

4-H Career Readiness Framework

Growing a Generation Prepared to Succeed in Life & Career



NATIONAL 4-H
COUNCIL

A Serious Problem: The American Workforce Deficit

More than one-third of employers globally reported talent shortages in 2014, according to the ManPowerGroup Annual Talent Shortage Survey. **The reason, in one word: skills.**

The future of the United States economy, and the future of our youth, depends on a robust pipeline of skilled workers ready to fill the roles most in need - scientists, engineers and healthcare professionals who will lead at work and in our communities.

- Yet half of all high school students report that they are not prepared for life after high school – for college or career – and most are unsure about their career path when they graduate.
- *Guidepost for Success* studies by the U.S. Department of Labor have shown that the crux of the issue is that young people, especially at-risk populations, do not understand the role of a particular job and cannot identify a pathway to attain it.

- Top reasons employers say they can't fill positions: Lack of technical and workplace skills. (*ManPowerGroup Annual Talent Shortage Survey*)
- Only 14% of Americans – and only 11% of business leaders – strongly agree that college graduates have necessary skills for success. (*Gallup Poll*)

Despite this lack of direction, more youth than ever are graduating high school and enrolling in post-secondary education. These youth are credentialed on paper, but lack the critical skills to succeed in their careers. **This is America's very real, and very critical, career readiness gap.**

A 4-H Solution: A Clear Career Pathway for America's Youth

4-H, the nation's largest youth development organization, is proven to grow confident young people with the skills to thrive in life today and career tomorrow. 4-H has the reach and the research-backed approach to address the critical skills gap among American youth—and the resulting career readiness gap that is plaguing the nation.

Research has shown that to be successful in college and prepared for the workforce, young people need to explore the topic area, develop skills necessary for success, immerse themselves in the field of work and experience these skills at work. These experiences, which produce career-ready young adults, are an intrinsic part of the 4-H experience.

National 4-H Council has engaged with youth development experts throughout Cooperative Extension to develop a career readiness framework to grow millions of career-ready 4-Hers across the nation. This is a framework that 4-H educators can use to:

1. Enhance existing 4-H programs with a more intentional career readiness overlay; or
2. Develop programs focused exclusively on college/post-secondary preparation and career readiness (such as the 4-H Youth Futures program in St. Louis, Missouri and the 4-H Juntos program in North Carolina).

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This 4-H Career Readiness Framework centers on a four-step pathway to career readiness: from **exploring to learning to practicing to experiencing**, and ultimately, to a clear career goal and **career success**.

This model allows for youth to move throughout the stages fluidly to:

- Explore and discover potential career paths
- Learn the skills and concepts associated with careers
- Practice through engaging, hands-on projects
- Experience the career through real-world professionals and immersion activities



The fluidity of the model, combined with the expansive and ever-growing collection of 4-H curricula and projects, allows 4-Hers to move back and forth between steps and experiment with different career paths throughout their 4-H experience. In this way, they will find the right career fit for them, while gaining vital skills.

A Transformational Vision: 10 Million Youth Ready for Life & Career

Just imagine the potential!

- The proven **4-H experience**
- Enhanced with an intentional **4-H Career Readiness Framework**
- Embraced by a national network of **110 land-grant universities** and more than **3,000 4-H educators** serving every county and parish in the country

National 4-H Council's bold vision is to impact 10 million youth in the U.S. by 2025 – empowering them with the skills they need to be ready for life today and for career tomorrow.

Through the support of our partners, we can accelerate program piloting, resource development and program delivery to impact more youth, more quickly. Together, 4-H and its partners will grow a generation who will lead in the workplace and in the community.

Case Study: Demonstrated Success in North Carolina

4-H Juntos—"Together" in Spanish—was developed by North Carolina 4-H Cooperative Extension. Now in its seventh year, it joins partners from 4-H with local middle schools, community colleges and businesses to provide educational resources to Hispanic students and their parents. The goals: 1) to prepare eighth- and ninth-grade youth for a successful transition to high school; and, 2) to equip them with the tools to succeed in secondary and post-secondary education. Over the last seven years, the 4-H Juntos Program has impacted approximately 2,200 youth and nearly 1,400 parents in 53 rural sites in seven states.

www.4-H.org