

4-H and Youth Development



MSU Extension and Montana 4-H believe in the power of young people and recognize that children have valuable strengths and real influence to improve their communities. Montana 4-H projects support members' personal growth and development through hands-on learning. Members practice skills of communicating effectively, responsibility, decision making, record keeping, and financial management.

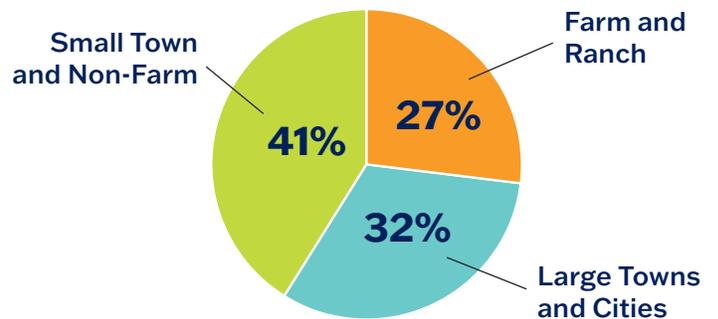
Montana 4-H reaches more than 17,000 youth from every county and reservation.

3,100 trained and certified volunteers support and mentor youth.

While American Indians in Montana make up 6.5% of the general population, **more than 10% of Montana's 4-H enrollment is American Indian youth.**

4-H MEMBERSHIP ACROSS MONTANA

Montana 4-H represents youth, families and volunteers from nearly every neighborhood. Members reside in rural, urban, and suburban communities across the Treasure State.



The Montana 4-H program encourages youth to develop communication skills.

70% Improved knowledge on how to prepare a presentation

66% Are more willing to speak in front of groups

64% Feel more comfortable when speaking with adults





4-H CONNECTION TO COMMUNITY

Montana 4-H youth have opportunities to make a difference in their communities through clubs, projects, and collaboration with local organizations. Youth who identify community needs, then plan and participate in a project to address those needs feel more connected to their community with a sense of hope and purpose.

Of third- to sixth-grade 4-H members:

- **Nearly half felt more strongly about the desire to help people** in their community because of their 4-H experience.
- More than half indicated more opportunities to help plan a community service project since joining 4-H, while **24% reported having led a community service project** as a 4-H member.

Of seventh- to twelfth-grade 4-H members:

- **45% feel a bigger part of their community** due to 4-H involvement, and 44% look for ways to help when learning about a problem in the community.
- **50% feel more strongly about their ability to make a difference** in their community due to their 4-H experience.
- **44% credit their 4-H experience for providing a greater opportunity to learn about people** who are different from them.

4-H LEADERSHIP ACADEMY

The 4-H Leadership Academy is a series of skill-building winter workshops delivered virtually to all interested 4-H teens. Thanks to the virtual platform, youth can participate regardless of location or family income. Teen participants in 4-H Leadership Academy reported:

- **25% increase in comfort working with people** they did not know
- **20% increase in motivation** to take on leadership roles
- **18% increase in feeling capable** in cooperative group work

4-H CONGRESS

Montana 4-H Congress provides more than 300 youth, ages 13-19, an opportunity to visit MSU each July, stay a week in dorm rooms, eat meals in dining halls, explore courses of study and career possibilities, and hone developing life skills through workshops, intellectual growth, and leadership opportunities.

Youth reported **leadership, communication, and teamwork** were the top three improved skills as a result of attending the Montana 4-H Congress.

Skills learned through Montana 4-H Congress support youth in other areas of their lives:

94% Learned skills that will help them do better in school.

87% Recognized that **“activities taught me to develop a plan to reach my goals.”**

76% Found that **“4-H Congress helped me identify which careers match my interests and abilities.”**

94% Discovered that attending increased **“an expanded view of things beyond my community.”**

99% Found **“there were opportunities for them to learn new ideas.”**

50% of youth used the word **“inspired”** to describe their experiences.

