

Key Issue Form

1. Title: Meeting Needs of Children, Youth and Families

2. Description:

Rapidly changing environmental conditions, including demographics, economics, family strength and structure, priorities and performance of NH schools, public policy, and community resources and systems are impacting youth outcomes.

- a. Out-of-school time: The capacity of NH families and communities to meet the needs of children and youth, especially during out of school times, is challenged by a shrinking pool of resources to support universal access to quality programs, services, and positive youth development experiences.
- b. Volunteerism: Programs dependent on volunteers, such as 4-H youth development, are greatly impacted by a changing volunteer pool.

3. Public Value:

- a. Out-of-School Time: Healthy environments with opportunities for learning and leadership by youth and adults in their communities promote positive youth and family development.
- b. Volunteerism: Volunteering has many benefits. The unskilled unemployed, including those between jobs, can keep their skills polished. Early retirees can find the esteem they seek by offering their life experience. Younger volunteers can enhance their employability by gaining skills and building their resume. Volunteers of all ages can improve systems of organizations by contributing their “high tech” skills learned in school and/or in the workplace.

4. Identify and summarize key data that help make the case that this is a key issue

- a. Out-of-school time:
 - “A significant proportion of American children are at substantial risk for negative outcomes: infant mortality, undernourishment, abuse, neglect, poor health, substance abuse, teenage pregnancy, crime, violence, and academic underachievement, due to family, community, social, political, and economic conditions which they have not created. Poverty exacerbates most other risk factors, and it is the central reason that many children and families do not thrive”. (CYFAR overview, dated 07/19/2007, <http://www.csrees.usda.gov/nea/family/cyfar/philosophy.html>).
 - “Roughly 23% of NH youth go home alone after-school. After-school programs keep kids safe, help working families, and inspire learning”. (PlusTime NH Annual Report 2007).
 - The 2007 NH High School Youth Risk Behavior Survey (YRBS) shows multiple risk behaviors including carrying weapons (18%), being victims

of theft or property damage on school property (25%), use of tobacco products including cigars (26%), use of marijuana (40%), access to illegal drugs on school property (22%), having sexual intercourse (45%), having sexual intercourse with multiple partners (34%), feeling so sad or hopeless they stopped doing usual activities (17% males, 32% females), spending one or more hours / week in clubs or organizations outside of school (only 26%), feeling like they matter to people in their community (only 45% males, 37% females).

b. Volunteerism:

- Volunteers are more interested than ever in issues and causes, more demanding about the nature of their volunteer work, desire more meaningful and challenging projects, less tolerant of authoritative management and bureaucracy, and expect to be treated professionally. (The Art of Volunteer Development, Chapter 3, Current Volunteer Trends and Issues. <http://arts.utah.gov/services/publications/handbooks/documents/Volunteermanualch3.pdf>)

5. How does/would addressing this issue tie into UNHCE mission?

a. Out-of-School Time - efforts in two areas – CYFAR and 4-H After-school – have served to prove that UNHCE has a significant role in improving the quality and quantity of out-of-school time experiences at the community level across the state. When children are in safe enriching environments during those times when they aren't in school or in the supervision of family, everyone benefits including child, family and community. The 4-H Youth Development program is providing important expertise in volunteer management, curriculum, and the essentials of quality environments for youth; and is a key resource in communities for the professional development for after-school program staff.

b. Volunteerism - A major focus on volunteerism across the UNHCE system – to include establishing collaborative networking systems, exploring and adopting new leadership and management styles, and working more productively across the academic continuum and within the corporate world - could energize UNHCE programs in achieving our mission “to strengthen youth, families and communities, sustain natural resources, and improve the economy”.

6. What Extension programs/activities, if any, currently address this issue? For each, describe how the program/activity addresses the issue.

a. Out-of-School Time –

- CYFAR - To assure that critical needs of children and families are met, CYFAR supports comprehensive, intensive, community-based programs developed with active citizen participation in all phases. CYFAR promotes building resiliency and protective factors in youth, families, and communities. CYFAR programs are limited to 2-3 communities per 5-year cycle. NH has

served only six communities with intensive CYFAR programs since 1991; however has increased organizational capacity to do more.

- 4-H After-school – NH is in the early stages of integrating 4-H into existing after-school programs, having developed basic tools for partnership development and assisted 16 programs in 9 counties with the acquisition of small grants from National 4-H Council / JCPenney After-school Fund.
- NPASS – through a multi-state grant, UNHCE has partnered with museums, NSF and other states to provide intensive science-based training and support for after-school providers.

b. Volunteerism

- 4-H staff has provided training for PlusTime NH after-school sites on the volunteer management system.
- NH is hosting the North East Volunteer Leader Forum in October 2008, as well as regional volunteer leader forums across the state.

7. Other organizations currently addressing this issue

a. Out-of-School Time

- PlusTime NH provides support in the start-up or expansion of programs, sponsors AmeriCorps and AmeriCorps*VISTA for direct programming, and provides consulting services and training.
- NH After-school Coalition is a group of statewide leaders working to address the professional development and certification of program staff, and foster program quality and compliance with state licensing standards. Members include Dept. of Education, Bureau of Child Care Licensing, Early Learning NH, Easter Seals/Resource & Referral, PlusTime NH, UNHCE, NH colleges and universities. Collaboration regarding this issue is essential and each partner has a unique and critical role.

b. Volunteerism

- Volunteer NH! seeks to support the changing trends of volunteerism through an annual conference – UNHCE staff are heavily involved as presenters at this conference.
- NH Association of Volunteer Administrators (NHAVA) is dedicated to supporting and strengthening the profession of volunteer administration in the State of New Hampshire through education, networking and recognition.

8. If UNHCE doesn't currently address this issue, how might we address it in the future?

b. Volunteerism – In addition to what is already in place, new strategies, training, and overall systems are needed to address the growing need to support our mission with volunteers. “Because of the rapid pace and limited time in many people’s lives today, organizations need to become more adept at sequencing volunteers in and out of organizations and developing systems to re-invite people after they have been on a volunteer sabbatical due to other life pressures”. *Betty B. Stallings, Building Better Skill*