4-H and Youth Development Advisory Board

4-H and Youth Advisory Board – Justification for Change:

Youth boards have been in place in counties for over six years. As with any other concept or initiative, it is practical to review the youth board concept to gain a better perspective of where we are as an agency and within the youth board. A recent survey was conducted with County Extension Agents that provided the 4-H and Youth Development Unit insight into what was working, what was not working, and what could be addressed to ensure youth voice is being heard in county youth programs.

This board is a means of maintaining a grassroots connection, making certain that youth programs are relevant to the target audience.

4-H and Youth Advisory Board:

For many years, programs for youth have been driven by the social problems or risks young people experience. These deficit-based programs are designed to “keep kids out of trouble” by exposing them to positive activities and relationships. They are usually developed and conducted by adult “experts,” with little or no input from young people themselves.

Over the last two decades, there has been a shift in the way many organizations serve youth with the realization that youth-adult partnerships are essential. Key ingredients in a successful program are the role young people play, the relationship between the adults and young people involved, and the settings in which programs take place (The Innovation Center for Community and Youth Development, 2003).

Research shows that when young people work with adult volunteers

- the youth programs will be more successful and have a greater impact;
- the ability of young people to communicate well, solve problems, and work effectively with others will increase significantly; and
- the young people will mature and become more responsible and compassionate because they are involved in “caring for” other young people.

Thus, it is important for young people to be involved with the county Extension agent and adult volunteers in developing, implementing, evaluating and interpreting educational programs for youth. The 4-H and Youth Advisory Board supports the 4-H and youth development program just as the Program Area Committees support the other base programs in Extension.

4-H and Youth Advisory Board requirements:

The board meets face-to-face with the County Extension Agent at least twice annually. At other times the board is strongly urged to communicate using distance technologies such as chat rooms, e-conferencing and blogs. Members serve 2-year terms. It is recommended that the board be made up of 8 to 15 (3 youth/1 adult ratio) people who work or have interest in
the area of 4-H and youth development and who represent the demographics and diversity of the county.

Youth members should represent the different schools including home school, come from different parts of the counties, and different Commissioner precincts. Examples of ways to select youth include: 1.) youth could be selected by county Extension agents; 2.) established as a new officer position for each club in the county; or 3.) selected from the County 4-H Council by Council members. The ages of youth members should range from 12 to 18, at the discretion of the county Extension agent. Adult members should have a broad perspective and be able to think beyond the traditional 4-H program. They should be passionate about serving young people in their communities. Examples of ways to select adults include, county Extension agents selecting committee members from the community to meet the needs of the committee or selecting from the County Volunteer Leaders Association by members. All membership is at the discretion of the county Extension agents in that county.

The 4-H and Youth Advisory Board serves a strategic function by helping the County Extension Agent determine what programs should be implemented from year to year, reviewing the educational impacts of programs, determining how to reach new youth audiences, and helping decide whether task forces or coalitions are needed to address priority issues.

Counties that have a current structure that is meeting the programming planning committee structure can keep their structure in place.

**The roles and responsibilities of the 4-H and Youth Advisory Board, 4-H Council & Volunteer Leaders Association:**

The 4-H and Youth Advisory Board, 4-H Council and Volunteer Leaders Association have distinct roles. The board is made up of both young people and adults. It supports the County Extension Agent in planning, conducting, evaluating and interpreting youth development programs. The 4-H Council is the youth leadership of the 4-H program. The council trains 4-H officers, plans leadership development sessions for members, and promotes the 4-H program. Volunteer Leaders Association is an organization of adult volunteers. It trains and recognizes volunteer leaders, promotes the 4-H program, and helps develop program resources.

**4-H and Youth Advisory Board Roles and Responsibilities:**

The 4-H and Youth Advisory Board and county Extension agents work together in what is known as the program development process. The board’s responsibility is described in the following outline.

1) **Oversight for the 4-H and Youth Development Program:**

   A. Annually review the county youth enrollment, program evaluations, needs assessments, and the Issue Identification Action Plan related to the area for which the board has advisory responsibility.
B. Help identify and prioritize output and outcome programming needs, goals and opportunities for the coming year. Coalitions and task forces could also have a role in this process.

C. Set target dates for each educational activity and event and determine the best ways of marketing these programs to the target audience.

D. Determine what educational methods and techniques will most effectively convey information to the people the educational program is intended to reach.

E. Engage resource people to help present the program. Gather other resources that are needed to make the program successful.

F. Identify programming successes and evaluation results to highlight when interpreting or promoting the program to interested stakeholders and to the Leadership Advisory Board.

G. Identify stakeholders (individuals and groups) who should know about the success of the program so that interpretive information can be targeted to them.

H. Help make presentations about the program to the county Leadership Advisory Board, County Commissioners’ Court, and other stakeholders.

I. Review the membership rotation clause in the 4-H and Youth Advisory Board’s by-laws and identify potential new committee members to replace those whose terms have expired.

J. Help contact potential committee members.

K. Help determine how the external support fund (account) will be managed and controlled by board members and assign that responsibility to members.

2) Assist the County Extension Agent with Outcome programming:

A. Determine outcome program annually based on priority issues

B. Assist with determining audience for outcome program

C. Secure resources needed for outcome program

D. Assist with developing a marketing/promotional plan for outcome program.

E. Assist with interpreting outcome plan results to Commissioner’s Court, key leaders, public, etc.

F. Review the evaluations at the end of the outcome program to determine if the program needs to be maintained and if so, how the program can be improved in the coming year.

This group is to review, assess and advise the county Extension agents in the overall county 4-H and youth program direction. This group would annually review the 4-H enrollment to determine the direction the program needs to take annually.

To validate youth issues every 4 years the 4-H and Youth Advisory Board will conduct along with the other county program area committees (AG, FCS, etc.) and the Leadership Advisory Board to conduct an issue identification process. This process may include youth from all youth organizations such as civic, academic, faith-based, and community organizations. They should represent public and private schools and home school programs. It may also include additional adults such as youth ministers, public or private schoolteachers, school board
members, legislative aides, county commissioners, city parks and recreation managers, business people, or staff members of youth and family service agencies.

**Volunteer Leaders Association Roles and Responsibilities (made up of all volunteer leaders and parents in the county):**

1. Identify training needs and provide training for volunteer leaders
2. Provide leadership opportunities for volunteer leaders
3. Serve on event/activity committees like County Camp, Food project including planning the county Food Show and Rabbit project.
4. Assist in the development of resources to support the 4-H program.
5. Assist in planning, implementing, and evaluating 4-H events and activities through the exchange of ideas among volunteer leaders.
6. Interpret the 4-H program to the public with the emphasis on leadership development and self esteem for all youth of Texas.

**County 4-H Council Roles and Responsibilities:**

1. Identify training needs and provide training for youth
2. Provide leadership opportunities for youth
3. Plan County wide community service project or support “one day 4-H”
4. Support National 4-H Week
5. Assist in planning, promoting and implementing of programs and services for youth.
6. Plan and participate in community service activities
7. Study problems, activities and concerns of youth, especially issues
### Differences between Youth Board and 4-H and Youth Development Advisory Board:

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<th>Youth Board</th>
<th>4-H and Youth Development Advisory Board</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Purpose</strong></td>
<td>The County Youth Board serves a strategic function by helping the county Extension agent determine what programs should be implemented from year to year, reviewing the educational impacts of programs, determining how to reach new youth audiences, and helping decide whether task forces or coalitions are needed to address priority issues.</td>
<td>This group is to review, assess and advise the county Extension agents in the overall county 4-H and youth program direction. This group would annually review the 4-H enrollment to determine the direction the program needs to take annually. <strong>Counties that have a current structure that is meeting the programming planning committee structure can keep their structure in place.</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Membership</strong></td>
<td>At least two youth members should be from the 4-H and Youth Development Program—one representing a club unit (project, community, school, military, etc.) and one representing other 4-H groups (special interest group, school enrichment, after-school program, etc.). Other youth members could come from organizations such as FFA, boys' and girls' clubs, scouts or student councils. They should represent public and private schools and home school programs. Adult members should have a broad perspective and be able to think beyond the traditional 4-H program. They should be passionate about serving young people in their communities. Adult members might be youth ministers, public or private school teachers, school board members, legislative aides, county commissioners, city parks and recreation managers, business people, or staff members of youth and family service agencies. At least one adult on the board should be an educator.</td>
<td>Youth members should represent the different schools including home school, come from different parts of the counties, and different Commissioner precincts. Examples of ways to select youth include: 1.) youth could be selected by county Extension agents; 2.) established as a new officer position for each club in the county; or 3.) selected from the County 4-H Council by Council members. The ages of youth members should range from 12 to 18, at the discretion of the county Extension agent. Adult members should have a broad perspective and be able to think beyond the traditional 4-H program. They should be passionate about serving young people in their communities. Examples of ways to select adults include, county Extension agents selecting committee members from the community to meet the needs of the committee or selecting from the County Volunteer Leaders Association by members. All membership is at the discretion of the county Extension agents in that county.</td>
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<td><strong>Roles and Responsibilities</strong></td>
<td>Responsible for identifying youth issues and planning one major program annually to meet the needs of the youth in that county.</td>
<td>Oversight for the whole 4-H and Youth Development programming including output and outcome programs.</td>
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<td><strong>Programming</strong></td>
<td>The board should sponsor or play a significant role in at least one major program each year. This may be an ongoing program or a different program each year. The key is for the board members to work together and take ownership of the program to ensure its success. The county Extension agent facilitates the work of the Board and carries it through the program development process.</td>
<td>Annually review the county youth enrollment, program evaluations, needs assessments, and the Issue Identification Action Plan related to the area for which the board has advisory responsibility. Identify and prioritize output and outcome programming needs, goals and opportunities for the coming year.</td>
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<td><strong>Issue Validation</strong></td>
<td>Conduct annual issue identification process to determine youth program.</td>
<td>To validate youth issues every 4 years the 4-H and Youth Advisory Board will conduct along with the other county program area committees (AG, FCS, etc.) and the Leadership Advisory Board to conduct an issue identification process. This process may include youth from all youth organizations such as civic, academic, faith-based, and community organizations. They should represent public and private schools and home school programs. It may also include additional adults such as youth ministers, public or private schoolteachers, school board members, legislative aides, county commissioners, city parks and recreation managers, business people, or staff members of youth and family service agencies.</td>
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4-H and Youth Advisory Board

Adult Leaders Association

Leaders/Parents

4-H Council

4-H Clubs

Committees for management of events and activities, Stock Show concession stand, County Camp, etc.