

# 4-H More than you imagined



HEAD, HEART,  
HANDS, HEALTH

*4-H is a community of 104,000 young people across Missouri learning leadership, citizenship and life skills.*

## 4-H Youth Development: An Overview

Young people become confident, mature adults ready for success in today's challenging world through 4-H, the only youth development program with a direct connection to technological advances from research conducted at state land-grant universities.

Studies show that the more than 6.5 million youth participating in 4-H across America do better in school, are more motivated to help others, feel safe to try new things, achieve a sense of self-esteem, and develop lasting friendships.

Boys and girls of all races and ethnic backgrounds in urban, suburban and rural communities across America and on U.S. military installations worldwide participate in 4-H experiences. 4-H programs are offered through school-based, after-school and camp settings and community clubs.

Missouri 4-H welcomes all young people ages 5 to 18. For kids ages 5 to 7, there is a special 4-H program called the Clover Kids. There is a small fee to join 4-H. Some projects may require a small investment to get started, and there may be charges for materials or special trips.

## Contemporary Focus

The fundamental 4-H ideal of practical, "learn by doing" experiences encourages youth to experiment, innovate and think independently.

4-H has three mission mandates: **science, engineering and technology**; **healthy living**; and **citizenship**. Youth learn leadership, citizenship and life skills through projects with topics as varied as rocketry, GPS mapping, public speaking, photography, nutrition and community service.

## Positive Youth Development

Educators at 106 land-grant universities operate 4-H programs in every state and U.S. territory, alongside trained youth and adult volunteers. Learning opportunities are designed around four essential elements necessary for positive youth development: **independence, belonging, generosity and mastery**.

4-H is operated and supported by a shared leadership of public and private partners including National 4-H Headquarters; USDA within the Cooperative State Research, Education and Extension Service; Cooperative Extension educators at land-grant universities; National 4-H Council; 4-H associations and foundations; and volunteers. Missouri 4-H is sponsored by University of Missouri Extension in partnership with the University of Missouri, Lincoln University, and state, federal and county governments in each Missouri county.

## An American Institution

The 4-H youth development movement began more than 100 years ago. It evolved from rural youth programs created by land-grant college and university researchers and the United States Department of Agriculture to introduce new technology to what was then a country of primarily rural communities. As our nation's economic and demographic profiles become more diverse, 4-H adapts and expands to meet the needs of all youth.

*You can find more information on the Missouri 4-H Web site: [4h.missouri.edu](http://4h.missouri.edu) or call 1-800-642-8041.*

