

Recommendation 5

Develop and implement specific plans to increase the number of minorities and improve parity of participation in state, district and county 4-H events.

Within the past year, a variety of things have occurred which we believe will help to increase the number of minorities participating in the 4-H youth development program and, over time, result in increased participation in county, district and state 4-H events.

The need to develop more 4-H curricula to appeal to and reach diverse audiences has been addressed by the Department of Agricultural and Extension Education.

*A new curriculum specialist has been hired to provide leadership for creating or purchasing new youth materials. Specific curricular being developed at Penn State University or secured from other states include:

Theatre Arts Adventures
Electric Excitement
Woodworking
Health-It's Your Choice
Wild over Work
Babysitting

*Curricula purchased for use in Pennsylvania from the National 4-H Cooperative Curriculum System are required to be sensitive to and respectful of differences in income, culture, gender, physical and mental abilities.

*A new curriculum development structure and system has been implemented that includes an International and Diversity Curriculum Committee.

*It is anticipated that more 4-H projects will be available to Pennsylvania's youth via web-based delivery, thereby providing greater access to interested youth.

An inservice training program on recruitment of minority youth will be conducted in March 2001. Target audience will be all extension educators who have responsibility for 4-H youth development programming. Leadership for this training is being provided by the State Program Leader for Children, Youth and Families and faculty from the Department of Agricultural and Extension Education.

A train the trainer model for recruiting leaders from minority and underrepresented groups is also being planned for program year 2001.

By July 1, a new accounting/reporting process to adequately capture the involvement of all youth being served in Pennsylvania 4-H and youth development programs will be developed. The current reporting mechanism "A-100" is not adequately capturing all youth reached through programs other than formally organized 4-H programs/projects.

The data system, to be developed under the leadership of the State Program Leader for Children, Youth and Families, working with a committee of field-based educators reflecting the diversity of programming across the Commonwealth and state faculty, will be ready for implementation at the beginning of the FY 2001-02 program year.

As the organization is able to employ more people of color with responsibility for providing leadership for youth development programs, we anticipate greater and more successful outreach to minority and underrepresented groups. Youth that represent Pennsylvania at state or national youth events represent a broad span of diversity.

Several new programming initiatives conducted in partnership with other colleges within the University are targeted towards enhancing youth development through Cooperative Extension community partnerships. Of special significance are the “Public Education-Extension Prevention Partnerships” (PEPPS) and “Extension and Schools Enhancing Life Skills “ (EXSELS) projects. The first project has among its objectives expanding the number of youth and families served by extension facilitated and school-based programs with an emphasis on reaching the underserved. Project EXSELS, a five-year project funded by the National Institute on Drug Abuse to promote positive youth development, will be implemented in 16 schools with a cohort of students beginning in the 7th grade.

Minority youth participation targets for FY2000-2003 project a 3% increase in youth participating in 4-H/Youth Development programs over each of the next three years. Projections are based on the 1998-99 benchmark data provided by the “A-100” reporting system. During the 1998-99 program year, 22,920 minority or underrepresented youth were involved in our 4-H/youth development programs. Total number of youth participants for the past three program years are depicted in the graph found in Table 1 (Appendix P).

Minority Youth Program Target Increases

	<u>%</u>	<u>Number to be reached</u>
2000-01	3	23,608
2001-02	3	24,317
2002-03	3	25,047

Pennsylvania’s 1990 census data indicates that 49% of the youth age 8-19 are females and 51% are males. The 1998-99 gender breakdown for 4-H members, reflected in Table 2 in the Appendices (Appendix Q), indicates that youth participation data collected on the “A-100” has shown that total number of participants have declined over the past three years. However, the participation by gender remains pretty steady. The three year average indicates that 52% of our program participants are females and 48% are male. As membership increases, we will strive to maintain a balance in gender participation.

The Youth Development/4-H Curriculum Development specialist is currently working with the Office of Marketing Development to develop a marketing plan to increase

enrollments and efforts in schools with the goal of bringing more youth, including minority and underrepresented youth, into 4-H clubs.

The Youth Program Policy Committee (YPCC) is exploring the creation of a “Clover Bud Youth Program,” for children ages six and seven, which will open doors for developing more interest in 4-H programs. In states where this program exists, it becomes a recruiting tool for youth once they reach the age for enrollment in 4-H.