



DIVISION OF AGRICULTURE  
RESEARCH & EXTENSION

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# Exponential Growth in 4-H Enrollment & Engagement Through Positive Learning Experiences

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## Introduction:

4-H enrollment and participation across the State of Arkansas dropped dramatically during COVID and the year following. In White County, our enrollment numbers had decreased by 50% as families were not allowed to meet in person and virtual meetings or activities had very low success rates in our area. These families were slow to return, and some did not return at all as their family situations or priorities changed. The need to increase enrollment and improve engagement was identified by the 4-H Expansion & Review committee within our county. To reengage these families and return to our normal operating enrollment numbers a plan was put in place to offer our normal 4-H Youth Programming to all interested youth in the public.

## Objective:

To increase 4-H enrollment and engagement to pre-COVID levels within a County 4-H program.

## Materials and Methods:

After the COVID situation, an increase in life skills and self-sufficiency educational requests were also received. Programming was planned to increase 4-H exposure to the public that focused on these skills. Over the last two years, nine-day camps have been made available to the public for youth. We reached out to community centers, libraries, newspapers, and social media to advertise programs and reach non-4-H youth. Day long workshops focused on holiday baking, leadership, survivor skills, livestock, life skills, the outdoors and rocketry were conducted. The educational programming was provided by the 4-H Agent, Master Gardeners, Volunteer 4-H Leaders, and 4-H Teen Leaders. The opportunities and benefits of 4-H were incorporated into each of the day camps to increase awareness of our existing county programs.

## Impacts:

Each day camp was attended at full capacity by 4-Hers and non-4-H youth with 459 youth and adults attending. The adults and teens assisting benefitted from the day camps as they encouraged others to get involved and shared their personal experiences in or with 4-H. Ultimately, the enrollment and participation in White County 4-H has increased 378% since our low during COVID in part to these efforts. These youth have become contributing members across many areas of our program and have encouraged friends and family members to participate to make the best better.

## Conclusion:

- 4-H positive youth development programming made available to non-4-H youth can exponentially increase enrollment and engagement in county 4-H programs.
- Providing relevant and timely programming can meet the needs of community youth and benefit your program simultaneously.



White County 4-H Enrollment Numbers

