4-H Citizenship Program

*Connecting, learning, engaging, leading and impacting*

**Definition:**
4-H Citizenship is the knowledge, skills, attitudes and motivation that give youth the capacity to move beyond one’s individual self-interest and to be committed to the well-being of some larger group.

**Vision:**
Youth will make a positive difference by engaging in learning opportunities that give them a heightened sense of responsibility and capacity to connect as active members of their communities, nation and world.

**Key Focus Areas**
- **Civic engagement**
  - Voice
  - Advocacy
  - Activism
  - Deliberative, informed decision making
- **Service**
  - Community service
  - Service learning
  - Community youth development
- **Civic education**
  - Government principles, processes and structures
  - Personal roles and responsibilities
  - History and cultural heritage
  - Global understanding
- **Personal development**
  - Leadership
  - Mutual respect and understanding
  - Character development
  - Critical thinking and problem solving

**Effective 4-H Youth Citizenship programs will allow young people to:**
- **CONNECT** – Be active partners in a larger community as they recognize, appreciate and respect human diversity and commonality; understand their part in shaping change and work together towards the common good.
• **LEARN**—Learn from others, self and environment to develop informed perspectives, empathy, ethics, pro-social values, positive self identity and sense of social responsibility.

• **ENGAGE**—Engage in political education and awareness, social justice, advocacy, negotiation, public problem solving, community service, etc.

• **LEAD**—Develop leadership skills where youth use their voices, work, ideas or behavior for the greater good.

• **IMPACT**—Make a difference in community, country and world

**Effective 4-H Youth Citizenship programs will include the following strategies for learning & positive youth development:**

**Learning**

• Based on appropriate national and state learning standards
• Meet youth where they are
• Mentorship
• Experiential learning providing opportunities for practice, application and reflection including critical thinking and problem solving.
• Motivation—achievement, affiliation and power/influence (McClelland’s Motivational Model)
• Learning styles
• Using appropriate technology

**Positive Youth Development**

• Youth/Adult Partnership approach—youth and adults work together in a positive and respectful environment, contributing their unique strengths to the project and their relationship.
• Youth are engaged in the identification, planning, implementation, leadership and evaluation of the program.
• Youth in Governance
• Includes the **Essential Elements** of Positive Youth Development—mastery, independence, belonging and generosity
• Parent/guardian component running in parallel
• Provide a continuum of developmentally appropriate experiences and opportunities

**This is a guiding document created at the National 4-H Citizenship Mission Mandate Program Summit in Baton Rouge, LA in September 2010.**

**Contact**
Doug Swanson, 4-H National Headquarters, dswanson@nifa.usda.gov

8/1/2011