Youth throughout the U.S., including North Dakota, participated in research to define and measure positive youth development (Source: Lerner and Lerner 2011). Compared with their peers, youth involved in 4-H programs are:

- **2X** more likely to participate in STEM activities
- **2X** more likely to make healthier choices
- **2X** more likely to be civically active
- **4X** more likely to give back to their communities
- **75%** of youth participants in the Incredible Wearables/National Youth Science Day Experiment reported it helped them learn how to use science to solve problems
- **1,000+** youth demonstrate leadership skills through 4-H club offices, 4-H Ambassadors, or special projects

**LEARNING**
North Dakota 4-H youth develop life skills of teamwork, decision making, critical thinking and public speaking by engaging in a variety of learning experiences. These skills, coupled with mastering content and integrating knowledge, develop exceptional workforce competencies, making youth ready for post-secondary education, work and life.

**LEADING**
North Dakota 4-H prepares youth as future leaders through intentional experiences in leading. Beginning at the elementary school age, youth in 4-H become involved as active, engaged citizens and leaders in their local clubs and communities. Youth grow as citizen leaders by finding and using their voice to address local issues and needs, and participate actively in discussions and programs that benefit others.

**North Dakota 4-H in 2016-17**
- **6,440** enrolled 4-H members
- **2,502** volunteers
- **369** youth volunteers
- **1,616** youth in 4-H camping programs*
  *record **558** youth at North Dakota 4-H Camp near Washburn

Total youth participants by residence:
- **26%** from farms
- **40%** from towns under 10,000 and rural non-farms
- **34%** from towns and cities over 10,000

- **27,063** total youth participants

**19%** 4-H enrollment increase in past five years

For more information on these and other impacts of NDSU Extension, go to [www.ag.ndsu.edu/extension](http://www.ag.ndsu.edu/extension) or contact Brad Cogdill at 701.231.7259 or brad.cogdill@ndsu.edu.

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4-H is North Dakota State University Extension’s youth development program. It is available for youth ages 5 to 18.

4-H accomplishes its work through local Extension staff, with support from Extension specialists, who lead the nonformal educational program through clubs, school enrichment, camping, afterschool and special-topic settings in their communities. 4-H gets its capacity through the work of adults who serve as volunteer leaders. They guide the youth with leadership and organizational support.

4-H Youth Development is an organization and a program.

As an organization, youth join 4-H and the adult volunteers are approved to serve as leaders to create a safe environment for learning through effective youth-adult relationships. As part of a high-quality 4-H experience, youth are expected to:

- Select projects for in-depth study
- Record what they learn (record books)
- Attend meetings regularly and be active participants
- Complete community service projects (or become involved in a group community service project)
- Participate in some form of public presentation
- Have projects evaluated (usually part of 4-H achievement days or a fair)

4-H’s foundation is the Essential Elements of Positive Youth Development

As a program, 4-H offers planned learning experiences at the county, multicounty, state, regional and national levels related to:

- Animal science
- Communication skills
- Clothing, home and consumerism
- Creativity
- Environment, outdoor skills and shooting sports
- Food, nutrition and health
- Plant, soil and range science
- Preventing and reducing youth risk behavior
  - Boundaries and Boundaries Jr.
  - Impact Teen Drivers
  - Living Online: Middle School, High School and Caring Adults
  - Overdone: Practicing Wellness in Busy Families
- Science, engineering and technology
- Service to others
- Youth camping at the North Dakota 4-H Camp
- Youth leadership and civic engagement

4-H is authorized by the U.S. Congress, and at the federal level, is the responsibility of the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), National Institute for Food and Agriculture (NIFA). The authority for the program is assigned to the state’s land-grant university (North Dakota State University) and its Extension program.

USDA establishes the use of the 4-H name and emblem, and accountability measures related to fund-raising to support the 4-H program. NDSU Extension’s 4-H Youth Development Program has the responsibility and authority to define what is and is not a 4-H educational program. It also authorizes counties to use the federally protected 4-H name and emblem, and establishes statewide policy and accountability for the 53 county programs where 4-H is conducted.