



**Beyond
Ready**

2025 National 4-H Index Study



Executive Summary

The **2025 National 4-H Index Study** marks the fourth annual nationwide assessment of how 4-H programming influences youth development and readiness for the future. Conducted in collaboration with 38 state 4-H programs, this study provides a national baseline for the Beyond Ready initiative, which aims to ensure that 10 million young people are prepared for work and life by 2030.

Study Scope and Methodology

- Data were collected from **7,369 youth** across diverse demographics, reflecting the broader 4-H population.
- Responses focused on the attribution **"Because of 4-H, I..."**, ensuring outcomes were directly tied to program impact.
- Measures included *youth program quality*, *Beyond Ready outcomes* (healthy, productive, engaged), *4-H program outcomes* (work, college/career, leadership, STEM), and *personal attributes* (hopeful purpose and personal responsibility).

Key Findings

Program Quality

- **Sparks:** **84%** of youth reported being passionate about their 4-H activities, and **82%** had opportunities to explore personal interests.
- **Belonging:** **90%** felt safe in 4-H and **85%** felt welcome.
- **Developmental Relationships:** Youth experienced strong adult partnerships; **95%** felt respected, and **83%** said adults expected them to have a positive future.
- *Higher quality program experiences strongly correlated with readiness outcomes.*

Program Outcomes

- **Work Readiness Skills:** **92%** learned how to act professionally; **91%** reported persistence; yet opportunities remain to deepen skill development.
- **College & Career Readiness:** **76%** said 4-H had a moderate to extreme influence; older youth (17+) reported higher readiness.
- **Post-Secondary Pathway Support:** Youth ages 17+ were more likely to report receiving support, highlighting a need for expanded opportunities across ages.
- **Leadership:** **64%** participated in leadership projects, but overall skill impact was moderate. Formal leadership projects significantly boosted outcomes.
- **STEM:** Low to moderate overall impact; stronger results for youth in STEM projects, especially ages 17+.

Beyond Ready Outcomes

- **Healthy Youth:** **71%** reported that 4-H moderately to extremely influenced their ability to care for physical health; **68%** said the same about emotional health.
- **Productive Youth (Time Management):** **83%** credited 4-H with helping them use their time wisely.
- **Engaged Youth:** **87%** reported 4-H influenced their desire to engage in community service and leadership.

Personal Attributes – Skills for Life

- **Hopeful Purpose:** **85%** were excited about their future; **83%** trusted they would have a positive future; **76%** believed they would make a difference.
- **Responsibility and Character:** **87%** reported taking responsibility for actions, and **85%** could be counted on to follow through.

4-H's Influence

- Strongest influence reported in *community engagement (87%)*, *productive time use (83%)*, and *personal responsibility/character (88%)*.
- Moderate influence on *college and career readiness (76%)* and *post-secondary pathway support (68%)*—areas identified for further growth.

Measurement Development

The study also provided the foundation for new evaluation measures to be added to the 4-H Common Measures library, covering health, productivity, engagement, work readiness, college and career readiness, leadership, and post-secondary pathway support.

Conclusion

The **2025 National 4-H Index Study** demonstrates that 4-H continues to significantly contribute to youth development by fostering sparks, belonging, strong adult relationships, and developing essential work-life readiness skills. Youth report high levels of optimism, responsibility, and engagement, confirming 4-H's unique role in preparing young people to be Beyond Ready.

At the same time, findings highlight opportunities to strengthen college/career readiness, STEM engagement, and structured pathway support to fully realize the 2030 goal of 10 million youth ready for work and life.



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