



## **4-H LIFE Evaluation Methodology**

The research on the impacts of the 4-H LIFE program was guided by a program logic model (PLM) that provided a conceptual framework for evaluating impacts. The PLM, developed jointly by program staff, participants, community stakeholders, and the program evaluators, listed the inputs, activities, and outputs of the program, and illustrated how the program was expected to lead to program impacts.

Several research methods were used to evaluate the impacts of the 4-H LIFE Program. First, basic information on program participation was maintained in an output tracking system. This on-going data collection effort provided reliable information on the number of program participants, their demographic characteristics, and alerted program staff to any changes in program participation that might be occurring over time.

The evaluation also included focus group research in which the 4-H LIFE fathers were interviewed about the perceived impacts of the program on their children. The results of that research, described in the focus group report, indicated that the program has intermediate effects on the parent-child relationship that translated into long-term benefits for the child. These research findings were illustrated in selected video footage from two documentaries that focused on the 4-H LIFE program and incarcerated fathers.

A third component of the program evaluation focused on changes in the life skills of the children and youth that participated. This component relied on a survey, which was administered twice a year and covered seven categories of life skills: academics and learning, goal setting and goal achievement, decision making, problem solving, communication, social competencies, and self-esteem. The results indicated both the areas of greatest positive impacts as well as potential areas for improving the 4-H LIFE Program.

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