



Extension



The Link Between UW Extension and 4-H Councils

4-H is the youth development program of the United States Department of Agriculture and the Cooperative Extension System of the nation's land-grant universities. In Wyoming, 4-H Youth Development programming has a dual focus: providing educational programs for youth and offering youth development leadership for communities. 4-H groups exist to extend and support Extension's youth educational efforts and are considered a formal component of Extension's programming. These groups are accountable to Extension for their activities and finances, and their continuation is contingent upon Extension's authorization and oversight, which is provided at the local level by the 4-H/Youth Educator.

The 4-H/Youth Educator Role

The 4-H/Youth Educator is the leader and decision-maker for all 4-H/Youth programs and groups within the county. While collaboration with the county 4-H Council is encouraged, the Educator has full authority to manage the budget, set priorities, and guide the program according to the mission and goals of the Wyoming 4-H program.

Responsibilities of the 4-H/Youth Educator

Program Leadership

- Provides vision, leadership, and oversight for the county's 4-H/Youth program.
- Serves as the primary link to the larger 4-H/Youth and UW Extension system.
- Brings state and national resources, policies, training, and materials to the county level.
- Teaches and supports youth development, organizational skills, and volunteer development through training, meetings, and educational materials.

Program Administration

- Ensures all programs using the 4-H name and emblem align with Extension's mission and policies.
- Monitors compliance with state and national 4-H policies, as well as federal and state nondiscrimination laws.
- Provides oversight and education for the financial accountability of 4-H groups, ensuring compliance with federal and state tax requirements.

Volunteer Management

- Implements the Wyoming 4-H/Youth New Leader Orientation and Risk Management Policies.
- Develops and manages a comprehensive volunteer system, including selection, training, recognition, and evaluation.
- Supports volunteers in their efforts to deliver quality 4-H programming.

Youth Development Leadership

- Facilitates positive youth development through clubs, activities, and leadership opportunities.
- Encourages youth engagement in 4-H-sponsored programs and fosters leadership roles for older youth.

The Role of the County 4-H Council

The County 4-H Council operates as an advisory group, providing support and input to the 4-H/Youth Educator. While the Council plays an important role in assisting the program, it does not have authority over program decisions, budgets, or staff. The Educator retains full responsibility for the administration and oversight of all aspects of the program.

Council Responsibilities

Advisory and Support Role

- Works with the 4-H/Youth Educator to assess the needs of the county's 4-H program through an annual needs assessment.
- Provides recommendations on youth and volunteer needs, educational opportunities, and program challenges.

Fundraising and Financial Support

- Raises funds and develops a budget to support county-level educational opportunities for youth and volunteers.
- Advises on financial priorities while ensuring alignment with the Educator's program goals.
- Serves as part of the county's financial checks and balances, with the Educator working alongside the treasurer to internally review all finances on a monthly or quarterly basis to enhance financial accountability.

Volunteer and Youth Engagement

- Supports volunteer development through training, financial assistance, and promotion of opportunities.
- Advocates for the value of 4-H programs within the community.

Recognition and Advocacy

- Assists in developing recognition programs for youth and volunteers.
- Promotes 4-H programs and maintains communication with stakeholders, including elected officials.

4-H Committees

Committees within the 4-H program exist to focus on specific purposes, events, or activities and operate under the oversight of the 4-H/Youth Educator.

Committee Guidelines

- All committees are accountable to the 4-H/Youth Educator.
- Committees must maintain clear communication with the Educator and provide meeting minutes and updates as needed.
- Standing committees should have bylaws or operating guidelines reviewed annually.

The 4-H/Youth Educator holds ultimate authority and accountability for all aspects of the county's 4-H program. While the County 4-H Council and committees provide valuable support and advice, the Educator's decisions regarding program direction, budgeting, and compliance are final. This structure ensures that the program operates in alignment with the mission and goals of the Wyoming 4-H program and the broader Extension system.