

OUTCOMES & IMPACTS QUARTERLY — FALL 2021

INTRODUCTION

While COVID-19 continues to challenge communities and individuals, USU Extension continues to provide impactful programming to improve the lives of Utahns. The fall issue of Outcomes & Impacts Quarterly focuses on youth and community development, with a special emphasis on our rural communities.

From developing youth job skills such as résumé and cover letter writing, to working with schools to decrease e-cigarettes use, the USU Extension 4-H program is focused on providing education and resources for positive youth development. Additionally, our financial wellness programs are making strides by helping individuals and families attain financial wellbeing, while our landscape architecture programs are working with community leaders to alleviate housing affordability issues in our rural gateway communities.

Sincerely,

Kenneth L. White

Dean, College of Agriculture and Applied Sciences; Vice President, Extension and Agriculture



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REVISED 4-H PORTFOLIOS: A MODEL FOR ASSESSING YOUTH IMPACT IN UTAH COMMUNITIES

Kelsey Romney



Though Utah 4-H has facilitated the 4-H Portfolios program for the past 20 years, the original program required each 4-H member to submit a lengthy portfolio, which brought about many challenges along with low youth participation. In 2019, a team of 4-H professionals transitioned the process to a standardized cover letter and résumé format, which was more accessible and of immediate benefit to the youth.

The revised 4-H Portfolio format spurred the development of many new resources, including a 4-H Portfolio training template, guidebook, webpage, cover letter and résumé examples, and judging rubrics. Resources were provided statewide to 4-H members, volunteers, and professionals. During 4-H contests throughout the state, youth were asked to tailor their cover letters and résumés and submit them electronically for review.

Working with adult leaders in their communities, youth are using the revised 4-H Portfolios program to solidify a clear pathway from their 4-H experience to a successful career.

New 4-H Portfolio Resources:



GUIDEBOOK



4-H PORTFOLIO TRAINING TEMPLATE



WEBPAGE



COVER LETTER AND RÉSUMÉ EXAMPLES



JUDGING RUBRICS



Annual statewide 4-H Portfolio training:

700%

increase in attendees from 2018 (20 in 2018 to 160 in 2020).

89%

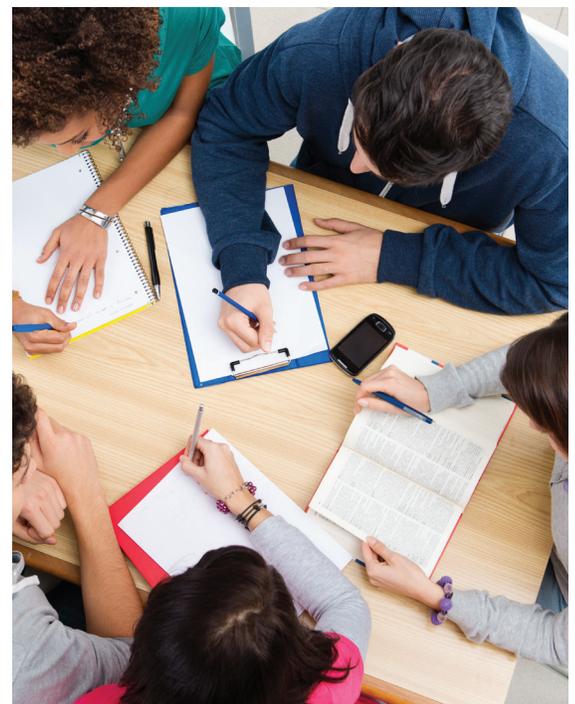
of 4-H Portfolio participants reported learning to write a cover letter and résumé during their 2020 4-H experience.

87%

indicated it will help them make decisions about their future.

> 1,600

4-H youth in grades 3 to 12 have written cover letters and résumés since 2019.



A statewide youth needs assessment showed:

Learning to write cover letters and résumés was one of the

TOP 10 LIFE SKILLS

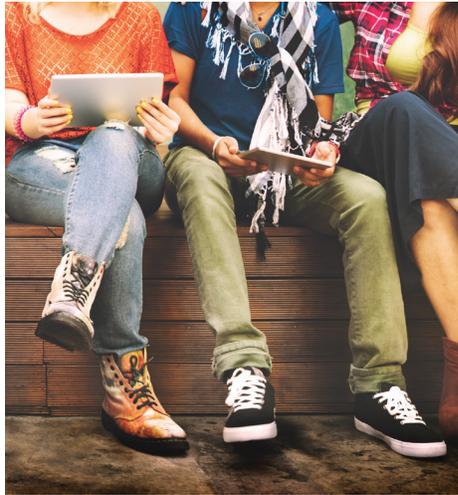
needed by Utah youth today.

THE EMPOWERING FINANCIAL WELLNESS PROGRAM

Amanda Christensen, Melanie Jewkes, Andrea Schmutz, and Lendel Narine

COVID 19 financial stress resulted in more people tapping into savings and investments, deferred bill/debt payments, and took on more credit card debt. Consequently, an increasing number of people were left with inadequate incomes and savings.

To support Utahns in their financial well-being, USU Extension received funding support from the Utah Department of Workforce Services in 2020 to implement the **Empowering Financial Wellness program**. It provided online education to individuals via the PowerPay Money Master (PPMM) course and topic-specific online webinars. The course consists of seven video-based learning modules on financial habits and attitudes, goal setting, budgeting, debt repayment, understanding credit, and saving.



84%

of Americans were stressed about finances because of the COVID-19 pandemic.

In 2020, total consumer debt surpassed

\$14 TRILLION

In year 1 of Empowering Financial Wellness

91

participants successfully completed the PPMM online course.

~2,155

participants completed at least one EFW webinar.

After the program, nearly all participants reported:



adopting a finance management plan by implementing sound financial practices.



an increase in savings.



an increase in their ability to handle unexpected financial burdens.



a general increase in their financial well-being.

E-CIGARETTE AND VAPE PREVENTION PROGRAM

Christina Pay, Jenna Hawks, Jordyn Oman, Cris Meier, and Ashley Yaucher

With limited prevention programs in place that focus on e-cigarette and vape prevention, an educational program was implemented in Southeast rural communities to combat the initiation and use of e-cigarettes among youth. "Be Epic, Escape the Vape" is a multi-component health and wellness program for vape prevention that targets youth in grades 5 to 12, teachers and parents in Carbon, Emery and Grand counties.

Extension health and wellness prevention coordinators facilitated the 1.5-hour training for teachers of grades 5 to 12 and school staff, designed to increase teachers' involvement and awareness of vaping, and to decrease the risk of youth e-cigarette initiation at school.

The training included up-to-date information about vaping, such as identifying vape devices, common hiding places for the devices and vape ingredients, as well as the health effects of e-cigarettes and statistics on the prevalence of youth vaping.

The teacher training component of Be Epic

9 schools received the program.

3-county program area.

42 teachers attended.

7 trainings were delivered virtually.

1 school requested in-person delivery.



Southeast rural Utah has the highest rate of electronic cigarette use among youth in the state.



e-cigarette use has increased nationally among students, leading the surgeon general to declare it a youth epidemic.



100%

of teachers increased their knowledge of the health risks associated with e-cigarettes and confidence to address e-cigarette use in the classroom with students.

HOUSING AFFORDABILITY ISSUES ADDRESSED FOR UTAH AND ACROSS THE WEST

Elizabeth Sodja

With their small size, quaint feel, and outdoor recreation opportunities, many gateway and natural amenity region (GNAR) communities – those near national parks, monuments, resorts, and public lands – have become increasingly popular places to visit, own homes, live, and work remotely. The popularity of GNAR communities has spiked during the COVID-19 pandemic, contributing to the increased demand for homes, which further inflates prices. In addition, a rise in the popularity of short-term rentals, such as Airbnb and VRBO, places additional pressures on limited housing inventories in these communities.

To help provide information and tools during an unprecedented time of change, the GNAR Initiative of USU Extension and the Institute of Outdoor Recreation and Tourism created a six-part interactive webinar series, “How to Shred GNAR(ly) Problems: Tools, Techniques & Resources to address Epic Housing Challenges.”

Participants included community members, academics, researchers, federal agencies, state agencies, international, non-GNAR communities, and private companies.

Community members asked for more information and advice on implementing similar programs in their areas. **Two communities are pursuing deed-restriction programs to preserve local housing inventory, and several have started inventorying short-term rentals in their community to see how both can benefit from potential tax revenue.**



6 webinar sessions.

312 registrants.

21 states and provinces with participants.

66 communities and regions participated.

Since the completion of the July webinar series, session recordings have been viewed **300+ TIMES.**

Post-webinar survey results showed:

100% of respondents found the webinars valuable.

85% have recommended the webinars to a peer or coworker.



TOOLS, TECHNIQUES & RESOURCES TO HELP ADDRESS EPIC HOUSING CHALLENGES

HOW TO SHRED GNAR(LY) PROBLEMS
WEBINAR SERIES