

### Program Status

Consider these North Dakota 4-H statistics:

**6,314** youth enrolled in 4-H

**23,600** youth reached by 4-H programming

**2,447** adults are 4-H volunteers




The North Dakota 4-H program maintained its enrollment for 2018-2019. 4-H accomplishes its work through local Extension professionals, with support from Extension specialists, who lead the nonformal educational program through clubs, school enrichment, camping, after-school and special-topic settings in their communities. As a program, 4-H offers planned learning experiences that relate to several subject areas at the county, multicounty, state, regional and national levels.

4-H gets its capacity through adults who serve as volunteer leaders. These approved adult volunteers guide the youth with leadership and organizational support.

Results of a 2018 4-H Volunteer Impact Study in the North Central Region show that the impact of volunteers goes beyond individual benefits to the youth, adults and the organization. Volunteering for 4-H leads to changing community conditions by making communities stronger, connecting communities, improving the health of communities and increasing overall civic involvement. In that study, 93% of volunteers said "volunteering with 4-H makes communities stronger" and 91% said "volunteering with 4-H contributes to better connected communities."

**The public value of the 4-H youth development program justifies an equitable share of public financial resources to fulfill its mission of developing youth and families in our state.**

 **THE NEED:** Designated funding to support core programming related to positive youth development opportunities through club, camping, after-school and special-topic educational experiences. This could include off-campus 4-H specialist support and designated funding to support extended learning opportunities.


### First-generation Engagement

The North Dakota 4-H program has diversified itself by providing a number of different opportunities for youth participation. 4-H is slowly breaking down the stereotype that it is only for farm youth.

This diversification brings challenges, and the opportunities may be growing beyond our ability to support them. The number of staff providing leadership and support is static, especially for the last five years.

We also have responsibility for reaching and retaining new audiences. Population consolidation in the oil-impacted counties, Native American Indian reservations and urban counties creates opportunities to reach first-generation 4-H (and Extension) families, but our staffing limitations are a significant obstacle.

**4-H has the responsibility to conduct a diverse and inclusive program that reflects the demographics and social conditions of the North Dakota population to be served.**

 **THE NEED:** Designated funding support to more intentionally reach and retain youth and their families who reside in areas where population consolidation is occurring in North Dakota.

### Ag-bioscience Engagement


Youth are an intentional audience for NDSU Extension; they are our future. The challenge is daunting: We must find new ways to feed 9.8 billion people in this world by the year 2050. North Dakota, as part of the North Central Region of the U.S., is part of an agricultural powerhouse. A significant burden of responsibility for feeding this future population rests with the agricultural and ag-bioscience knowledge base, business and industry.

One of the challenges is preparing our youth population with 21st century job skills. Foundational to this skill set will be competency in science, including ag-bioscience, to prepare youth for careers in this area. Wall Street, the U.S. Department of Labor and the U.S. Department of Agriculture report increasing job opportunities associated with agriculture. In North Dakota, agriculture is a job creator.

Not enough youth are in the pipeline to fill these jobs. 4-H youth development can be part of the solution. In the 2018 North Central Region (NCR), a 4-H Volunteer Impact Study reported that 96% of participants said "volunteers help youth gain learning and leadership skills as they (youth) prepare for careers and engage in communities."

STEM (science) education is the first and most prominent part of the answer. It is the pathway that leads to good problem-solving skills, career development and innovation, and is tied closely to our society's success in helping feed these 9.8 billion people. This challenge also provides significant entrepreneurial opportunities related to agriculture.

**As a land-grant university to the state's agriculture and natural resources base, NDSU has the responsibility for engaging the state's youngest citizens – its youth – to be work- and career-ready for employment in agriculture. 4-H youth will be prepared to be productive and contributing members of an ag-bioscience workforce.**

 **THE NEED:** Designated funding support to engage youth in a 4-H ag-bioscience program focus.

Data in this report are from the 2018 4-H Volunteer Impact Study conducted by the NCR volunteer Extension specialists and evaluation specialists from Minnesota and Wisconsin.

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