



FY 2019-2021 STRATEGIC PLAN

A CASE FOR YOUTH INVESTMENT



NATIONAL 4-H
COUNCIL



EXECUTIVE

A Shared Vision: 10 million True Leaders by 2025

National 4-H Council is dedicated to a future in which millions more young people are engaged in Cooperative Extension's high-quality 4-H youth development programs, where 4-H youth, volunteers and staff are representative of the diversity of our nation.

National 4-H Council's Mission

Increase investment and participation in high-quality 4-H youth development programs.



SUMMARY

Our strategic objectives are aligned with Cooperative Extension priorities, and represent Council's assets and unique role in the 4-H movement:

OBJECTIVE 1: Elevate 4-H's role in expanding economic mobility in America.

OBJECTIVE 2: Engage a community of alumni and supporters to help grow 4-H.

OBJECTIVE 3: Broaden corporate and foundation support for 4-H outcomes.

Who We Serve and How

National 4-H Council (Council) is the private sector, non-profit partner of Cooperative Extension (Extension) and 4-H National Headquarters located within USDA. 4-H programs are implemented by the nation's 100+ land-grant colleges and universities and the Extension system, through more than 3,000 local offices across the country. Utilizing hands-on learning, kids build confidence, creativity and curiosity, as well as life skills such as leadership and resilience, to help them thrive today and into the future.

Council serves Extension in three unique ways:

- **Convene the movement:** Council works in coordination with USDA, land-grant institutions and 4-H families to stimulate collective action to address some of the nation's most pressing issues.
- **Tell the 4-H story:** Council provides leadership around the design and implementation of a national brand story by leveraging the power of trusted brand partners and advocates, particularly 4-H alumni.
- **Create public-private partnerships:** Council generates financial and in-kind support from corporations, foundations, individuals and the federal government to further the collective goals of Extension.

Where We've Been and Where We're Headed

National 4-H Council is supporting 4-H's growth initiative in three phases. In our first phase, completed in 2018, Council launched a new brand story, engaging Extension and outside partners, 4-H families, and millions of 4-H alumni in a contemporary vision about the importance of 4-H and its young leaders. We also helped build capacity in Extension to support innovation in programs, delivery methods and evaluation.

TABLE 1: FY 2016 - 2018 MAJOR OUTCOMES*

Accelerate efforts to engage more youth in 4-H	Strengthen 4-H brand relevance through alumni	Increase investments that support growth strategies	Build a healthy National 4-H Council culture
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Raised \$27M in support of Extension priorities in STEM and Healthy Living • Raised \$4M for historically black colleges and universities and minority scholarships • Partnered with Extension in more than 30 states to extend the national brand campaign • Reached 2M youth through Council grants 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Grew alumni database to more than 370K • Grew social media footprint to 800K followers • Named national celebrity spokesperson and established formal relationships with 50+ 4-H "Luminaries" • Garnered \$20M per year in media value for 4-H 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Grew unrestricted revenue by 63% • Grew the individual and major giving portfolios by 50% • Raised Board contribution to 40% of overall fundraising • Raised \$8M in cause marketing support 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Achieved an Employee Engagement score 15% above peer group • Established a performance-based compensation program • Launched an associate-developed Culture Guide and annual recognition awards

*To see the full FY 2016-18 Strategic Plan and outcomes, go to www.4-H.org/outcomes

In our second phase, which includes fiscal years 2019 through 2021, Council's primary objective is to mobilize additional resources and advocates to accelerate the rate of transformational change and growth occurring throughout Cooperative Extension and 4-H.



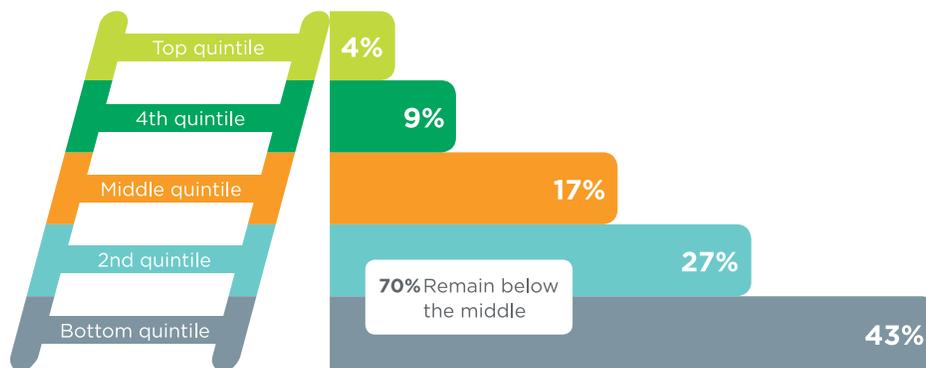
4-H & THE AMERICAN DREAM

For many people — and many communities — the American Dream is no longer a birthright. The widely held principle that if you work hard, a better economic future awaits, is increasingly eluding our nation's young people.

According to researchers led by the economist Raj Chetty, upward economic mobility — the possibility that children will grow up to earn more than their parents — has been declining for nearly half a century. In 1970, 30-year-olds had a 90 percent chance — almost a certainty — of earning more than their parents did at the same age, adjusted for inflation. By 2014, those odds had dropped to around 50 percent.¹

FIGURE 1: THOSE BORN INTO AMERICA'S LOWEST INCOME LEVELS ARE NOW LIKELY TO STAY THERE²

Percent of Americans raised in the bottom income quintile who stay put or move up as adults



Moreover, what upward mobility there is in the U.S. is distributed unevenly. For example, nearly seven out of 10 black Americans (compared to a third of white Americans) who are born into the middle-income quintile end up in the bottom two quintiles as adults, which is testament to the deep-seated barriers and structural racism they face.³ Research has detailed some of the main factors that impede people of color as they try to climb the income ladder, including racial bias and a higher presence of single parent households, as well as over-criminalization, high poverty rates, and poor education systems.

1. Chetty, R., Grusky, D., Hell, M., Hendren, N., Manduca, R. & Narang, J. (2017). The Fading American Dream: Trends in Absolute Income Mobility since 1940. Retrieved from: nber.org/papers/w22910

2. Ibid.

3. The Bridgespan Group. (2018). Social Mobility in Rural America. New York: The Bridgespan Group.

And while urban young people of color have struggled with upward mobility, economic advancement is also a challenge for young people in rural America, where opportunities can vary significantly within regions — or even within counties. The barriers to upward mobility in rural America are the same as those in urban areas: poverty, racial barriers, under-investment in education, and limited job options.

One encouraging fact has emerged from the volumes of data on social mobility and equity, however. Those communities that invest in young people and their development are most likely to beat the averages and find economic success and upward mobility. For while larger economic forces such as regional economies and state policies can drive (or constrain) economic mobility, individual communities play an integral role in supporting positive change. And that is where Cooperative Extension and 4-H programs are focused.

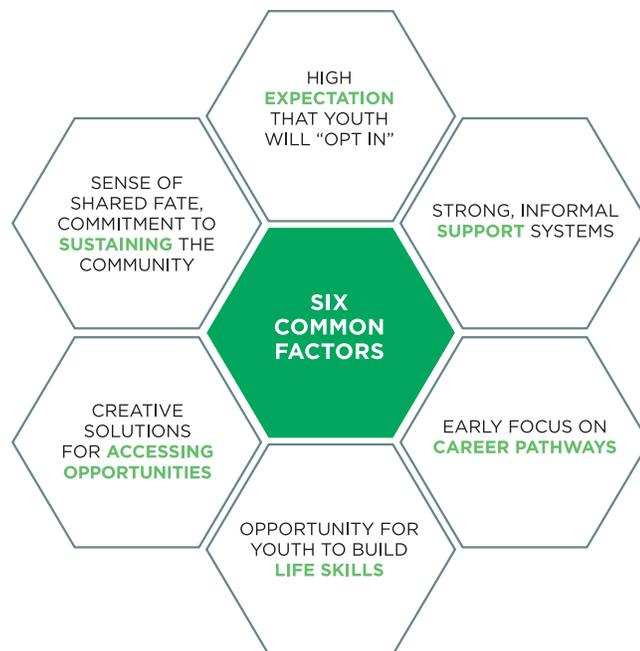
MAKING GREATER AND MORE EFFECTIVE INVESTMENTS IN CHILDREN AND YOUTH WILL BE THE BEST WAY TO IMPROVE SOCIAL MOBILITY THROUGHOUT THE NATION.⁴

The fact is, too many kids lack the critical skills they need to excel in life and career, which is why an investment in our youth is an investment in healthier and more prosperous communities. Youth issues are make or break factors in upward mobility; low birth-weights, teen pregnancies, high school graduation rates, unemployment and incarceration are all indicators of a community’s trajectory — positive or negative.

Communities with better outcomes for youth defy trends in downward mobility. Research by The Bridgespan Group identified six common factors in upward mobility (see Figure 2).

Cooperative Extension and 4-H have a 100-year history in creating these conditions through education, engagement and a deep understanding of human development. With targeted investments in new 4-H programming and delivery methods, Council seeks to expand Extension’s circle of success and impact millions more kids in every town, every city and every corner of America.

FIGURE 2: SIX FACTORS AFFECTING UPWARD MOBILITY⁵



NATIONAL REACH, LOCAL PROGRAMS

4-H reaches kids in every corner of America — from urban neighborhoods to suburban schoolyards to rural farming communities.

4. Katz, B. and Tilchin, R. (2016). Investing in the Next Generation: A Bottom-Up Approach to Creating Better Outcomes for Children and Youth. Washington, D.C.: Brookings Institution.
 5. The Bridgespan Group. (2018). Social Mobility in Rural America. New York: The Bridgespan Group.



4-H: DRIVEN BY THE POWER OF MORE THAN 100 PUBLIC UNIVERSITIES

4-H is the only youth development organization whose programs in science, healthy living and civic engagement are supported by more than 100 public universities, and delivered by a robust community of more than 500,000 4-H volunteers and Cooperative Extension professionals in every county, parish and borough in the U.S. 4-H programs are inherently local, meeting youth and families where they live and serving community needs and values.

4-H Inspires Kids to Do

4-H is grounded in the belief that kids learn best by doing. Youth choose and complete hands-on projects in areas like science, health, agriculture and civic engagement in a positive environment, where they receive guidance from adult mentors and are encouraged to take on proactive leadership roles. Regardless of the project area, all 4-H programs include mentoring and career readiness as core elements.

WHAT MAKES 4-H UNIQUE:

- Access to 100+ public universities
- Research-driven youth development model and expertise
- Locally driven programs at scale
- Operating in every county in America
- Youth choose their own developmental path

4-H PROGRAM AREAS



STEM

5.6 Million Projects



Healthy Living

2.7 Million Projects



Agriculture

3.1 Million Projects



Civic Engagement

2.4 Million Projects

The proven power of positive youth development

The 4-H model of positive youth development has driven new thinking and approaches to youth development around the world for decades. Preeminent youth development scholars at the Institute for Applied Research in Youth Development at Tufts University partnered with faculty at America’s land-grant universities to conduct research, which showed that the structured out-of-school learning, leadership experiences, and adult mentoring that young people receive through their participation in 4-H play a vital role in helping them achieve success.⁶

FIGURE 3: UNPARALLELED OUTCOMES⁷

Compared to their peers, the findings showed that youth involved in 4-H programs are approximately:

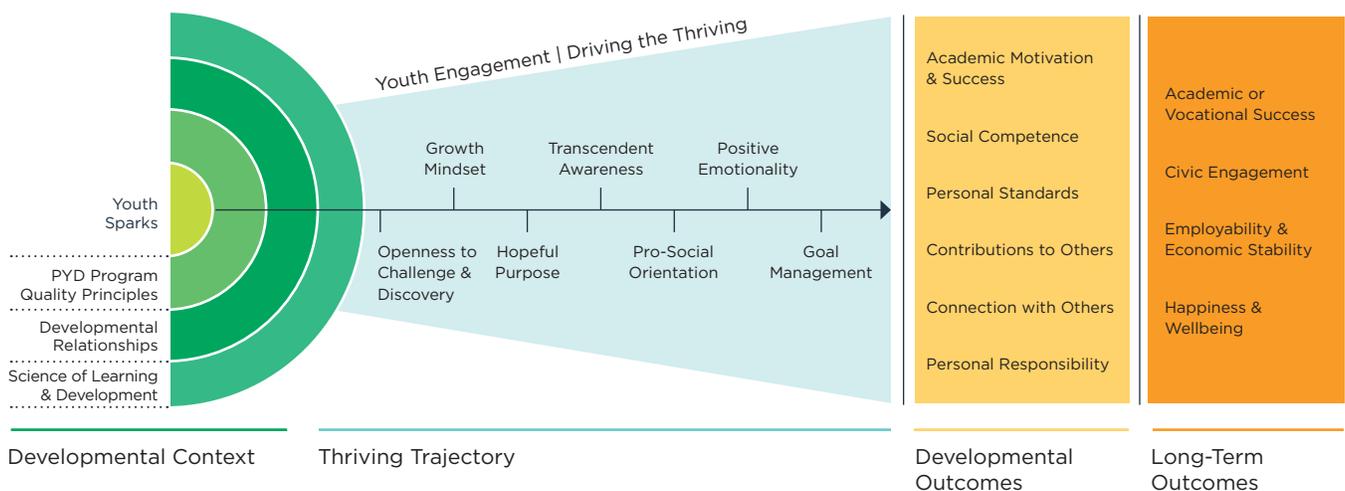


New Evidence That 4-H’ers are Thriving

Cooperative Extension continues to look closely at the ways in which 4-H contributes to the high-quality positive development of youth. Developed at Oregon State University by Dr. Mary E. Arnold, in collaboration with Dr. Ryan Gagnon of Clemson University, the 4-H Thriving model outlines the ingredients of a high-quality 4-H program and shows how high-quality programs help youth participants achieve key developmental outcomes. The 4-H Thriving model is a key component of our next phase of research and is being developed along with other program evaluation projects, such as Common Measures — a suite of evaluation instruments designed to assess the impact of 4-H programs.

FIGURE 4: THE 4-H THRIVING MODEL⁸

The 4-H Thriving model predicts that youth who participate in 4-H programs with a high quality developmental context will thrive, and thriving youth achieve key developmental outcomes.⁹



6. Lerner, R. M., et al. (2005). 4-H Study of Positive Youth Development. Retrieved from: 4-H.org/about/research
 7. Ibid.
 8. Arnold, M. (2018). 4-H Thriving Model. Retrieved at: health.oregonstate.edu/thriving-model
 9. Ibid.



[CONVENING THE 4-H MOVEMENT]

THE PATHWAY TO TOMORROW'S 4-H

Elevate 4-H's role in expanding economic mobility in America

A critical factor in 4-H's ability to grow will be its success in mobilizing support and creating alignment within the 4-H community. In the first phase of our ten-year strategic vision, we've witnessed several positive signs in this direction — a national co-funded outreach campaign, the establishment of an Extension-led group of thought leaders, a design team tackling new systems and programs for the future, and investment in new and more perceptive measurement and evaluation tools.

But there is much more to be done to reimagine a 4-H that can more effectively reach and change the lives of youth in the future. And managing this change will require support at all levels — from the local 4-H volunteer to the university president. There are many challenges facing our educational systems today, from inadequate funding to serving a changing student population to constant technological change, yet each land-grant university has a powerful partner in Extension and 4-H.

We know that a 4-H experience can equip a young person for success in school and career, and that an investment in youth can translate into economic health for whole communities. Those messages need to continue spreading, which is why Council will leverage its role as convener to provide energy and momentum, and to engage critical constituencies.

The 4-H Pathways Project

This multi-year initiative, funded by National 4-H Council and led by Cooperative Extension, is developing new, innovative ways to meet and serve new communities and a new generation of youth. Its areas of focus include:

- expanded reach through online engagement;
- new programs, partnerships and customer relevance;
- new revenue opportunities; and
- new internal/institutional relationships.

Strategy A: Connect 4-H outcomes to university-wide goals

Council will engage multiple stakeholder groups in support of 4-H growth and position 4-H as an effective solution to critical societal and economic challenges. This will help to mobilize investments in change management, professional capacity and the scaling of successful programs.

We will further use this platform to develop new measures of 4-H effectiveness and thought leadership on youth development, including an update of the Tufts longitudinal study and valuation of economic contribution, as well as the establishment of the True Leaders Institute, a multi-level leadership and systems change resource for all educators.

Strategy B: Mobilize the Board of Trustees as champions for positive change

Council will focus on the development of a diverse, engaged and self-sustaining Board of Trustees through good governance, strategic recruitment and stewardship. Achieving an increased level of personal and professional fundraising will directly impact our strategic vision.

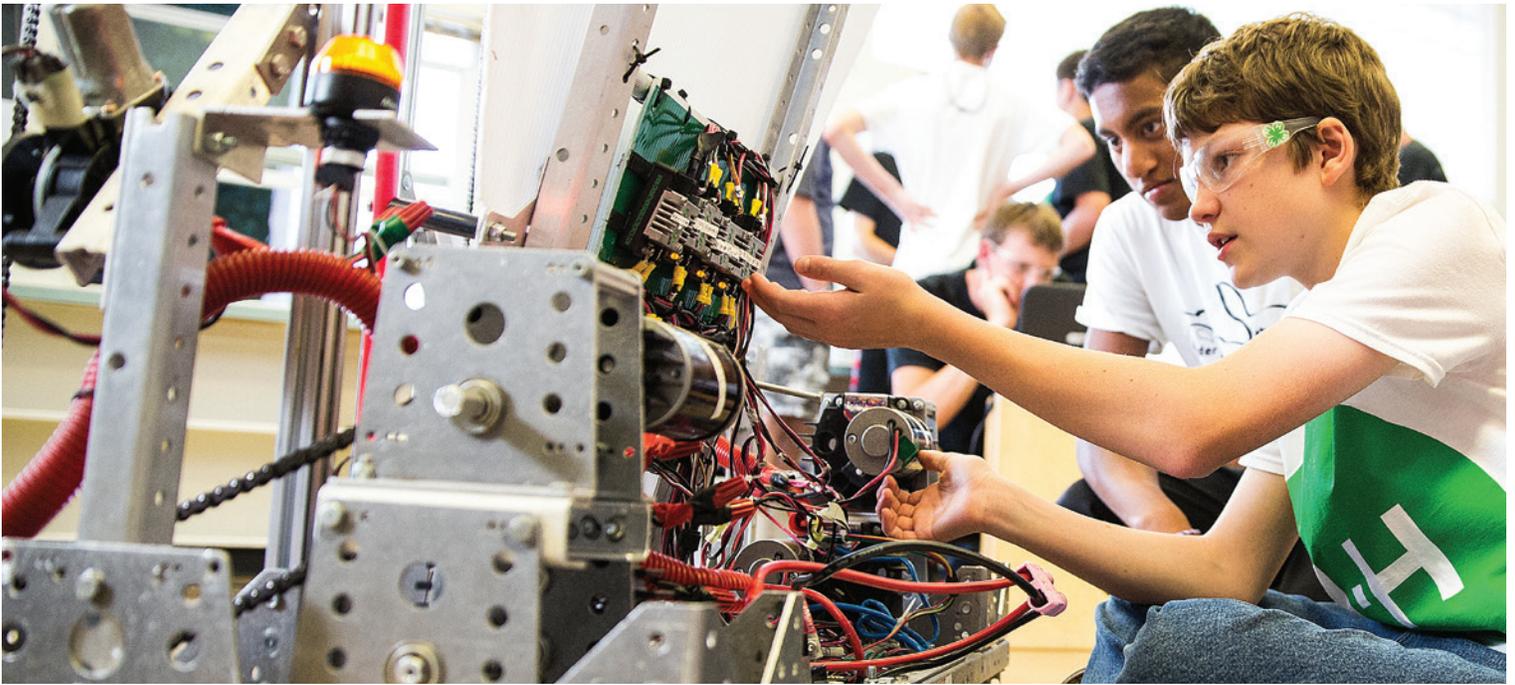
Strategy C: Engage Council Associates

Council's ability to effectively serve the system and stimulate growth depends entirely on the quality of our Associates, their engagement in our work and mission, and their capacity and capability to fulfill our unique role. Our investments will be focused on retaining high-performing talent, proactive communications and professional development in order to outpace the competitive set in employee engagement.



National 4-H Conference Center

Extension and 4-H youth, educators, volunteers and alumni have been gathering for learning opportunities at the National 4-H Conference Center — 4-H's national home in Washington, D.C. — for more than 50 years. We protect and nurture this physical and financial asset by positioning the Center as a premiere educational facility for all youth, as well as government, non-profit and corporate customers who share our mission and values.



[TELLING THE 4-H STORY]

THIS COUNTRY WAS BUILT BY DOERS

Engage a community of alumni and supporters to help grow 4-H

What we learned over the first phase of the Grow True Leaders campaign is that 4-H alumni are the drivers of brand reach and relevance, and that youth skill development for life and career is their priority. We also learned that 4-H's hands-on doing approach is a key differentiator, which is why our new messaging leverages these learnings to activate our key alumni audiences.

Our marketplace objective will be to engage a "Community of Doers" (e.g. alums, parents, partners and influencers) as advocates, donors, volunteers and consumers who share 4-H's values and vision.

Our approach involves targeting four segments of alumni to encourage them to invest in 4-H and to open doors to others:

- Influencers: Corporate, foundation and institutional investors.
- Celebrities: High profile alums with shared values of 4-H.
- Mass consumers: 4-H moms, 25-54 with school-aged children.
- Young professionals: Emerging 4-H alums, 18-30 years old.

Strategy A: Increase the quality and quantity of media exposure

The campaign will use a 360-degree approach, leveraging corporate and media partners, celebrity alumni and local Extension communicators to present a relevant and contemporary image that takes "Today's 4-H" mainstream. We will deepen our story through a proactive, robust and sustainable earned media approach, which will focus on empowering kids to do and to grow their skills to become true leaders. In addition, we will work with media partners and entertainment influencers to bring 4-H experiences to "right fit" television shows, movies, music, publishing and digital platforms, integrating "4-H doing" as part of our branded content. Both earned media and branded content will prioritize the themes of equity, access and belonging.

Strategy B: Create a comprehensive digital experience to engage alumni and friends

We will extend our outreach through a seamless digital experience designed to creatively immerse our passionate alumni and friends in rich and dynamic content, with the intention of driving membership, advocacy and support. Unique content created for the campaign and social media activations will position 4-H as the “go to” destination for alumni, parents and mentors who seek trusted content in building hands-on skills for kids.

We will also work to improve our data collection and analysis by building a 360-degree view of constituents across channels, allowing us to understand what motivates them to volunteer, advocate or donate on behalf of 4-H — and to deliver more targeted and relevant communications. 4-H programs across the country will also benefit from better data, allowing them to more effectively communicate and engage locally.

Strategy C: Activate State and Local Extension

Another important learning from our first phase is that campaign awareness is contingent on stakeholder adoption. For this reason, we will build the capacity of land grant institutions to effectively tell the 4-H story to their constituencies, and will work to offer communications resources directly to state and county Extension partners to help them grow their programs. Those resources will include:

- new investments to support equity and inclusion initiatives;
- evaluation and professional development platforms;
- celebrity alumni and cause partner referrals;
- seasonal brand pulse points to drive alumni engagement;
- turnkey cause marketing programs; and
- a youth voice platform as a premier asset.

Strategy D: Launch a cause marketing program

We will continue to surface and cultivate incremental opportunities to promote the 4-H name and emblem through corporate cause marketing partnerships where natural affinity and constituency overlap exist. Our primary criteria will be to find those partners who share our values and our belief in the importance of investing in youth — and who recognize the value and relevance of the 4-H name and emblem.

Longer term, we will develop a Board-driven, transformational approach that drives demand for the 4-H brand, as well as increases in restricted and unrestricted revenue across the portfolio. This approach will require effective and progressive use of the 4-H name and emblem, alignment with societal issues consumers care about, and the identification of significant capacity-building investment.

The online alumni experience and cause marketing initiative will work together to drive revenue from individual giving. With time, we expect exponential growth to take place through the development and engagement of the alumni pipeline.



The National 4-H Supply Service, known as Shop 4-H, serves Extension with a variety of programmatic merchandise and extends the reach of our message. We also offer apparel and accessories that let youth, volunteers and alumni show their 4-H pride. New cause marketing partnerships can provide brick and mortar retail opportunities to reach new communities with 4-H programs and content.



[CREATING PUBLIC-PRIVATE PARTNERSHIPS]

INVESTING IN A GENERATION OF DOERS

Broaden corporate and foundation support for 4-H outcomes

There are several interconnected factors that impact Council's ability to resource new partners and capacity in the marketplace: the brand, local activation, content and the ability to document program outcomes. There is tremendous overlap between this area of focus and the brand campaign. An integrated approach is under way where proprietary brand assets and corporate partnerships complement and accelerate our progress against both communications and revenue goals.

Technology, jobs and the future of work

Robots, artificial intelligence, and driverless cars are no longer features of some far-off future. They are with us today and will likely become increasingly commonplace in coming years. As these tools progress deeper into everyday use, they raise the question — how will society rethink the concept of jobs, given that current jobs could be automated and the jobs of the future could be completely different?

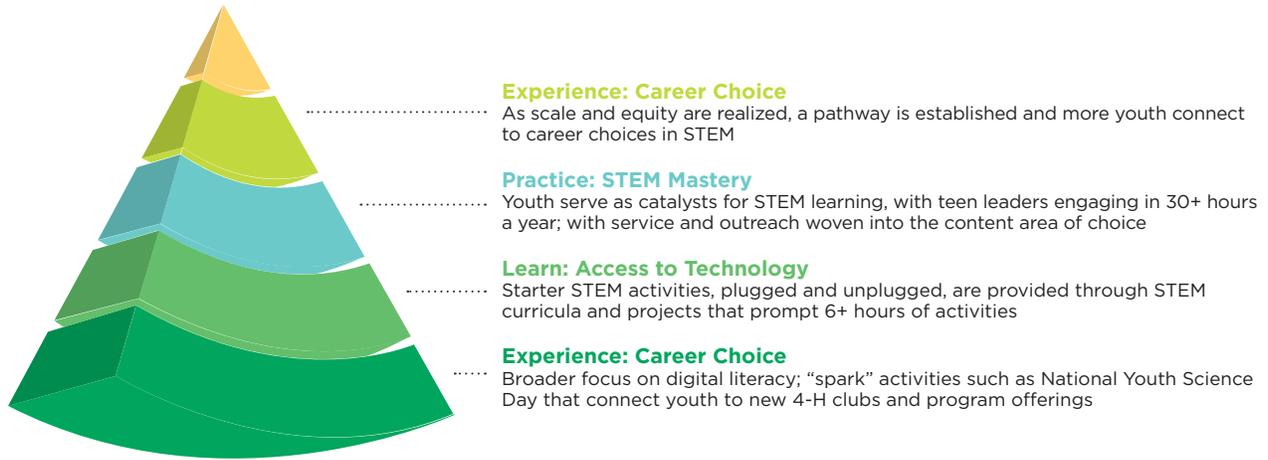
4-H programming is proven to nurture both the technical and the social skills needed to succeed in today's and tomorrow's economy. And jobs of the future that require creativity (research and academic jobs), complexity (strategy and management positions), and empathy and compassion (care providers and teachers) will continue to be valued. High quality 4-H positive youth development programs create young leaders who have the healthy life skills to thrive in today's — and tomorrow's — world.



STEM Futures combines university-backed research and curriculum with engaged adult mentors and hands-on experiences. Our approach helps youth prepare for and understand where they are in the career pathway (see Figure 5) and apply what they have learned through hands-on experiences.

FIGURE 5: A STEM PATHWAY FOR AMERICA'S YOUTH

Youth need role models, diverse experiences, resources and family support to find a clear direction toward a career pathway. The 4-H STEM Pathway engages youth with clearly defined career and academic interests and those who need additional support. The four components of the Pathway — **Explore, Learn, Practice and Experience** — provide intentional and progressive science education and leadership skills for 4-H'ers of all levels.



Strategy A: Build the capacity of workforce development programming

Council aims to bolster workforce development opportunities in high priority program areas, i.e. computer science, technology, agriculture and career pathing. Delivery to diverse and underserved constituencies will be prioritized.



Microsoft and its employees’ commitment of \$6.6 million will reach nearly 100 communities with new technology training by 2020. From the youth-led 4-H Tech Changemakers, who are utilizing technology to solve community problems, to 4-H Digital Ambassadors using a teens-as-teachers model to bring digital learning to their rural communities, this partnership is driving workforce skills across the country. In its first year, 88% of Tech Changemakers reported that they would pursue a tech career.



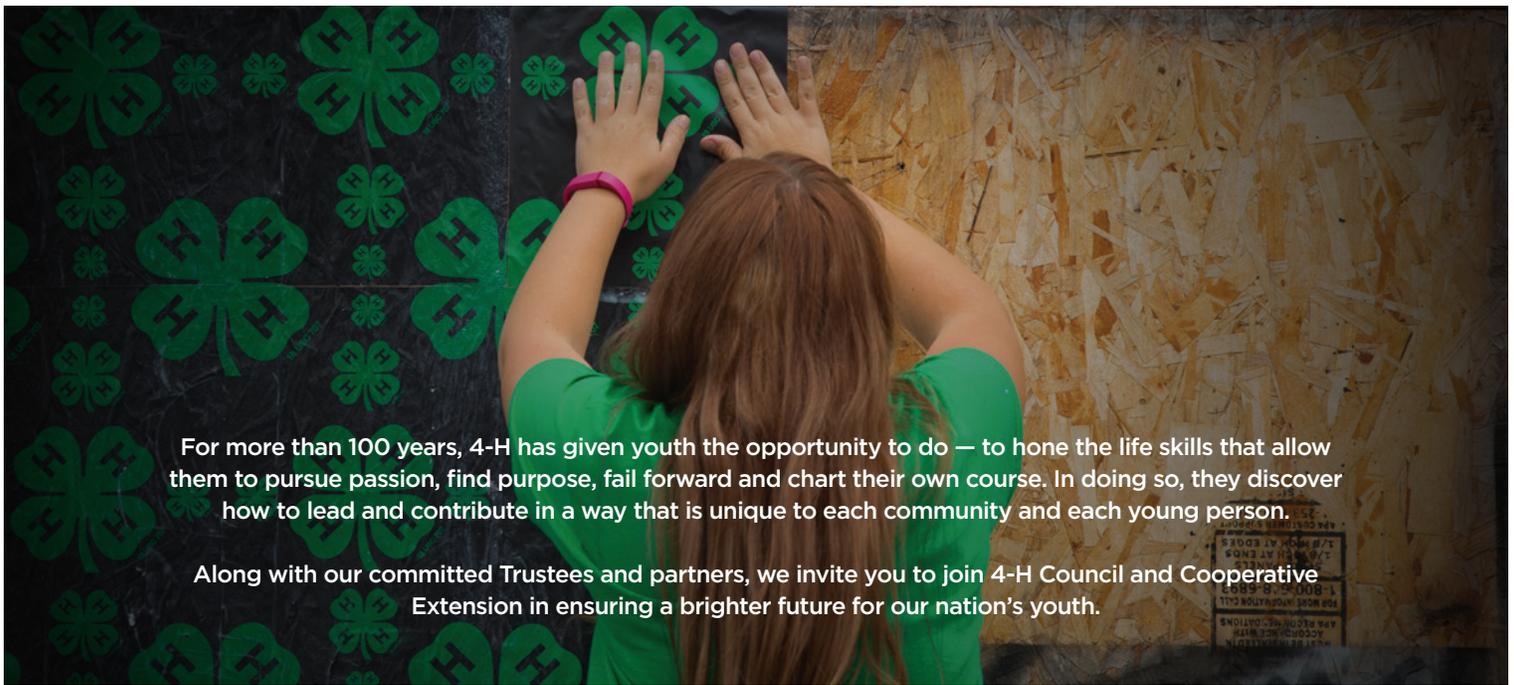
Strategy B: Build the capacity of health equity programming

We need to create urgency and relevance for new partnerships through continued brand investment and system alignment, as well as provide capacity-building revenue for system efforts, utilizing a systems level approach, evidence-based programming, local approaches to national issues, access and equity.



Walmart’s investment of over \$13 million across the last decade has provided more than 1 million youth and families with important nutrition education. The investment has also built the capacity of 4-H educators, providing them with tools and training to help them reach underserved audiences in African American, Latino and Native American communities with culturally relevant programming.





For more than 100 years, 4-H has given youth the opportunity to do — to hone the life skills that allow them to pursue passion, find purpose, fail forward and chart their own course. In doing so, they discover how to lead and contribute in a way that is unique to each community and each young person.

Along with our committed Trustees and partners, we invite you to join 4-H Council and Cooperative Extension in ensuring a brighter future for our nation's youth.

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I pledge my **H** **AD** to clearer thinking,

my **HE** **RT** to greater loyalty,

my **H** **NDS** to larger service,

and my **HE** **LTH** to better living,

for my club, my community, my country

and my world.



NATIONAL 4-H
COUNCIL

National 4-H Council is the private sector, non-profit partner of the Cooperative Extension System and the National Institute of Food and Agriculture within the United States Department of Agriculture.

Learn more at www.4-H.org

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