

4-H Expansion and Review Committees

Every county in Utah must have a bona fide 4-H Expansion and Review Committee. One of the objectives of the USU Extension Performance Plan is to increase the membership of underrepresented racial/ethnic minority group members in structured 4-H youth and family/community clubs and special interest and/or study groups. The maintenance and establishment of functioning Expansion and Review Committees are critical to achieving this objective. This committee represents the population of the county in terms of race, geography, age, 4-H participants, and non-4-H participants. No specific quotas are required.

What is the purpose of an Expansion and Review Committee?

The 4-H Expansion and Review Committee meets annually to look at the demographics of a county and the participation in 4-H to see if 4-H is serving all segments of the population. If there are areas needing improvement, the committee makes suggestions on how to improve service delivery in the underserved areas.

Forming the Committee

Approximately 5-9 members or less are sufficient for the E&R Committee. One member can represent several criteria (4-H leader, adult, geographic area of county). Large committees are often too unwieldy and frequently produce no real measurable results. The E&R Committee does not have to be composed of the most important people in the county. People with high visibility are usually involved in more community affairs that they can properly attend to. People should be selected to serve on the E&R Committee who understand what they are being asked to do, have an interest in youth, have some knowledge of youth programs (especially in the area in which they live), and make a commitment to serve. These factors should be determined based on personal contacts with potential committee members by the 4-H staff and community of volunteers.

Once an E&R Committee has been selected and formally invited to participate, the meeting should be scheduled with a planned agenda set by the 4-H staff. The meeting agendas should include at least the following items:

- Introduction of Members
- An orientation to Extension
- An orientation to 4-H
- Review of the Extension Civil Rights Performance Plan detailing the objectives specific to 4-H.
- Expectations of the Committee members
- Questions - Discussion
- Review Demographics for County and 4-H Programs
- Make Recommendations for Improvement

It is important that the E&R Committee meetings begin on time and last no longer than scheduled.

Establishing Objectives and Goals

The meetings are planned and organized by the 4-H staff. Staff document and maintain minutes of the E&R Committee meetings and should be prepared to:

1. identify some areas of concerns, problems and or needs of the 4-H program in county;
2. identify the potential pool of youth who could be served by 4-H;
3. detail the number and types of clubs;
4. review the volunteer base in the county; and

5. review key program areas that could potentially involve the underrepresented within the county.

This gives the E&R Committee something tangible to work on. It is likely that once this process is initiated the committee will identify additional needs and concerns of their own. With the county E&R Committee functioning the first and most critical step in complying with the USU Extension Performance Plan with an affirmative action step has taken place!

The E&R Committee can provide advice on many of the objectives of the Civil Rights Performance Plan. The composition of your E&R Committee will be a determining factor as to whether its advice will be beneficial to the 4-H staff. It is imperative that the existing 4-H clientele (leaders and members) and the target audience not now being served or underrepresented be reached in a meaningful way. In this way the county should get recommended plans of action that will accomplish the job of expansion and secure the support of current leadership and members.

Background Information

Each county must have accurate demographic data in order to do proper program development in reaching the underserved in the community. The most current ES237 printout for the county provides baseline data of where the county currently stands in serving the clientele of the community. Federal Census information provides added dimensions to understanding the potential clientele that can benefit from the 4-H program. The committee needs to consider the current status quo of the 4-H clubs and groups, their racial composition, and the racial composition of 4-H leaders in the county. 4-H staff should be thoroughly familiar with these data and help the E&R Committee digest and understand the current 4-H program, its service area and clientele.

Reasonable Effort

Reasonable effort can consist of a variety of actions depending on local circumstances. It is important to keep in mind that one type of effort and or one shot efforts is not sufficient to meet the all reasonable effort requirement. Each county should set up a program for demonstrating consistency in the recruitment of members from existing units; and for the formation of new units that provides for a process of recruitment of members and leaders that will provide equal access to participation for all youth residing in the geographic areas served by the unit. Taking this affirmative action step will help the county meet the civil rights performance requirements for the 4-H program. The temptation to work only with those units who have no minorities participating is great. Singling out 4-H units by requiring action by some and not others should be avoided. Reasonable effort is primarily the process of assuring that individual's eligible to participate receives ample notification of the existence of 4-H., what 4-H is, what the opportunities are, and what the procedure is for participating. In addition, Extension has the responsibility to assure that the conduct of the 4-H program does not serve to inhibit the participation of minorities or whites because of where meetings, activities and events are held. It must be emphasized that 4-H leaders should not be required to take actions that would require and appreciable increase in expenditure of time or personal finance beyond ordinary involvement in 4-H. The question of whether non-participants in 4-H has the same opportunity to participate as those who are members should always be asked. The county should be able to demonstrate that those eligible to participate but do not was a matter of choice by the individuals concerned.

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