



University of California 4-H Youth Development Program

4-H Strategic Plan 2023-2028



4-H Vision

A world in which youth and adults learn, grow, and work together as catalysts for positive change.

4-H Mission

The University of California (UC) 4-H Youth Development Program (YDP) engages youth in reaching their fullest potential while advancing the field of youth development.

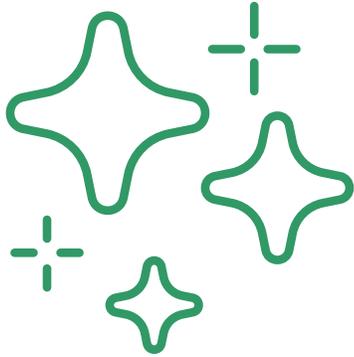
UC 4-H provides meaningful opportunities for all youth and adults to work together to create sustainable community change.

UC 4-H engages young people in three primary content areas: civic engagement and leadership, healthy living, and science, technology, engineering, and mathematics.



Introduction

The previous 4-H Strategic Plan 2018-2028, released in September 2018, was developed over 20 months with multiple opportunities for stakeholder input, situational analyses, and a broad strategic planning committee. The plan focused on four key areas: (1) strengthening access, equity, and participation; (2) increasing opportunities for meaningful youth engagement; (3) improving organizational infrastructure; and (4) advancing youth development research and extension. While recognizing the plan was a “living document” and that revisions may be needed due to environment, funding, and/or priorities changes, no annual reviews or revisions took place until November 2022. Since the plan’s release in 2018, there has been a global pandemic forcing a transition to remote and virtual programming, a new California 4-H staff funding formula, and a new state and regional 4-H program coordinator staffing model. These conditions supported the need to refine our 4-H Strategic Plan.



Sparks (Developmental Context)



Revision Process

In November 2022, a team selected a subset of high priority and high leverage actions from the 2018 strategic plan in which to focus for the next five years (2023-2028). The team also took into consideration best practices in organizational strategic planning, as well as attending to new environmental and organizational realities.

The team included: Zeva Cho, 4-H Statewide Program Manager; Claudia Diaz Carrasco, 4-H Youth Development Advisor & Chair, Positive Youth Development Program Team; JoLynn Miller, 4-H Youth Development Advisor and Multi-County Director; Gemma Miner, Academic Coordinator for Volunteer Engagement; Susan Weaver, 4-H Regional Coordinator; Steven Worker, Interim Assistant 4-H Youth Development Program Leader for UC 4-H Strategic Plan.

Revision Guiding Principles

In revising the strategic plan, the team was guided by the following principles, identified in organizational development literature.

- **Simplify:** Prioritize and focus on fewer actions that are the highest potential leverage over 5 years to improve program quality, educator preparation, and likely to realize positive youth development outcomes.
- **Stakeholder Identity:** Ensure that staff, academics, volunteers, and youth see themselves in the plan.
- **Workload and Capacity:** Address employee capacity - give “permission” to sunset programmatic activities to focus on strategic plan actions.
- **Accountability:** Themes have designated owners (champions) as well as linkages to UC ANR Workgroups, 4-H Advisory Committees, and other groups. The champion role is to help coordinate, manage, and steward the actions mostly accomplished by teams, CE Advisors, and 4-H professionals. Additionally, each theme has specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, and time-bound metrics identified from: (1) University of California 4-H Strategic Plan 2018-2028, (2) 4-H Staffing Plan Performance Criteria, (3) ANR Goals, and (4) relevant literature.

4-H Niche in the Field of Positive Youth Development

4-H is connected to the land-grant university, bridging research to address local needs.



Belonging
(Developmental Context)

“Our unique role in youth development is that our programs are based on scientifically valid research. ... Unique strength to construct a continuum of discovery, program implementation, evaluation, and study that leads to new knowledge and an informed field.”
4-H Mission and Direction Report (2003)

What does the strategic plan mean for 4-H academic, professional, or administrative/support staff?

The plan provides both goalposts and a map (actions) to help us together grow, strengthen, and build California 4-H – and its fifty-eight county programs – as a high quality and equitable youth development program. Specifically, each theme has actions (tasks, projects, or efforts) specific to groups (academic or professionals) that will advance towards that theme’s goals over the next five years.

The 4-H Strategic Plan outlines actions for 4-H professionals to prioritize their work. We understand there are essential functions required in every position to keep 4-H operating; this constraint will require all of us to be intentional about how we allocate our time. Please engage in conversations with your supervisor(s), Regional Program Coordinators, and 4-H volunteers and members about pausing, sunseting, merging, offloading, or disbanding programmatic activities that are not aligned with the themes and pillars.

Equitable Youth Development

Together, we must strive to provide high quality, and equitable youth development experiences for all of California’s young people. The spaces we create with and for young people must be inclusive, welcoming, and accessible, particularly for youth who identify with populations experiencing marginalization. We must be intentional in protecting and lifting up our most vulnerable youth and communities. As youth development professionals, we strive to prepare our youth to participate vigorously in civic discourse, to organize, to fight to be heard, to be safe, and to be free.





Relationships
(Developmental Context)



4-H Vision Statement

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4-H Mission

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UC 4-H provides meaningful opportunities for all youth and adults to work together to create sustainable community change.

UC 4-H engages young people in three primary content areas: civic engagement and leadership, healthy living, and science, technology, engineering, and mathematics.

4-H Core Values

- California 4-H supports UC ANR mission and strategic initiatives, public values, and clientele needs.
- California 4-H recognizes that professionals provide the youth development framework and program priorities for volunteer educators and other extenders who bring knowledge, experience, and passion to work with youth.
- California 4-H appreciates, respects, and values diversity through a commitment to inclusion of diverse Californians.
- California 4-H professionals respond to local needs within a statewide positive youth development framework.
- California 4-H innovates to maximize impact and resources while documenting unique youth development contributions.

Themes and Pillars

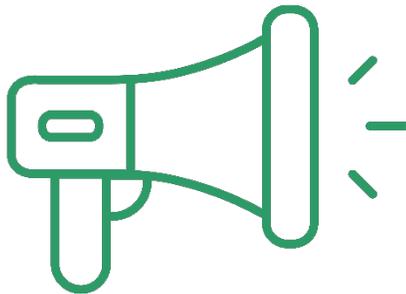
The UC 4-H Strategic Plan focuses on three interconnected themes to advance UC 4-H towards high quality, equitable youth development programming and applied research over the next five years.

Themes: Every theme, with identified champions and teams, specifies goals → actions → metrics.

Pillars: Pillars cross and support themes.

Strategic Plan Lead: Steven Worker, Interim Assistant 4-H Youth Development Program Leader





Youth Voice
(Developmental Context)

THEME #1: Strengthen access, equity, and belonging in 4-H programs.

Champions

- Kaitlyn Murray, 4-H Access, Equity, and Belonging Academic Coordinator
- Liliana Vega, 4-H Youth Development Advisor

Teams

- Diversity in Youth Development Workgroup
- Justice, Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion 4-H Advisory Committee

Related 4-H Advisor Subject Matter Area: Ethnic & Racial Identity Development

Vision: All California youth have access and opportunities to be engaged in high-quality 4-H youth development programs.

Goals

1. California 4-H is an inclusive program for participating 4-H youth and adult volunteers.
2. There is parity in ethnic and racial membership in 4-H programs.
3. All counties offer multiple 4-H program models responsive to local youth needs and interests.
4. California 4-H promotes efforts to develop, implement, evaluate, and disseminate new program models shown to engage diverse youth.

Actions

Champions

- Coordinate the statewide implementation of the Youth Organizational Equity Assessment (YOEI).
- Conduct equity audits for existing policies, practices, organizational infrastructure for systemic racism and recommend changes to create more inclusive organizational environments.





Youth Engagement
(Developmental Context)

- Develop 4-H equity guidelines that establishes shared language to guide program outreach, program development, and evaluation.
- Lead efforts for sustained professional development for 4-H professionals on inclusiveness, intercultural competence, and adapting program models for cultural relevance.

Academics

- Develop a plan-of-action to address statewide needs in response to the Youth Organizational Equity Assessment (YOEAs) findings.
- Develop, implement, and evaluate culturally responsive youth development program models and practices.
- Develop additional educational resources for 4-H professionals, volunteer educators, and partner organizations to help prepare them to engage with diverse youth and communities.
- Extend knowledge and information about program models and frameworks that support the engagement of diverse youth.

Professionals: Community Educators & Regional Coordinators

- Participate in professional development to strengthen competence in culturally responsive youth development practices.
- Provide sustained professional development to volunteer educators to ensure equity principles are embraced and implemented throughout all programs.
- Partner with after-school programs and in-school programs in geographic areas less/not served by 4-H and implement 4-H programs (using 4-H delivery modes appropriate to the youth).
- Adopt and implement successful 4-H program models to offer a breadth of programming to young people.

Metrics



Metric	Data
(Goal 1) DEI integration into ANR workgroup and 4-H advisory committee efforts	YOEAs Results
(Goal 1) Equity Audit Report is complete with indications of policies changed to meet the needs of diverse youth.	State Office Report
(Goal 1) Annually, number of professional development opportunities offered to professionals, volunteers, and partners that include, mention, or recognize DEI principles	ANR Project Board

Metric	Data
(Goal 2) Parity in ethnic and racial membership.	4-H Enrollment
(Goal 3) All counties offer 4-H youth programming with at least four delivery modes (50% of counties by 2024)	4-H Enrollment Reports and ANR Project Board
(Goal 4) New program models developed, piloted, and evaluated; ready for dissemination and replication; included in the California 4-H Policy Handbook.	ANR Project Board and California 4-H Policy Handbook
(Goal 4) Annually, number of publications (fact sheets, curriculum, manuscripts) that include information relevant to access, equity, and belonging.	ANR Project Board





Positive Academic Attitude
(Developmental Outcome)

THEME #2: Increase opportunities for meaningful youth engagement in high quality 4-H programs aligned with the 4-H Thriving Model of Positive Youth Development.

Champions

- Gemma Miner, Academic Coordinator for Volunteer Engagement
- Matthew Rodriguez, 4-H Youth Development Advisor
- Ana Torres, 4-H Regional Program Coordinator (Region 9)
- Susan Weaver, 4-H Regional Program Coordinator (Region 7)

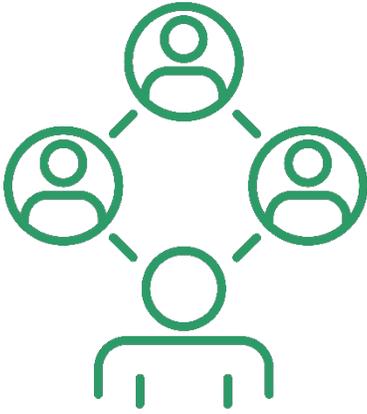
Teams

- Thriving Youth Workgroup
- Developing Volunteer Capacities Workgroup
- Expanded Learning Workgroup
- Career/College Readiness & Workforce Development Workgroup
- 4-H Advisory Committees (Animal Science, Camping, Civic Engagement, Clothing and Textiles, Healthy Living, Incentives and Recognition, Public Speaking and Communications, STEM, Shooting Sports, and Volunteer Development)

Related 4-H Advisor Subject Matter Areas: Agricultural Science; Camping, Outdoor Education, and Natural Resources; Civic Engagement and Leadership; College and Career Readiness; Community Engagement and Development; Ethnic & Racial Identity Development; Healthy Living; STEM, Volunteer Engagement and Development

Vision: Youth are engaged in high quality 4-H programs, based on the 4-H Thriving Model of Positive Youth Development, which are culturally, environmentally, and developmentally relevant.





Social Competence
(Developmental Outcome)



Goals

1. All counties expand programming relevant for teenagers, with an emphasis on college and career readiness.
2. All counties grow programming focusing on STEM, healthy living, civic engagement, and leadership learning experiences.
3. Adult volunteer educators have the knowledge and skills to facilitate youth development and experiential learning that are grounded in the 4-H Thriving Model of PYD and culturally relevant practices.

Actions

Champions

- Become California's 4-H Thrive Champion, learning the 4-H Thriving model, and coordinating the statewide roll-out.
- Charter a new Positive Youth Development Workgroup to coordinate academic actions.
- Convene the Developing Volunteer Capacities Workgroup; emphasize development of web-based volunteer educator development/certification system.

Academics

- Design, test, and evaluate new program models informed by evidence-based positive youth development research.
- Adapt existing program models to align with the 4-H Thriving Model of Positive Youth Development.
- Develop a rubric and system for developing, updating, and evaluating curriculum based on approved guidelines.
- Identify and develop curriculum for use by 4-H professionals and 4-H adult volunteer educators in STEM, health, civic engagement, and leadership.
- Develop, implement, evaluate, and share culturally relevant, equitable youth development volunteer recruitment and engagement strategies.
- Measure youth development outcomes using the 4-H Thrive common measures.
- Revise all programmatic, policy and web-based collateral to align with the 4-H Thriving Model of Positive Youth Development.

Professionals: Community Educators & Regional Coordinators

- Expand (replicate and scale-up) college and career readiness programming using STEM, healthy living, or civic engagement and leadership curriculum.
- Implement culturally relevant, equitable volunteer recruitment and engagement strategies.
- Provide sustained professional development to 4-H adult volunteer educators to improve capabilities in delivering high-quality positive youth development programs based on content from the *Volunteer Educators' Guide (2023)*, including youth development practices from the 4-H Thriving Model of PYD; teaching practices (pedagogy), including experiential learning and inquiry-based learning; and intercultural competence, inclusiveness, and program expansion; and engaging with diverse youth and communities.



**Personal Standards
(Developmental Outcome)**

Metrics



Metric	Data
(Vision) 4-H youth experience positive outcomes	Thrive common measures
(Vision) 4-H program models include intentional alignment with the 4-H Thriving Model of PYD.	ANR Project Board; ANR/National 4-H Curricula Publications
(Goal 1) All counties offer a college/career readiness program for teenagers.	4-H Enrollment
(Goal 1) 4-H teen membership has increased 30% in every county by 2028 (from 2018 baseline); being in parity with the local youth population.	4-H Enrollment
(Goal 2) All counties offer STEM, healthy living, civic engagement, and leadership (projects) learning experiences.	4-H Enrollment
(Goal 3) California 4-H recruits 10% more 4-H adult volunteer educators annually; being in parity with the local adult population; 4-H provides sustained professional development.	4-H Enrollment

THEME #3: Advance youth development research to advance strategic plan goals.



**Connection with
Others**
(Developmental Outcome)



Champions

- Kali Trzesniewski, Associate Director of Research - 4-H Youth Development
- Roshan Nayak, 4-H Evaluation Coordinator

Teams

- 4-H/YFC Advisors and Academic Coordinators
- Ongoing grant and multi-state research projects (e.g., long-term PYD outcomes study, public speaking self-efficacy study, youth retention study, social capital study, Gen Z volunteerism study)

Goals

1. All 4-H professionals, volunteer educators, and county 4-H youth development programs are connected to, and benefit from, academic expertise and research results needed to advance theme goals.
2. Connections between university resources and 4-H academics are coordinated, connected, and directed towards high priority youth development issues.

Actions

Champions

- Identify gaps in the research needed to advance theme 1 and 2 goals in collaboration with Theme 1 & 2 champions.
- Develop processes for creating and supporting applied research project groups to initiative (or continue) applied research projects.
- Create materials and trainings to support research and evaluation projects.

Academics

- Initiate (or continue) applied research projects that will generate scientific evidence to advance theme goals.
- Identify venues to dissemination research results that progress theme goals.
- Adapt/adopt 4-H common measure instruments and use locally to assess program quality and youth development and content learning outcomes.

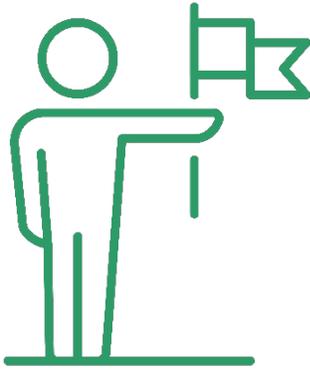
Metrics

Metric	Data
(Goal 1) Set of research questions critical to advancing theme goals; identified and with active applied research projects.	ANR Project Board
(Goal 2) Theory of change and/or logic model for each applied research project	ANR Project Board



Pillars

Cutting across and supporting the themes.



**Personal
Responsibility**
(Developmental Outcome)

PILLAR #1 Grow financial sustainability.

Champion: Carolyn Warne, Foundation Director, California 4-H Foundation

Teams: UC ANR Office of Government and Community relations

Goals

- Sufficient funding is available to sustain and grow 4-H.

Actions - Champion

- Connect with the 4-H Regional Program Coordinator network to help identify cross-county programs and fundraising priorities.
- Provide consultation, coaching, and advice for local fundraising efforts.
- Provide education and build awareness of fundraising strategies.

PILLAR #2 Improve organizational communication and foster 4-H brand awareness.

Champion: Suzanne Morikawa, Marketing & Communications Specialist

Teams: 4-H Branding Task Force

Goals

- Californian's are aware of 4-H youth development, its connection to UC, and the public value 4-H youth members contribute to California.
- All 4-H participants have access to timely information, are informed, and aware of 4-H opportunities locally and statewide (communication channels are effective).

Actions - Team

- Implement a branding strategy to increase recognition of 4-H's connection to UC.
- Improve communication across the organization within and across all levels (e.g., club, county, and state).





Contribution
(Developmental Outcome)

PILLAR #3 Reimagine volunteer management to bolster organizational infrastructure.

Champions

- Gemma Miner, Academic Coordinator for Volunteer Engagement
- JoLynn Miller, 4-H Youth Development Advisor

Teams: Reimagining VMO Task Force

Goal: Reframe California 4-H volunteer engagement system, based on organizational and staff capacity, programmatic priorities, and scientific evidence on volunteerism in youth programming with an equity lens. The benefit of this effort will help 4-H professionals refocus on Themes #1, #2, and #3.

Actions – Champion: Remove UC 4-H policy that requires a county VMO structure by December 15, 2023.

Actions – Team: Design options for volunteer engagement strategies that could replace County Councils / Volunteer Management Organizations. Pilot and evaluate success for any new strategies. Create and operationalize collateral that supports implementation of new strategies.

PILLAR #4 Streamline administrative procedures.

Champion: Zeva Cho, Statewide 4-H Program Manager

Team: 4-H Efficiency Committee & State 4-H Policy & Enrollment Analysts (Whitney Bell, Larissa Leavens)

Goal: Streamline and modernize administrative processes and procedures.

Actions - Champion

- Re-establish 4-H Efficiency Committee

Actions - Team

- Benchmark with other state 4-H or non-profit program’s processes and procedures.
- Research and implement a “knowledge database” to help people find information about 4-H policies and programs.



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