and how these factors could influence one's ability to overcome challenges. Those factors included, but were not limited to, family support, caring adults, positive peer groups, strong sense of self and self-esteem, and involvement in school and community activities.

Researchers began to report that young people who have a diverse set of protective factors could, in fact, experience more positive outcomes. Youth programs are strengthened when they involve youth as equal partners, providing benefits both for the program and for the involved youth.

Connecting youth to positive experiences and environments is a purposeful process. All youth have the room for positive growth and development. Youth must be valued to bring their skills to the table. Adults and youth work in partnership. Youth can attend, participate, or lead through positive youth development activities.



This systems approach to positive youth development uses the ecological model of influencers and strength-based supporters to involve and engage every part of the community—schools, homes, community members, and others. Young people are valued through this process. Positive youth development is an investment that the community makes in young people.



Risk can be used as a strategy to help youth develop positive outcomes. In today's fast-paced world, it may be more important than ever to prepare youth to cope with and adapt to the unexpected. Positive risk taking teaches youth how to apply learning from various points of view and decision making to the challenges they face. Instead of avoiding difficult situations, positive risk taking can be a tool in addressing the always-changing future (USDA/NIFA, 2017).

Great relationships between youth and adults is one of the elements needed for positive youth development. The 4-H Junior Leader program is an example on how positive youth development can be achieved through 4-H.

Essential Elements of 4-H

The National 4-H program has adopted a list of eight essential elements critical to positive youth development practices. These essential elements are condensed into four key concepts: belonging, mastery, independence, and generosity. The four Essential Elements are considered necessary attributes of youth programs striving to create environments conducive to optimizing youth development.

These Essential Elements reflect the positive outcomes youth achieve through 4-H participation called the five “C’s”- competence, connection, character, and caring. A sixth C, contribution, is the culmination of the first five. The 4-H Junior Leader program should incorporate opportunities for youth to gain a sense of independence and belonging, as well as, opportunities to demonstrate generosity and mastery of knowledge gained (Martz, McNeeley, Mincemoyer, et al., 2016).

ESSENTIAL ELEMENTS

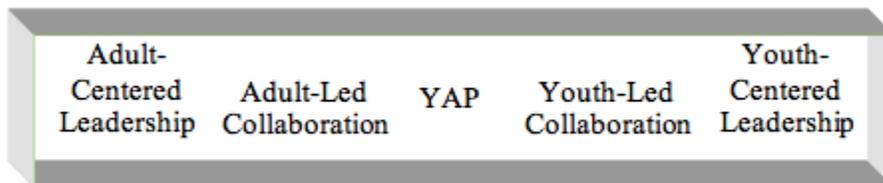
<p><i>I pledge my head to clearer thinking...</i></p> <p>INDEPENDENCE</p> <p>Gaining Character & Confidence</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Opportunity to See Oneself as an Active Participant in the Future • Opportunity for Self-Determination
<p><i>I pledge my heart to greater loyalty...</i></p> <p>BELONGING</p> <p>Gaining Connection</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A Positive Relationship with a Caring Adult • An Inclusive Environment • A Safe Emotional and Physical Environment
<p><i>I pledge my hands to larger service...</i></p> <p>GENEROSITY</p> <p>Gaining Caring & Character</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Opportunity to Value and Practice Service to Others
<p><i>I pledge my hands to larger service...</i></p> <p>MASTERY</p> <p>Gaining Competence</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Opportunity for Mastery • Engagement in Learning

Youth-Adult Partnerships

The 4-H Junior Leader program is an opportunity for youth and adults to work together in a positive relationship as youth navigate their leadership journey. Youth-adult partnerships (YAPs) are:

- Youth and adults working together in a positive, mutually respectful environment with the recognition that each group contributes unique strengths to the relationship.
- A process that takes place over time, with small successes leading to big changes.
- Collaboration – it can be hard, but is worth the intentional effort to come together.

Youth-adult partnerships (YAPs) take intention and time to build, because they push the boundaries of how the two groups traditionally interact. Junior Leader programming should fall



along the right half of the continuum, between YAPs and Youth-Centered Leadership on the Continuum of Youth-Adult Relationships (Jones, 2004).

- **Adult-Centered Leadership-** consists of programs that are conceived and driven completely by adults, without employing any youth decision-making.
- **Adult-Led Collaboration-** includes programs or situations where adults provide guidance for youth, but the youth have some input in decision making, albeit limited by adults' discretion.
- **Youth-Adult Partnership-** located centrally on the continuum. This is a point of balance where a partnership is achieved between youth and adults. Youth and adult participants have equal chances in utilizing skills, decision-making, mutual learning, and independently carrying out tasks to reach common goals.
- **Youth-Led Collaborations-** programs or projects where youth primarily develop the ideas and make decisions while adults typically provide needed assistance.
- **Youth-Centered Leadership-** includes programs or activities led exclusively by youth, with little or no adult involvement (Jones & Perkins, 2005)

Experiential Learning in Positive Youth Development

Through supportive 4-H Junior Leader Advisors, the 4-H Junior Leader program will help youth discover what they are learning as part of their experiences and to pursue deeper understanding to apply what was learned in other life situations. 4-H Youth Development programs promote life skill development through use of a five-step Experiential Learning Model (Gleason, 2013).

Experiential learning can occur when youth are involved in a project or activity in which they:

- look back at their experience critically
- determine what was useful or important to remember
- apply this new information in real life situations
- are encouraged to think, work harder and ultimately learn more thoroughly than is possible through just showing or telling.

4-H Junior Leader Advisors can facilitate such learning through the Experiential Learning Model by:

- setting aside enough time for reflecting on the experience
- asking the right questions
- planning developmentally-appropriate experiences that lead to reflection
- listening carefully
- supporting each youth's unique learning style



1. EXPERIENCE—The hands-on action step.

Youth do their project/activity before they are shown or told how to do it. Remember, it is important adults do not rob youth of their discoveries. Youth must experiment with new ideas, interests, projects, etc., first-hand.

The following ideas for questions can help Junior Leader Advisors incorporate the whole experiential learning process into a project/activity.

2. SHARE—Describe what was done.

Promote discussion by asking the following:

- What kinds of hopes and dreams did you have for your 4-H experience this year?
- What did you do? Where did you go? What was your goal for this project/activity when you began?
- What did you do to plan your project/activity? Tell me about your most/least favorite things about working on your project/activity.
- What did you learn while doing this project/activity? How did you feel? What was easiest? What surprised you?
- What did you learn about yourself? How did you share your project/activity with others?



3. PROCESS—Identify common themes and discover what was most important (the life skill) about the project, activity, or service opportunity.

Use the following process questions:

- What did you learn about yourself by doing this project/activity? How did others help you?
- How did you make your decisions? What steps did you take?
- What did you learn about making decisions?
- What made this a good project/activity?
- What were some of the common themes or thoughts you had?
- What problems came up over and over? How did you handle them?
- What would you do if _____?
- What was the most challenging part of your project/activity? Why? How did you solve it? What did you learn from this project/activity that you didn't know before?
- What suggestions would you have for someone else who wanted to do a similar project or activity?
- Why does it matter (to you or anyone else) that you did this project/activity?
- What life skill(s) were you developing through your project? Why is the life skill important?
- What did you learn through sharing with others?
- What new questions do you have about yourself and others?

4. GENERALIZE—So what?

Identify how to use what's been learned in real life. These questions transition the experience or "product" itself to the skill being practiced in real life. They explore the nature of the life skill and help participants reflect on how the life skill has been developed through their experiences.

Generalizing sets the stage for applying the life skill in new situations.

- What key points have you learned?
- Have you had similar experiences related to this project/activity?
- Where have you faced similar challenges in your life?
- How is this life skill important to you?
- Where might this situation occur in the future?
- Discuss another time when you had fun and learned new things at the same time.
- Why is it important to have plenty of information before making decisions?
- Describe what you learned about your decision-making skills?
- What did you learn about your own skill in communicating with others?
- How would you describe your skills regarding _____?
- What advice would you give to someone who wants to learn about this life skill?

5. APPLY—What's next?

The experiential learning process has been building toward these questions. Adults can help youth show that they have gained knowledge and practiced the life skills learned rather than solely focusing on the subject matter.

- How do you think the project/activity relates to your everyday life?
- Why was this project/activity important to you?
- What have you learned about yourself? Others?
- Are there principles or guidelines you can use in real-life situations?
- What similar situations have you experienced?
- How can you use these skills in different situations?
- In what ways do people help each other learn new things?
- How will you act differently as a result of this experience?
- List some ways you can learn new things.
- What are qualities that you think are important in a leader?
- If someone helped or mentored you in this project, what would you tell him/her you learned and what difference it has made in your life? How would you express your appreciation?

Targeting Youth Life Skills

The Targeting Youth Life Skills Model (Hendricks, 1996) identifies and divides the major life skills targeted by 4-H positive youth development by the four H's from the 4-H clover: Head, Heart, Hands, and Health. These four are further divided into categories of life skills and then into specific general skills. Life skills are defined in the Targeting Life Skills Model as "Skills that help an individual to be successful in living a productive and satisfying life."

As 4-H Junior Leader Advisors capitalize on the youth's interest in exploring 4-H, their challenge is to provide age-appropriate skills until they are learned and able to be used every day. By using the Experiential Learning Model and Targeting Life Skills Model to help youth fully internalize both the exploring 4-H content and life skill practiced, they gain the ability to apply both types of skills appropriately. The Targeting Life Skills Model is a guide for planning activities to ensure 4-H Junior Leaders are gaining life skills and to help adults see the interrelatedness of activities and learning (Nebraska 4-H, 2005).

Example:

A guest speaker teaches 4-H Junior Leaders about resume-building, interviewing, and how to apply for a job. The **project area** is Career Development, the **life skills** learned are under the **HANDS: Working** and **HEAD: Managing** categories as **marketable skills, planning/organizing, keeping records, and goal setting.**



STRUCTURE

Club Organization

Traditionally, the 4-H Junior Leader program has operated following a club structure with an officer team making joint decisions with an adult advisor. This structure helps facilitate youth/adult partnerships, and gives additional leadership opportunities. As is typical of business meetings, 4-H Junior Leaders should be familiar with basic parliamentary procedure for decision-making and how to properly record meeting information.

4-H Junior Leader groups commonly have their own financial accounts, with financial oversight from the 4-H Educator or an Adult Volunteer Advisor. This allows teen leaders to safely learn fiscal management. 4-H Junior Leader groups must abide by the same financial policies and procedures as other 4-H entities in submitting annual financial reports. If the 4-H Junior Leader group is organized as a separate 4-H Club, they will have a unique Employer Identification Number (EIN) from the IRS and will annually file a tax return.

Commonly, 4-H Junior Leaders are encouraged to join a local 4-H club, in addition to Junior Leaders, so they can demonstrate their leadership skills; however, changing program expectations and structures may allow teens the opportunity to work in other leadership roles



without requiring participation in a community club (at the discretion of the County 4-H Educator and decision-making board).

Other potential leadership roles include: Teens as Teachers, 4-H Expansion and Review Committee, project committees/leaders, Global Gateway Experience, 4-H Council/Fair Board representatives, etc.

Recommended Timeline for the Year

4-H Junior Leaders should meet regularly/monthly and year-round:

- Summer | Elect officers; plan program for coming year
- Fall | Team building activities; ambassadorship/4-H promotion
- Winter | Service Learning; mentorship--help welcome new families
- Spring | Working groups (planning summer educational/fair activities)
 - Assist with activities such as Mini 4-H, Ag Days, Concession Stand, etc.

Project Guidelines

Learning and leadership can take place without creating an exhibit for the fair, but it is a good idea to plan a culminating activity of some kind for the year, or a way for youth to document their growth in 4-H Junior Leaders.

Suggestions include:

- Completion of a manual
- Leadership portfolio including resume
- Culminating exhibit/fair entry
- Record sheet

Some counties connect participation in 4-H Junior Leaders to a points system that allows teens to earn various distinctions for their leadership. This is not a requirement of the 4-H Junior Leader program. Seek input from your county decision-making board and current teen leaders in continuing or developing such a system. Note that 4-H Junior Leaders are intended to promote personal growth, not competition.

ADULT ADVISORS

Characteristics of Junior Leader Adult Advisors

- Advisors should believe in youth voices
- Advisors should serve as positive role models and mentors
- Advisors must be caring and passionate about the mission
- Advisors provide help to key youth leaders
- Advisors do not need to have all the answers, but can help youth find the answers

Roles of Adult Advisors

All Advisors who are 4-H Volunteers will complete the volunteer screening process, annual re-enrollment, and “Programs Involving Minors Safety Training” as directed by the Purdue 4-H Youth Development Extension Educator. A ratio of 1 adult to every 10 youth is ideal for Positive Youth Development Programs. At least two approved adults (Extension Staff and/or 4-H Volunteers) should be present before the first youth arrives and after the last youth leaves.

Roles that Adult Advisors can fill:

- Facilitator: help the group focus/get attention and provide structure
- Help youth manage finances and think about cost of activities
- Help delegate responsibilities
- Recruit new 4-H Junior Leader members
- Provide training in career preparation
- Let youth fail in a safe environment (sense of belonging)
- Work as a Volunteer/Educator team toward a youth-driven program

[See a template of a 4-H Junior Leader Advisor Role Description.](#)

4-H JUNIOR LEADER OFFICERS

Considerations for Youth Officers/Committee Leaders

- Representatives from each school in your county
- Multiple people in each office to share leadership and ensure coverage
- Officers should work with adult advisors to plan the next program year prior to program kick-off
- When considering officer positions, note how the role relates to leadership and the relevancy of the officer position
- A club officer agreement including the role description and expectations should be sent prior to election and discussed during that process. Some considerations might include:
 - Minimum attendance
 - Coverage of responsibilities
 - Maintain active communication with other officers and advisors

Suggested 4-H Junior Leader Offices

[\(A Role Description is provided for each of the offices listed.\)](#)

- President
- Vice President

Note: Multiple VPs can be selected to lead different committees

- Secretary
- Treasurer
- Service Learning
- Technology/Social Media
- Team Building
- Parliamentarian
- Food Stand
- Mini 4-H
- Board Representative
- TEMPLATE

Suggested 4-H Junior Leader Committees

- Service Learning
- 4-H Mission Areas: Science, Healthy Living, Civic Engagement/Leadership
- Fundraising
- Mentorship—provides personal contact to new 4-H members and/or new 4-H Junior Leaders
- Ambassadors—prepares for public speaking events at schools and community events.

Officer Elections

4-H Junior Leader groups should strive to elect officers in the summer (May—August) so they are in place before graduating members leave the 4-H program. This also allows officers to conduct planning prior to the beginning of the program year on October 1.

- Must meet prior year completion criteria to be eligible for officer position
- Private ballot voting is encouraged with teen audience
- There are a few options to consider for the election process:
 - Candidates give a speech--Video presentation if they can't attend election meeting. Set up an opportunity for peers to submit questions during or after the speech.
 - Interview-based, conducted by adults and peers.
 - Individual officer positions can be elected, or a slate of individuals designated to serve in roles can be recommended by the 4-H Council, 4-H Youth Educator, and/or 4-H Junior Leader advisors and voted on by entire membership.

Officer Planning and Communication

- Officer retreat to plan the program year in August/September
- Teams/committees of non-officer 4-H Jr. Leaders sign up to facilitate different meetings and service learning events during the year. These teams/committees are chaired by a 4-H Junior Leader Officer.



- Monthly Officer planning meetings
 - Meet via webinar/conference call or in person at least a week in advance of whole group
- Tools for communication:
 - E-mail | When sending e-mail communication, it is best to include the family and member's personal address. This allows the members to be accountable for their own information, but helps ensure delivery (many student e-mail accounts block outside senders). Group e-mails and simultaneous text message reminders can be sent through 4-HOnline if members enable those settings.
 - Text groups | Programs such as Remind 101 can allow adult volunteers (who may not have access to 4-HOnline) to share messages with all youth without sharing personal contact information. Parents can also subscribe to these platforms to stay up-to-date on program communication.
 - Social media | Social media accounts should never be administrated by youth alone, although they may be primarily creating and posting content. Establish a system that allows for adult monitoring of all social media communication.
 - Video Conferencing | Programs such as Zoom, WebEx, GoogleMeet, etc. allow groups to convene electronically, but do pose a cyber-security risk. When establishing meetings through these systems, it is best if you adjust settings so participants are required to use a password and enter without video. When sharing links and passwords for video conferencing, do so through private message, not on social media or websites. Finally, make sure that when the meeting is over, the adult facilitator closes the meeting and does not allow youth to remain on the platform unsupervised. Other platform specific security measures can be established and adult facilitators should be aware of concerns and safeguards for their platform of choice before hosting video conferences.

PROGRAM ACTIVITIES

4-H Junior Leader program activities should engage youth while intentionally connecting them to leadership development. Several resources are available on the [4-H Junior Leader webpage](#).

It is also important that your 4-H Junior Leaders have input regarding program activities. Consider providing them with the [lesson planning template](#) and guiding them through the desired program components while they decide the content. These could be completed annually and held for the next year's program planning.

Ideally, activities can be planned in late summer or early fall for the upcoming program year. This allows members to arrange their schedules to seek out the events that most appeal to their leadership development style and interests.

Suggestions

- Meet at different places with a focus on career paths, civic engagement, or service
- Guest speakers based on club input
- [4-H Junior Leader Resource webpage](#)

SUGGESTED CURRICULUM

A number of resources designed for 4-H Junior Leaders have been developed. Indiana's 4-H Junior Leader resources are located on the [4-H Junior Leader Project webpage](#).

Resources are also available from other 4-H sites:

- [Step Up to Leadership](#), Cooperative Curriculum System
- [Teen Corps, Developing Youth & Adult Leaders to Strengthen Communities](#), University of Maryland
- [Teen Leadership 20](#), Ohio State University Extension
- [We Connect, A Global Youth Citizenship Curriculum](#), University of Minnesota Extension
- [WorkReady](#), Purdue Extension

SERVICE LEARNING

Service Learning vs. Volunteerism

It is the intent of the 4-H Junior Leader program to teach civic engagement and leadership through service-learning. These types of projects include the youth in planning, carrying out, and evaluating volunteer efforts. Whereas traditional volunteerism may have had youth working for a good cause, they often have not been involved in the planning of the activity or truly knowledgeable of the mission they were seeking to fulfill.

A typical service-learning event would include multiple steps:

- Educate the youth members about the need(s) they can help serve
- Involve 4-H Junior Leaders in planning how to address those needs
- Allow 4-H Junior Leaders to lead the implementation efforts, not just follow the directive of the adult facilitator
- Follow-up the activity with a time to reflect on the what the youth learned, the impact they realized, and changes they would like to make in the future

Suggestions

- Nursing Homes/Senior care facilities activities (carve pumpkins, decorate doors, play games with residents, food delivery, etc.)
- Food Drive/Food Pantry
- Container gardening with produce grown being donated
- Trick or Treat for Canned Goods
- Angel Tree
- Tie – Blankets
- Pillow Cases



- Treats for Farmers (other public service members)
- River Sweep
- Community Dinner
- Rake & Run
- Performing Arts
- Thank you notes for 4-H Volunteers
- Birthday Bags

LEADERSHIP OPPORTUNITIES

Contact your 4-H Extension Educator for more information on helping youth participate in these events.

- Representatives to different boards (4-H Councils, Fair Boards, etc.)
- Mini 4-H Activity Days, camps, workshops, etc.
- Teens as Teachers
- Food Stands
- Jr. Leader Retreats
- Exchange Trips
- Lock-in with another county
- Committee work
- Going into schools and sharing their experiences in 4-H Jr. Leaders
- TV/radio/newspaper interviews at local media outlets
- 4-H Academy @ Purdue
- State 4-H Junior Leader Conference
- 4-H Round-Up
- Indiana 4-H Leadership Summit
- Global Gateway Experience



PROGRAM PROMOTION/RECRUITMENT

4-H Junior Leader promotional materials can/will be included in state 4-H promotional material order. If creating your own promotional material/content for 4-H Junior Leaders, send to Jenny Clark (jenny@purdue.edu) for review prior to purchase.

Approved Logos



Suggested Social Media Captions

Hey #Indiana4H 7th-12th graders! Contact [Junior Leader adult mentor name/county Extension Office] at [contact information] to take part in Junior Leaders - a leadership experience unlike any other! #InspireKidstoDo

#InspireKidstoDo by becoming a/an [county name] County 4-H Junior Leader! Contact [Junior Leader adult mentor name/county Extension Office] at [contact information] to connect with new friends, serve your community, and develop your leadership skills! Learn more at [Jr. Leader web page URL] #4HGrowsHere

Do you know a teen leader who would be a great mentor to others in their community? #Indiana4H Junior Leaders is an opportunity for youth in grades 7-12 to develop their leadership skills, mentor others, make new friends, and more! Contact [Junior Leader adult mentor name/county Extension Office] at [contact information] to learn more! #InspireKidstoDo #4HGrowsHere

Calling all #Indiana4H teen leaders! Join Indiana 4-H Junior Leaders and #InspireKidstoDo in your community. Learn more at [Jr. Leader web page URL] or contact [Junior Leader adult mentor name/county Extension Office] at [contact information! #4HGrowsHere



Are you #4HGrown? Help inspire others in your community by becoming an #Indiana4H Junior Leader. Learn more at [Jr. Leader web page URL] or contact [Junior Leader adult mentor name/county Extension Office] at [contact information]! #4HGrowsHere

It's time to step up and lead! #Indiana4H Junior Leaders is an opportunity for youth in grades 7-12 to develop their leadership skills, mentor others, make new friends, and more! Contact [Junior Leader adult mentor name/county Extension Office] at [contact information] to learn more! #InspireKidstoDo #4HGrowsHere

In #Indiana4H Junior Leaders, youth in grades 7-12 dive deep into leadership, service, community, and personal development. Learn more at [Jr. Leader web page URL] or contact [Junior Leader adult mentor name/county Extension Office] at [contact information]! #4HGrowsHere

PROGRAM EVALUATION

One of the benefits of having a comprehensive guide for 4-H Junior Leader programming across the state is we can show state-wide impact of our work with teens. Standard evaluation tools for prescribed curriculum may be available, or developed as standard activities are adopted, but we can already use the Common Measures tool to share the impact of 4-H Junior Leader programming.

Common Measures resources can be accessed at the Extension Hub, Evaluation Tab, “Extension Metrics/Digital Measures.” Scroll part way through the page content to find [“4-H Youth Development \(Common Measures\)”](#) in gold font. You can read more about how to administer and report these assessments at this site. Printable and online versions of these assessments are linked to the site. Common Measures assessments should be administered and recorded by the 4-H Educator, not a volunteer advisor.

Depending on the topics discussed with teens, the most applicable Common Measures tools for 4-H Junior Leaders are as follows:

- 4-H Experience
- Universal
- Citizenship
- College and Career Readiness

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