

Proficiency 5

Service Learning Project

Introduction: Applying learning to real-world situations is a vital component of the learning cycle. Service learning projects are powerful tools that encourage learning and community involvement. In this Proficiency, youth will develop and carry out a service learning project focused on **bio-security risk mitigation at a public venue**, such as a shared barn space, fair, exposition, or show. The goal of this project is for youth to identify a need or issue that they can address by working as a group and in partnership with adults from the community. The time required to complete this Proficiency will vary depending on the projects that youth choose. At least two project meetings are required: one for steps 1-5 and a follow-up meeting for post-project reflection (step 7).

Procedure:

Youth should form small groups (3-6 individuals are suggested). Working collaboratively, youth should accomplish the following:

1. **Research and Brainstorming:** Each group should make a list of the topics in which they have interest. These topics should focus on bio-security risks they have noticed in their experience with public venues where animals are housed or shown. Suggested topics include:
 - a. Lack of availability or use of hand-washing stations.
 - b. Sharing of tools between youth without proper cleaning or sanitation.
 - c. Cleanliness of scales or other common equipment.
 - d. Disease transmission risks due to animal housing or show procedures.
 - e. Cleanliness of wash racks.
2. **Choose the Topic:** Each group should select one topic from the list they have developed.
3. **Develop the Project:** Youth should work together to gather information necessary to answer the following questions.
 - a. What will be the location of the project?
 - b. What are the different ways that a solution to the issue(s) could be achieved?

***Tip:** Discuss the different categories of projects youth could carry out:

 - i. Direct Action: Putting a solution directly into effect.
 - ii. Education: Teaching others how to make a difference.
 - iii. Advocacy: Working with decision-makers to change rules or policy.
 - c. Who will be the adult partners in this project? Develop a plan to engage each necessary partner in the process.
 - i. Parents
 - ii. 4-H Volunteers
 - iii. Fair Directors
 - iv. Barn Supervisors

4. **Plan the Project:** Youth should work together to write out a project plan that addresses each of the following:
 - a. What materials will be needed?
 - i. Where will these materials be sourced? What financial resources are necessary?
 - b. What are the tasks required to complete the project?
 - c. What is the timeline to complete the project?
 - d. Who will be responsible for completing each task by the agreed upon deadlines?
5. **Sharing Plans:** Each team should share their plans with the full group. Youth should provide feedback to each other and revise their project plans accordingly.
6. **Carrying out Plans:** Groups will follow the procedure they developed in order to implement their service learning project. During their experience, they should keep a record of their progress and any challenges they encounter. Youth should document their progress with notes, photos, and/or videos at each step along the way.
7. **Reflect on the Project:** After completing their plan, the youth should discuss their experience with the full group. 4-H volunteers should facilitate a group discussion, addressing the following topics:
 - a. What were the successes and challenges of your project?
 - b. What improvements would you make if you were to repeat this project?
 - c. How do you believe that your project had an impact on your community?
 - d. What additional steps could be taken by your group to continue making a positive difference?

Additional Resources

Service Learning. 4-H Youth Development Program, University of California, Agriculture and Natural Resources. Retrieved from: <http://4h.ucanr.edu/Programs/Projects/Citizenship/ServiceLearning/>

Smith, A. (1997). Beyond 4-H community service... To community service learning. USDA CSREES: Washington D. C.

What is Service Learning? Iowa State University Extension and Outreach, 4-H Youth Development Program. Retrieved from: <http://www.extension.iastate.edu/4h/page/service-learning>