

Regional Directors and Youth Program Specialists Working Together

Foundation for collaboration

Regional directors and youth program specialists are important team members in supporting the 4-H Youth Development Program in Iowa. These relationships are dynamic and unique in each county. These relationships should be grown and fostered to develop a trusting and supportive environment for the success of youth county staff and ultimately the county 4-H program.

Collaboration includes:

Regional director and youth program specialist will demonstrate shared leadership and clear roles in the success and fidelity of the 4-H program. A regional director has direct responsibility for staff supervision and a youth program specialist has program development responsibilities.

Youth program specialists will lead and communicate expectations of a county 4-H Youth Development Program by:

- Provide continuing education for county extension council, county staff and others on what is 4-H, updates to the program, state and national 4-H program priorities and vision, as well as other important Iowa 4-H Youth Development information. This may include Data for Decision Makers and other programmatic information. It should also include educational context and details to help better describe the 4-H program to stakeholders. It may also include grant and program growth context.
- Include county youth staff supervisors in planning, implementation, and communication. In Model 3 counties, that is a county director. In other models it is the regional director.
- Provide leadership and coordination on reporting between MyData and 4HOnline.
- Provide overall strategic program direction. This includes serving as lead in problem solving, program planning, program evaluation, communication and the support of county staff who engage with youth with overall program implementation. Support should include planning, guidance on professional development and overall staff positive youth development education and mentoring. The youth program specialist will lead the transition planning during a county vacancy.
- Overall strategic program direction includes guiding 4-H volunteer management using ISOTURE procedures.
- Provide support to the county extension council program committees and regional director regarding 4-H Youth Development Plans of Work, program

planning efforts and Reports of Accomplishment. This is done collaboratively as a team of a regional director, county director, youth program specialist, extension council and county youth staff.

- Advise and provide collaborative partner level support for 4-H Youth Development Program with county level groups such as county youth councils, partners, foundations, fair boards, county level activities and youth committees.

Regional directors will provide leadership to the county extension operations and convey the role of the youth program specialist in strategic programmatic direction by:

- Provide leadership to the hiring, onboarding, annual review, and general support of county youth staff. Regional director will champion the engagement of the youth program specialist in this process to maintain success and fidelity of the 4-H program. Whenever possible, engagement should include interviewing, onboarding, professional development, and input on annual review.
- Encourage county youth staff to develop strong relationships with the youth program specialist. This could include inviting the youth program specialist to staff meetings and other field teams. This could include office work culture building opportunities.
- Facilitate the collaborative program planning process to develop a comprehensive annual plan that is reflective of extension, extension council and programmatic strategic goals.
- Facilitate collaborative programmatic specific risk management approaches that follows Iowa State University, ISU Extension and Outreach and the 4-H Youth Development Program rules and regulations. This includes volunteer screening procedures at the county level.
- Communicate opportunities to connect extension councils and other youth serving committees with youth program specialists to begin to build strong relationships.
- Consult with the youth program specialist on problem solving, conflict management and the development, implementation, and evaluation of youth programs.
- Lead and collaborate with the youth program specialist during the program planning process, align 4-H budget plans with program goals and help 4-H field and county staff understand county 4-H youth annual budgets. Provide guidance on resource development opportunities when possible. Provide guidance on club finances, fundraising and appropriate use of public funds.
- Ensure appropriate evaluation and reporting is completed and shared across the system. Ensure county staff follow 4-H program reporting requirements and recommendations.

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