

*Report for the United States  
House of Representatives Committee on Appropriations*

# **4-H PROGRAMS IN THE NATION'S LARGEST CITIES**

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# 4-H PROGRAMS IN THE NATION'S LARGEST CITIES

REPORT FOR THE U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES COMMITTEE  
ON APPROPRIATIONS

4-H has been operating in many urban areas dating back in some States to the early 1920's. The most significant expansion has occurred since 1970. This expansion is due to the impact of special Congressional Appropriations in 1973 earmarked for urban 4-H programs and a major commitment within states to reach the broad spectrum of the nation's youth. The successes of 4-H Expanded Food and Nutrition educational programs for low-income city youth, 4-H education television, and other programs were designed to reach the special needs of central city youth.

Since 1970, over 13 million central city youth in all the Nation's largest cities participated in 4-H youth development educational programs. During the decade of the 70's, **4-H enrollments in central cities increased from 278,452 in 1973 to the current enrollment of 1,161,666.** There were 4.3 million youth in metropolitan areas involved in 4-H in the 1970's, while 9 million youth participated in 4-H during the decade of the 80's.

**Currently, of the 5.4 million youth in 4-H Nationwide, 1,161,666 youth come from central cities and 574,863 reside in adjoining suburbs.** One factor in successful 4-H central city programs has been the ability of the Extension Service to adjust, expand, and add to existing 4-H projects, programs, and activities to meet the needs of youth specific to central cities.

Project interests of urban youth range from the traditional 4-H projects such as plant science, conservation, food and nutrition, health and safety, and career exploration to current youth concerns of environmental education, parenting, entrepreneurship, money management, waste management, water quality, science literacy, and others.

Today's urban 4-H involves youth in organized clubs, special interest groups, EFNEP, TV, school enrichment programs, camping, and individual and family study.

4-H programs are in traditional community based clubs and in schools, public housing developments, neighborhood centers, juvenile correctional institutions, extended day care centers, recreation and community centers--wherever youth can be reached.

**The overall objectives of 4-H in urban areas are the same as for 4-H everywhere:**

- Understanding and fulfilling one's role in our society,
- developing a value system to guide positive behavior,
- developing and using active inquiring minds to their fullest potential,
- acquiring economic independence,
- developing leadership abilities,
- demonstrating ways of thinking, feeling, and acting in relation to others, and
- physically developing to the individual's optimum.

The curricula is realistic, meaningful, and flexible in providing experiential opportunities and fulfilling its historic concept of "Learn by Doing." Life skills development focused on coping, contributing, and competency is central to the 4-H experience.

### CHARACTERISTICS OF INNER CITY YOUTH

Challenges faced by inner city youth have increased programming challenges for the non-formal Land Grant University designed youth development programs. Extension youth professionals have identified the following risk factors in communities in which they work.

1. extreme poverty
2. homelessness
3. isolation
4. single parenthood
5. family dysfunction
6. lack of medical care
7. poor basic learning skills
8. limited language proficiency
9. ineffective language skills
10. negative peer pressure and low self esteem

The issue "youth at risk" has become an important national challenge. Youth become "at risk" from three primary conditions: poverty, lack of family support, and negative peer pressure. These characteristics identified by the Extension youth workers clearly reveal the youth crisis crossing social, cultural, and economic barriers. These conditions have perpetuated high dropout rates, teenage pregnancy, crime, gang membership, drug abuse, and domestic violence.

The following reports in 1991 illustrate specific examples of these risk factors:

- In Dallas, over 50 percent of families have single parents as head of household.
- Several schools in Chicago have dropout rates over 50 percent.
- Over 50 percent of residents in Omaha earn less than \$15,000 annually.
- Forty percent of residents in targeted areas of Minneapolis are below the poverty level.
- Sixteen percent of crimes in Jacksonville are committed by juveniles.
- There are 2,371 youths homeless in Albuquerque; 2,111 of these were victims of child abuse/neglect.
- In New Orleans, 60 percent of public school students score below the 15 percentile on the California Achievement Test of basic skills.
- In Denver, 4,000 youth are involved in gangs, resulting in 26 gang related crimes.
- There were 4,000 babies born exposed to drugs in San Diego.

## TYPES OF PROGRAMS PROVIDED

Today's 4-H is found in all of the Nation's largest cities. Examples of programs reported by State Extension Services include:

- In San Diego, 2,283 youth are involved in curricula focused on food and nutrition; embryology; gardening; science education; and, Blue Skies, a video series on enhancing career choices in **science and technology**.
- Kansas City, Kansas, provides opportunities for youth to have **intercultural experiences** such as being host to a 4-H Japanese Exchange student; to expand horizons of a young person and break down stereotypes and barriers of prejudice; a 4-H family day at the zoo and 14 community 4-H clubs.
- A recycling program in Memphis resulted in youth creating useful articles from recycled materials. Opportunities for recycling featured the integration of math, science, and social studies and were taught to students in the Arlington Elementary School. Christmas tree recycling, seedling transplanting, roadside sign improvements, support of a local clothes closet for the homeless, nutrition for proper nutrients, and water quality programs were all successful efforts.
- Self-reliance, **drug resistance**, leadership and citizenship skills, environmental issues, consumer education, parenting and communications were the focus of projects in the Atlanta area. Volunteer teachers in after school programs led 1,331 members in 4-H clubs.
- In New Orleans, 4-H provides educational programs to other agencies such as Children's Hospital, half-way houses, YWCA's, drug rehabilitation centers, and public and parochial schools. Projects focus on nutrition, financial management, self-esteem development and parenting.
- In Oklahoma City, many public recreation facilities were closed but were reopened for a 10-week summer program. A life skills enrichment program was provided by 4-H which focused on: **basic nutrition**, plant growth and production, bicycle safety and repair, dog care and training, fire safety, sex education, group and self-esteem building activities and recreation. Two thousand youth, 5-19 years of age, participated in this "hands-on" learning experience.
- A child care program in Jacksonville provided instruction to 2,062 youth who are alone at night and weekends. Self-sufficiency skills with an emphasis on safety, enabled these youth to be better prepared for this challenge.
- In Minneapolis, 250 4-H youth participated in a performing arts program which involved 12,000 children and adults. This project focused on teaching self-expression, leadership, self-esteem, community responsibility, and communication skills.

- In New York City, 11,500 4-H youth participated in special interest projects focusing on **horticulture/hydro and aquaponics**, leadership, self-esteem, parent/teen relationships, parenting and literacy enhancement. These projects were conducted in group homes, homeless shelters, school, and community centers. In a special overnight camping trip 15,000 school children were involved in a nutrition education and environmental program.
- There are 4-H programs in 73 of 75 communities in Chicago which involve 59,479 youth. School based programs focus on incubation and embryology, plants and soil science, **public speaking**, mechanical sciences and leadership. These 4-H special interest groups reach 29,827 youth.
- A unique partnership in Birmingham, between the staffs of the Botanical Gardens and County Extension Service, provides a plant anatomy program. Five hundred and sixty youth, 11-12 years of age, participate in a hands-on experience which includes home care of plants and environmental issues. Educational field trips enhance the program.
- In Dallas, ARCO and the Employment Commission sponsor a **career development** program. A project titled "On Your Own" included career choices, how to identify and gain a job interview and actual interviewing.
- In Los Angeles, 4,800 youth participated in a special "**nutrition for adolescent pregnancy**" program. Cooperators included schools for pregnant minors; Women, Infant, and Children program (WIC); and community public health clinics. The comprehensive educational curriculum provides an innovative approach by addressing the most immediate needs and interests of all ethnic groups.
- In cooperation with the Philadelphia Public Housing Authority, a successful 4-H program has involved youth and families in Norris Homes. Projects are centered on **family resource management**, family life-education, parenting and social skills, in nutrition education, plant science, crafts, woodworking, recycling, clothing construction, and career and leadership development. Weekend retreats, youth development forums, and the Martin Luther King, Jr., Youth Assembly supported this successful program.
- Louisville strengthens its inner city 4-H program with special educational activities such as public speaking events, demonstrations, illustrated talks, variety shows, fairs, fashion review, judging events, **community services**, and record keeping. A program titled American Private Enterprise provides hands-on experiences in the small business arena.
- Over 7,119 youth in Nashville participated in organized 4-H clubs, school enrichment and special interest 4-H groups. Projects focused on embryology, public speaking, forestry, leadership and assertiveness training, environmental issues, **food safety and health** and career exploration.

- In Baltimore, a special project titled, "4-H Adventures in Science," involved 315 youth. This program motivates and supports a child's interest in math and science. Volunteer scientists, engineers, health care technicians and professionals design and implement hands-on experiences.

In summary the following curricula were successful with youth in the inner cities. These projects were created, tested, and implemented by Land Grant University specialists, county Extension professionals, and partners from corporate and educational communities.

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|---------------------|------------------------------|------------------------|
| 1. Science literacy | 10. Forestry                 | 19. Woodworking        |
| 2. Aerospace        | 11. Guide Dogs               | 20. Arts & Crafts      |
| 3. Entomology       | 12. Rabbits                  | 21. Cultural Arts      |
| 4. Marine Biology   | 13. Horticulture             | 22. Bicycle Safety     |
| 5. Water Quality    | 14. Foods/Nutrition/Health   | 23. Handicap Riding    |
| 6. Waste Management | 15. Dental Health            | 24. Public Speaking    |
| 7. Embryology       | 16. Fire Prevention & Safety | 25. Private Enterprise |
| 8. Hydroponics      | 17. Money Management         | 26. Parenting          |
| 9. Environmental Ed | 18. Eye & Sight Safety       |                        |

### INVOLVEMENT OF VOLUNTEERS

Volunteerism has been the unique ingredient for successful programs since the beginning of 4-H and continues to be an important part of inner city programming. Examples of this strength include:

- In Houston, **597 adult volunteers** and **476 youth volunteers** work with 1,429 youth in organized 4-H clubs while **564 volunteers** involved 68,660 youth in school enrichment groups.
- An education day camp for 4th, 5th, and 6th graders in Omaha attracted 55 adult volunteers and involved 950 4-H members.
- Within the city boundaries of Jacksonville, **1,479 volunteers** work with 29,109 4-H youths in community clubs and special interest groups. There are 6,056 teenagers participating in 4-H programs. This is a national model for inner city involvement.
- In Tulsa, **60 4-H members** provided **10,080 hours of tutoring with youth** attending Emerson Elementary School. Tutoring included spelling, mathematics and reading... an excellent example of youth volunteerism.
- There were **1,711 adult volunteers** and 248 youth leaders assisting 2,347 youth in 4-H Clubs in Albuquerque. **Three hundred and twenty-seven volunteers** taught **18,830 youth in 4-H school enrichment programs**. Projects focused on environmental education, water quality, and science and technology.
- In Kansas City, Kansas, **150 youth and adult volunteers** provided a special 4-H family day for 2,616 youth and parents.

- In Boston, 4,000 youth learned horticulture techniques from **179 4-H volunteer educators**.
- Adventure based education was taught by 125 4-H volunteers, to 4,500 youth in Seattle.
- One hundred 4-H volunteers worked with 850 youths in 25 community based clubs in New York City. One hundred, fifty adults worked with 11,500 4-H youth in special interest groups.
- In Indianapolis, **1,379 adult and volunteer leaders** involved 43,975 youths in 4-H clubs, special interest groups, and school enrichment programs.
- In Honolulu, 13,535 youths participated in local community projects with **661 adult and youth volunteers**.

Nationally there are 663,785 volunteers, including 124,141 youth volunteers, who reach 5,434,286 youth.

#### COMMUNITY SUPPORT

Extension youth professionals realized in the early stages of developing programs for inner city youth that cooperation, not competition with other youth serving agencies, was the key to success. By joining resources, coalitions could focus on effective and efficient methods of addressing the serious and complex issues. For example:

- In Detroit, 4-H has networked with the Minority Equity Division of Michigan's Department of Education to provide programs with the Hispanic and Native American communities. The Public Housing Authority, Tenant Association and the Community Foundation for Southeastern Michigan have collaborated on programs for youth in public housing communities.
- Indianapolis 4-H programs are supported by strong coalitions between city public schools, private schools, community centers, city parks & recreation, the juvenile justice system, city-county government, county children and family services, city public housing, the Indiana Youth Institute and local libraries.
- 4-H is cooperating with several public agencies in Los Angeles, including the State Department of Education, VISTA, public housing authorities, WIC, public health, parks and recreation, community development, the unified school district and the police department. Private cooperators include J.C. Penney, Kraft General Foods, YMCA, YWCA, Boys and Girls Club, ARCO Foundation, United Way, McDonnell Douglas Employees Community Fund, Rockwell International, Lockheed, TRW, Hughes, Stern Memorial Fund, Kiwanis, the Boeing Good Neighbor Club, and Camp Fire.

- 4-H programs in Miami have depended on many partnerships to provide quality programs including cooperators such as Dade Community College, PTA, Urban League, Salvation Army, American Red Cross, Soil Conservation Service, National Park Service, NOAA, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, American Heart Association, National Dairy Council, Florida Power and Light, Chevron, Nestle's, and The University of Miami.
- Sharing personnel expertise and finances are the key to success in Jacksonville. Youth serving agencies such as Girls Inc., Boys and Girls Clubs, Boy Scouts, YWCA, Red Cross, Urban League, Just Say No and public agencies like HUD, Human Resources, recreation departments, schools, libraries, Divisions of Forestry, Civil Defense, the Sheriff's Department and SCS all enthusiastically cooperate in youth programming.
- There are several significant partnerships and collaborations between 4-H and other groups in Chicago which include public schools, Park Districts, public housing authorities, Commons Association, Quaker Oats Foundation, Kiwanis, Headstart, Boys and Girls Clubs, Holy Lutheran School, National Meat and Livestock Board, Heineman's Bakeries, Farm Bureau, General Motors, Harris Banks Foundation, and the Palmer House Hilton.
- Eighteen community organizations are cooperating in Baltimore to provide a science program for inner city youth. The lead agencies include Morgan State University, Coppin State College, City Public Schools, the Museum of Industry, Kennedy Institute at John Hopkins Hospital, and a television station.
- A coalition for youth and families support the Phoenix 4-H Program. The major partners include Boys and Girls Club, parks and recreation, public housing, Friendly House, Campfire, Valley Christian Center, Hispanic Research Center, Urban League, YMCA, Valle Del Sol, public schools, and Arizona State University.

### IMPACT

A strength of the Cooperative Extension System is its unique relationship to our Nation's Land Grant Universities. Extension is a major part of these institutions. Extension education is an essential element of the Land Grant's out-reach programs. University faculty create evaluation strategies and guide local youth professionals in measuring and reporting impacts. Examples of 4-H successes in major cities include:

- **Increasing self-esteem and responsibility among early adolescents** were results of the Atlanta 4-H program. This multi-cultural effort improved public speaking skills and many youth assumed leadership roles within their schools.
- Four hundred and thirty-five youth in the vegetable production program in Memphis saved their families approximately \$87,000 while improving their nutrition and health.



- A recent study of the impact of 4-H school programs in Chicago found that more than 65 percent of the students in 4-H science projects had **greater interest in science**, 45 percent developed a more **positive attitude about school** and 44 percent exhibited higher self-esteem. Pre- and post-tests of youth in the drug/alcohol prevention program showed that they more than doubled their knowledge of substance abuse prevention for drugs and alcohol. One school principal estimated that a summer remedial program increased reading motivation and effort by 100 percent.
- According to agency staff and teachers in Minneapolis, youth participating in 4-H School Enrichment After-School Programs increased self awareness and initiative; experienced **higher retention of facts due to the "hands on" style**; increased **their ability to set goals and plan beyond the immediate situation**; increased comfort and ability to bond with an adult; demonstrated **heightened interest in taking on leadership roles**; and increased interest in science and mathematics. These results illustrate the importance of the experiential learning method.
- Surveys of community leaders in Jacksonville revealed the following results of 4-H participation by youth: **Increased family living skills** (nutrition, clothing care, first aid and CPR, gardening, inter-family communications, consumerism, safety); the ability to understand and work with others, improved computer literacy, understanding of environmental factors, completed community service projects improved leadership, communications, **decision-making**, and management skills.
- Statements from youth in life skills training in Oklahoma City documented improved abilities to **believe in oneself** and to communicate with peers and adults.
- A 4-H'er in Memphis states "I've gained so much through 4-H ... opportunities to develop valuable skills through participation in 4-H activities such as judging, demonstrations, good preparation techniques and **leadership**, and the opportunity to meet other 4-H'ers across the United States. I've had victories as well as losses. 4-H is not just about competition and winning. Even though I lost nationally, I won. I won friends, developed my leadership skills, have unforgettable memories and gained much knowledge. This program is not just about the Special Program in Food for Youth, it's about a Special Program in **Friends, Fortitude and Frugality**."
- According to school officials in Seattle's Franklin High, the 4-H Challenge program for freshmen has "turned the school around. Grade point averages are up, **dropout rates are down**, decisions to go to college and a new spirit has emerged."
- Park managers in Milwaukee report a **decrease in vandalism** in city parks used by 4-H environmental education groups. Over 20,000 youth are involved in this program, which also includes parents and grandparents.

- The **Los Angeles** after school program has resulted in improved school performance; improved nutritional, physical and social well-being; and helps youth cope with personal and family problems. Children who have participated in the program seem less aggressive and better able to socialize with peers. **Divisions between cultural groups seem to have narrowed.** Teachers observed greater participation by youth in community activities, higher career goals, and greater leadership skills.
- Increased self-esteem, **decreased criminal activity, less use of drugs and alcohol,** reduced teen pregnancy and suicide levels and increased science literacy are reported results of 4-H participation in **Philadelphia.**
- The projects "Being All You Can Be," "4-H Bright Side," and "Communications Skills" in **Louisville** have resulted in strengthening self-confidence, developing social skills, assisting in understanding issues, making healthier/more positive life choices, and changed behavior in conserving natural resources and **protecting the environment.**
- The **Nashville** 4-H program indicated that 4-H participants increased self-esteem, leadership abilities, life-skills, high school performance, understanding child-abuse and reduced delinquency. A special program focused on **improved waste management techniques.** It produced the slogan "Reduce, Reuse, Recover," which is promoted throughout the community.
- Teens became effective forum presenters who spoke out on youth issues, took on leadership roles as youth program leaders and counselors and developed skills in community, listening, supporting, and disciplining as a result of a special program in **Detroit.** Single mothers also became knowledgeable about **inexpensive experiential learning activities** for their children.

### CONCLUSION

By way of summary, the scope of the programs offered to urban youth through partnerships has produced dynamic results. These programs will continue to provide increased opportunities for urban youth and adults to realize their fullest potential.

**Extension's national Youth at Risk Initiative** supported by Congressional Appropriations and the private sector is having a significant impact on youth in central cities. Extension youth professionals provide meaningful programs for youth in urban areas. They work in environments that may include many of the risk factors of: extreme poverty, homelessness, single parenthood, family dysfunction, limited language proficiency, negative peer pressure, lack of medical care, poor basic learning skills, negative peer pressure and low self-esteem. All of these contribute to high dropout rates, teenage pregnancy, gang membership, drug abuse, and domestic violence.

**Successful government programs, like 4-H, will continue to respond to the critical central city challenges facing youth today...the future of our Nation depends on it.**