

4-H Youth Venture Action Plan Workbook



Dream It. Do It.

**A step by step guide for creating and launching
a successful 4-H Youth Venture.**

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New Hampshire 4-H Youth Venture Introduction

Welcome

This Action Plan is structured to help you think through your community-benefiting idea and easily turn it into a successful Venture.

Once you've completed this Action Plan, you will be well on your way to making real and meaningful **changes in your community**. You will become an important part of an **emerging movement of young people**, and you will help alter the perception and role of youth in society. This is your opportunity to take charge and to show the power that you and your team, as young people, have to **shape your world**.

By following this Action Plan, you will create a Venture: a sustainable organization that **positively impacts the community**. Ventures can be for-profit or nonprofit businesses, school-based clubs, or community organizations. Ventures can be almost anything you imagine! 4-H Youth Venture is here to offer a range of support—including **up to \$1,000**—to help you launch your idea.

These are the criteria for becoming a 4-H Youth Venture Team:

- ✓ You and your Venture's leadership team are **ages 12-18**.
- ✓ Your Venture **benefits the community**.
- ✓ Your Venture is **youth-created** and **youth-led**.
- ✓ Your Venture is a **new** organization or a new program within an existing organization.
- ✓ Your Venture is ongoing and **sustainable** (not a one-time event).
- ✓ Your Venture has clear, **attainable goals** and a realistic budget.
- ✓ You are a part of a **team** that is trustworthy and committed to ethical standards.

Becoming an official 4-H Youth Venture Team is a **two-part process**: The first step is to complete and submit **one Action Plan as a team**. From there, you'll be invited to present your idea and plan to a **Selection Panel**, a group of community members who believe in the power of youth and want to help your team be successful.

This Action Plan will help you structure your Venture by asking your team to think through and plan your Venture's goals and activities. If you **thoughtfully** answer the following questions in the application, you will have a clear and **useful tool** that will help your team organize, start, and maintain a successful Venture. This Action Plan also serves as your team's application for grant funding from 4-H Youth Venture and for official acceptance into the 4-H Youth Venture network.

Since the 4-H Youth Venture program wants to help you be truly successful in this effort, they may ask you to **revise** sections of your Action Plan if it is too vague or if your team forgot to mention something significant.

If you have any questions along the way, or if you would like someone from 4-H Youth Venture to review a draft of your plan, just email or phone us! There's usually someone available Monday through Friday from 9:00am – 5:00pm EST.

Congratulations on choosing to apply to become a 4-H Youth Venturer! We know you have the power to create and lead your own community-benefiting Venture, and we look forward to helping you! Good luck!

For inquiries about Action Plans contact:

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Create Smart Goals

The section helps your Venture Team to set SMART goals. These goals are one of the most important parts of your Action Plan because they will be the driving force behind your Venture. Ask yourself: What three or four activities are most important to our team?

Specific: Is the goal detailed enough that someone who isn't a part of your team would know what needs to be done and how?

Measurable: Is there a clear way to measure success? How will your team know when you've reached your goal?

Actionable: Is there a clear series of steps to take to accomplish your team's goal?

Realistic: Is it possible to reach this goal considering the resources available to your team?

Timely: When will the goal be accomplished?

This goal is **specific** since it is clear what needs to be done to reach the goal. You don't have to be in the Venture to understand this goal.

A Sample **SMART** Goal: Our Venture will host two high school talent shows in October and in April to raise money for art programs in low-income schools. By charging admission, we expect to raise \$300 per show. We will donate 60% of our proceeds to an arts foundation and keep the rest for future Venture projects.

This goal is **timely** because it describes when the shows will occur: April and October.

This goal is **measurable** because it defines success as earning \$300.

This goal is **actionable** since it implies a clear series of steps: auditions, rehearsals, advertising, and the shows.

This goal is **realistic** because it relies on resources students have readily available to them.

SMART Goals Checklist

Review each SMART goal to make sure it meets the following criteria. Put a check next to each criterion the SMART goal meets. The first blank is for SMART Goal #1, the second blank for SMART Goal #2, and the third blank for SMART Goal #3. If the goal does not meet a particular criterion, make a suggestion that will help the writer revise their goal.

- 1. The goal is specific.
- 2. The goal is measurable.
- 3. The goal is actionable.
- 4. The goal is realistic.
- 5. The goal is timely.
- 6. The goal fits with the team's Venture Idea.
- 7. The goal is focused and clearly written.
- 8. The goal is written in complete sentences.
- 9. Spelling and punctuation are correct.

Additional Comments or Suggestions for SMART Goals 1, 2, and 3:

Budget Your Venture

4-H Youth Venture awards grants of **up to \$1,000** to help Ventures get *started*. This means the 4-H Youth Venture grant can be used to cover a Venture's expenses until the Venture starts earning funding on its own.

This budget is your team's chance to explain your Venture's financial needs, the amount it will cost your Venture to start running. Show all of the expenses and income your team expects to have as you launch and sustain your Venture—at least through the first year. The amount of the 4-H Youth Venture grant award is based on the information provided in your application.

Follow the bullet points below and illustrate your budget in the 4-H Youth Venture Budget Report spreadsheet; this spreadsheet is located on the CD. You may use the form to complete your budget or, if you prefer, you may create your own budget forms using a word-processing or spreadsheet program. Additional resources are available if you go to www.youthventure.org and click Take Action. In addition, 4-H Youth Venture staff members are always ready to help if you need guidance. Email or call us at 4hventure@unh.edu or (603) 862.2198.

- **List all of your Venture's start-up expenses.** Be as specific as possible (i.e., rather than listing baking supplies for making apple pies \$725.00, indicate specific costs such as a mixer with a large bowl and large dough hook at \$250 = \$250; Baking supplies and ingredients at \$250 = \$250; aprons at \$4 each = \$16 etc.). Please note 4-H Youth Venture grants cannot be used for salaries, payments to team members, or anything unnecessary to the success of your Venture.

Also remember that Venturers are entrepreneurial. Be creative and resourceful in finding ways to accomplish what your team has set out to do. Accordingly, your Venture's Action Plan should reflect that your team...

- Asked for donations (as many as possible!)
- Borrowed material, if possible, rather than purchased new material
- Asked for discounts, deals or "in-kind" donations when making purchases
- Researched costs and purchased products or services at the best value

List all of the income your team expects your Venture to earn. Consider possible sources of income, such as fundraisers, cash donations, donated services or materials, admission fees, or revenue from selling a product or service. How will your Venture acquire funding after the start-up grant has been spent? Estimate how much your Venture will be able to raise in order to sustain itself.

What is Sustainability?

Definition: A **sustainable** venture must be mindful of its **future** as it accomplishes immediate goals; this ensures that there will always be sufficient **resources** available to achieve its goals in the future.

Resources are people, materials, or facilities used to achieve a goal. Ventures gather resources to maintain their organization and to accomplish their goals.

Purpose: Ongoing ventures can have a **greater impact** on their communities than one-time projects or events.

Sustainable Ventures plan how they will maintain important resources such as volunteers, leaders, and funding.

Membership: Team members, volunteers or employees make ventures possible. It's important to keep members engaged if the venture is going to succeed. Expanding volunteer opportunities maximizes community impact.

Leadership: Your venture shouldn't suffer because the leader leaves. Establish a system for leadership succession; help ensure that there will always be a driving force behind your venture.

Funding: Youth Venture grants must be used in the first year. Ventures need to find ways to fund their efforts after the seed money is gone.

Example of a Sustainable Venture

Charlotte of Bedford, New Hampshire designed SeniorConnect to have all the components of a successful, sustainable venture. SeniorConnect maintains its membership by posting volunteer opportunities on its website. Charlotte is getting ready to go to college, but SeniorConnect will not be left without a leader; Charlotte has trained other volunteers to take over when she leaves. SeniorConnect continues to fundraise by writing grants and seeking donations from local businesses and foundations.

Final Steps

Once your team completes this Action Plan, you should be ready to submit it to 4-H Youth Venture. From here, it's on to Selection Panel—and then, if accepted, the actual launch of your Venture. Congratulations!

The Selection Panel Review will be based on your team's written application and an interview for the following points of your Venture:

- Youth Created, Led and Managed
- Makes a Difference in the Community
- Designed to be a Lasting/Ongoing Organization
- Involves a Strong Team
- Involves a Partner
- Clear, Attainable Goals
- Credible Plan and Budget
- Ethical Standards
- Energy and Skills to Succeed

Final Steps:

- Before submitting your team's Action Plan, take a few moments to review your responses. They should answer each question fully, be an accurate and detailed depiction of your Venture, and it should be clearly written (spell check!).
- **Photocopy or reprint the Venture Team Member Contact Form and Agreement for each member of your team. EACH team member is REQUIRED to complete, sign, and submit this form with the Action Plan. Team members under 18 are required to have their parents or guardians sign as well.**
- Photocopy or reprint the Media Parental Permission Form for each member. This form is optional. All team members who choose to give 4-H Youth Venture permission to use their image and story must sign this form; however, team members under the age of 18 must have a parent/guardian sign as well.

Final Steps

- Please check to be sure your Action Plan includes the following:

Part ONE:

- Venture Idea
- SMART Goals
- Accomplish Your Goal/ Invento
- Timeline
- Roles & Responsibilities
- Sustainability

Part TWO:

- Planning for your Expenses
- Preparing for your Income
- Budget Summary

Part THREE:

- Conditions of Association
- Youth Venture Terms and Legal Agreement
- Terms of Agreement
- Youth Member Contact Form and Agreement
- Team Information
- Media Parental Permission Form**
- References
- Adult Member Contact Form and Agreement
- Final Steps

Please send your completed Action Plan by mail to your 4-H Youth Venture office at **4-H Youth Venture, 180 Main Street, Moiles House, Durham, NH 03824-2536.**

Your Action Plan will be reviewed within a few days after we receive it. If any revisions are needed, you will be guided in doing that. Then, you'll be invited to present your Venture idea to a Selection Panel. Selection Panels typically occur approximately two-to-four weeks after submission.

Questions? Email or call us at 4hventure@unh.edu, (603).862.2198 or aballenger@youthventure.org, (603).223.9864