



**NATIONAL 4-H HEALTHY LIVING
PROFESSIONAL AND VOLUNTEER
DEVELOPMENT NEEDS ASSESSMENT:
A FOLLOW-UP STUDY**

FINAL REPORT

Joseph L. Donaldson, Ph.D.
Karen L. Franck, Ph.D.
John J. Toman, Ph.D.

May 7, 2014

National 4-H Healthy Living Professional and Volunteer Development Needs Assessment: A Follow-Up Study

Contents

Executive Summary	3
Study Questions	5
Methods	5
Data Analysis	6
Findings	6
Study Question One – What are the major development needs and specific training needs for 4-H professionals and volunteers working in the 4-H Healthy Living initiative as identified by local and state Extension 4-H professionals and volunteers?	7
Study Question Two – What are the needs and barriers to integrating an all-encompassing view of human health into all aspects of 4-H programming?	10
Integrating Healthy Living into All Aspects of 4-H.....	10
Barriers.....	13
Training Needs.....	17
Study Question Three – What are the preferred learning methods to receive 4-H Healthy Living training?	18
Study Question Four – What is 4-H “doing well” and “what would strengthen” the 4-H Healthy Living initiative as identified by local and state Extension 4-H professionals and volunteers?	19
“Doing Well” (Assets).....	19
“What Would Strengthen” (Improvements).....	24
Conclusions.....	29
Discussion/Recommendations	30
Limitations	31
Acknowledgements.....	31
References.....	32
Contact Information.....	32
Author Biographies.....	33
Appendices.....	34
A. Representation by State/Territory	34
B. Survey.....	36

National 4-H Healthy Living Professional and Volunteer Development Needs Assessment: A Follow-Up Study

Executive Summary

Overview – This study was a follow-up to the *National 4-H Healthy Living Professional and Volunteer Development Needs Assessment: A Delphi Approach* (Donaldson, Franck, Toman & Moody, 2013). The previous study was a needs assessment of professional development, training, and technical assistance for Extension 4-H professionals and 4-H volunteers working in the 4-H Healthy Living initiative. The intent was to provide recommendations in support of the 4-H Healthy Living Mission Mandate – “to provide capacity building recommendations” – that would allow for program growth and increased competency for 4-H professionals and volunteers who provide youth programs. While the original study involved deans/directors, local Extension personnel, state Extension personnel, volunteers, and other stakeholders, the purpose of this follow-up was to collect additional feedback and input from more Extension 4-H professionals and volunteers for their input regarding the major study findings and recommendations.

Purpose – The overall aim was to provide recommendations to the National 4-H Healthy Living Mission Mandate Management team that would inform decisions about training, professional development, and technical assistance, and ultimately further the aims of 4-H Healthy Living programs for healthier, happier young people. The present study sought to contact additional Extension 4-H professionals and volunteers, especially local Extension 4-H professionals, for their input regarding the previous study’s findings and recommendations. This follow-up study sought to address these questions:

1. What are the major development needs and specific training needs for 4-H professionals and volunteers working in the 4-H Healthy Living initiative as identified by local and state Extension 4-H professionals and volunteers?
2. What are the needs and barriers to integrating an all-encompassing view of human health into all aspects of 4-H programming?
3. What are the preferred learning methods to receive 4-H Healthy Living training?
4. What is 4-H “doing well” and “what would strengthen” the 4-H Healthy Living initiative as identified by local and state Extension 4-H professionals and volunteers?

Methodology – This study was conducted using an online survey. A link to the survey was provided to attendees of the eVolunteerism Conference conducted on March 20 and 27, 2014. In addition, the state 4-H Healthy Living liaisons were asked to share the survey link with local Extension professionals and volunteers, and the principal investigators (Extension professionals) of the National 4-H Health Rocks program were asked to respond to the survey. Surveys were received from 97 local Extension 4-H professionals, 26 state Extension 4-H professionals, and 22 4-H adult volunteers.

Findings/Conclusions – “Hands-on” learning techniques that promote engagement were the most important development need identified for local and state Extension 4-H professionals and volunteers. Among all respondents in this study, 46% identified a lack of resources as the major barrier to integrating an all-encompassing view of human health into all aspects of 4-H programming. This was also the barrier identified by the highest number of respondents in each group (local 4-H professionals, state 4-H professionals, and volunteers). Respondents described the major resource issues as limited funding, time constraints, lack of staff, and lack of trained volunteers.

The major training needs for local and state 4-H professionals and volunteers were in three areas: teen mental health, coping with stress, and interpersonal conflict skills. For both local and state 4-H professionals, the next highest area for training was bullying prevention. However, for 4-H volunteers, the next highest area of training was substance abuse prevention. Webinars were preferred by local 4-H professionals (79.3%) and state 4-H professionals (73%). Volunteers preferred online modules (73.7%). National, face-to-face conferences were least preferred by local 4-H professionals (18.5%) and volunteers (27.2%) while the least preferred method for state 4-H professionals was “apps on my phone” (19.2%).

Respondents noted numerous local program efforts as something that “4-H is doing well related to Healthy Living programming” in their county. These included “integrating gardening with healthy living programs...” and safety education programs, specifically all-terrain vehicle safety education and hunters’ safety education. Other major assets at both the local and state levels were nutrition education programs and Health Rocks. At the national level, respondents noted resource development and Health Rocks as assets.

Recommendations –

- Provide professional development, training, and technical assistance for Extension professionals and volunteers be provided in “hands-on” learning techniques that involve youth and promote their engagement. It is recommended that professional and volunteer development focus on *4-H Hands-On Healthy Living* to build capacity for engaging youth in 4-H Healthy Living programs. In addition to hands-on learning techniques, *4-H Hands-On Healthy Living* should address: Easy to use, low-budget activities, interactive teaching techniques, movement games, and strategies to integrate healthy practices into all aspects of 4-H programming.
- Provide additional professional and volunteer development for local and state Extension 4-H professionals and volunteers in human development, specifically teen mental health, coping with stress, and interpersonal conflict skills. The preferred delivery methods for this professional and volunteer development program are webinars, online modules, and face-to-face conferences in the local area.
- Address the barriers, assets and strengths identified in this study in the National 4-H Healthy Living plan. Lack of resources was perceived as the major barrier to integrating an all-encompassing view of human health into all aspects of 4-H programming. Action plans for 4-H Healthy Living programs need practical, sustainable approaches to increase funding, reduce time constraints, increase dedicated staff, and provide trained volunteers.
- Conduct additional research to examine the issue of time constraints and lack of interest that create barriers for infusing healthy living throughout all 4-H programs.

Introduction

This study was a follow-up to the *National 4-H Healthy Living Professional and Volunteer Development Needs Assessment: A Delphi Approach* (Donaldson, Franck, Toman & Moody, 2013). The previous study was a needs assessment of professional development, training, and technical assistance for Extension 4-H professionals and 4-H volunteers working in the 4-H Healthy Living initiative. The intent was to provide recommendations in support of the 4-H Healthy Living Mission Mandate – “to provide capacity building recommendations” – that would allow for program growth and increased competency for 4-H professionals and volunteers who provide youth programs. While the original study involved deans/directors, local Extension personnel, state Extension personnel, volunteers, and other stakeholders, the purpose of this follow-up was to contact more Extension 4-H professionals and volunteers for their input regarding the major study findings and recommendations.

The overall aim was to provide recommendations to the National 4-H Healthy Living Mission Mandate Management team that would inform decisions about training, professional development, and technical assistance, and ultimately further the aims of 4-H Healthy Living programs for healthier, happier young people. The present study sought to gather perspectives from state and local Extension 4-H professionals and volunteers regarding their development needs, specific training needs, barriers, and preferred learning methods to receive training. Emphasis was placed on recruiting local Extension 4-H professionals as this group was underrepresented in the previous study.

Study Questions

This study sought to address four primary questions:

1. What are the major development needs and specific training needs for 4-H professionals and volunteers working in the 4-H Healthy Living initiative as identified by local and state Extension 4-H professionals and volunteers?
2. What are the needs and barriers to integrating an all-encompassing view of human health into all aspects of 4-H programming?
3. What are the preferred learning methods to receive 4-H Healthy Living training?
4. What is 4-H “doing well” and “what would strengthen” the 4-H Healthy Living initiative as identified by local and state Extension 4-H professionals and volunteers?

Methods

This study was conducted using an online survey. The survey was developed using data collected from the Delphi study findings completed in 2013. Respondents to the 2013 Delphi study focused on the need for 4-H healthy living to become a more inclusive approach to how 4-H is conducted overall. The original study participants focused on the need to incorporate healthy living practices throughout 4-H functions so that healthy living becomes a way of doing business for 4-H programs. To collect more information about the feasibility, strengths and barriers to

creating an overall healthier 4-H program and to collect information specifically related to 4-H healthy living programs, the evaluation team developed both quantitative and qualitative questions related to these concepts.

Participants were recruited by providing an online link to the survey to attendees of the eVolunteerism Conference conducted on March 20 and 27, 2014. In addition, the state 4-H healthy living liaisons were asked to share the survey link with local Extension professionals and volunteers; and the principal investigators (Extension professionals) of the National 4-H Health Rocks program were asked to respond to the survey. These recruitment methods were selected for several reasons including the shortened timeframe of this project (approximately eight weeks) and the importance of recruiting 4-H local professionals and volunteers to get their input about 4-H Healthy Living programs. Appendix A shows respondents' representation by state/territory, and the survey is found in Appendix B.

Data Analysis

Data analysis included the use of descriptive statistics, including frequency, percentage, and mean. Open-ended questions were analyzed by the evaluation team by identifying themes, trends and unique items as in the previous study (Donaldson, Franck, Toman & Moody, 2013).

Findings

Of the 150 completed surveys, 97 were local Extension professionals, 26 were state Extension professionals, 22 were volunteers, one was a 4-H member, and four indicated their role as other. For the purposes of this data analysis, only the 145 surveys from local Extension professionals, state Extension professionals, and volunteers were considered. The vast majority of respondents were white (91%), non-Hispanic (96.6%), and female (85.5%) as shown in Table 1. The respondents represented 35 states and one territory (see Representation by State/Territory in Appendix B).

Table 1

Respondents' Demographic Characteristics

Characteristic (N=145)	N	%
Role		
Local Extension 4-H Professionals	97	67.0
State Extension 4-H Professionals	26	17.9
Volunteers	22	15.1
Gender		
Female	124	85.5
Male	21	14.5
Ethnicity		
Hispanic	5	3.4
Non-Hispanic	140	96.6
Race		
American Indian or Alaskan Native	2	1.4
Asian	0	-
Black or African American	9	6.2
Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander	2	1.4
White	132	91.0

Study Question One – What are the major development needs and specific training needs for 4-H professionals and volunteers working in the 4-H Healthy Living initiative as identified by local and state Extension 4-H professionals and volunteers?

Participants were asked to respond to the following question: “A recent national study produced several needs for 4-H professional and adult and teen leader volunteer development related to healthy living. Please indicate your top five development needs as a professional or adult or teen leader volunteer.” Fourteen needs were selected from the 2013 Delphi study results and participants were asked to select their top five development needs related to 4-H Healthy Living programs from this list.

Table 2 has the overall results and the results for the three groups—local 4-H professional, state 4-H professionals and 4-H volunteers. Overall, “hands-on” learning techniques that promote engagement were selected as the number one development need. However, groups tended to select development needs that were related to their role. For example, local 4-H professionals and volunteers tended to select development needs that were related to practical aspects of program delivery such as interactive teaching techniques, easy to use, low-budget activities, and movement games. In contrast, state 4-H professionals tended to select development needs that

were broader in scope such as strategies to incorporate 4-H healthy living practices into all aspects of programming. Tables 3, 4 and 5 identify the top five development needs selected by the three groups: local 4-H professionals, state 4-H professionals and volunteers.

Table 2

Development needs related to 4-H Healthy Living Programs ranked by overall group selection

	All Groups N = 145	Local 4-H Professionals N = 97	State 4-H Professionals N = 26	Volunteers N = 22
“Hands-on” learning techniques that promote engagement	73	9	13	11
Easy to use, low-budget activities	65	48	7	10
Increased understanding of where youth are today, i.e., trends and data regarding lifestyle choices, emotional challenges, sexual temptations, trending peer pressure, current drug, and alcohol use, etc.	60	42	11	7
How to develop a multi-disciplinary approach incorporating agriculture and health issues, healthy eating, menu planning, and cooking competitions	59	40	10	9
Strategies to empower youth to promote and adopt healthy living practices	59	39	12	8
Movement games that take 5-10 minutes	53	36	8	9
Strategies to integrate healthy practices into all aspects of 4-H programming	51	28	16	7
Uniform and simple evaluation protocols and tools	48	33	11	4
Ways to make programs interesting for participants	47	32	6	9
Healthy options for food, activities, and environments at 4-H events and educational opportunities	41	24	7	10
Research models and data collection methods to demonstrate impacts and behavior change	34	23	10	1
Tips to motivate youth to adopt healthy behaviors	31	25	2	4
How to translate healthy eating research and knowledge into practices	22	11	7	4
Tips for easy healthy living	10	8	0	2

Table 3

Top Five Development Needs of Local 4-H Professionals

Development Needs (N=97)	Number selected
“Hands-on” learning techniques that promote engagement	49
Easy to use, low-budget activities	48
Increased understanding of where youth are today, i.e., trends and data regarding lifestyle choices, emotional challenges, sexual temptations, trending peer pressure, current drug, and alcohol use, etc.	42
How to develop a multi-disciplinary approach incorporating agriculture and health issues, healthy eating, menu planning, and cooking competitions	40
Strategies to empower youth to promote and adopt healthy living practices	39

Table 4

Top Five Development Needs of State 4-H Professionals

Development Needs (N=26)	Number selected
Strategies to integrate healthy practices into all aspects of 4-H programming	16
“Hands-on” learning techniques that promote engagement	13
Strategies to empower youth to promote and adopt healthy living practices	12
Increased understanding of where youth are today, i.e., trends and data regarding lifestyle choices, emotional challenges, sexual temptations, trending peer pressure, current drug, and alcohol use, etc.	11
Uniform and simple evaluation protocols and tools	11

Table 5

Top Five Development Needs of Volunteers

Development Needs (N=22)	Number selected
“Hands-on” learning techniques that promote engagement	11
Easy to use, low-budget activities	10
Healthy options for food, activities, and environments at 4-H events and educational opportunities	10
How to develop a multi-disciplinary approach incorporating agriculture and health issues, healthy eating, menu planning, and cooking competitions	9
Movement games that take 5-10 minutes	9

Study Question Two – What are the needs and barriers to integrating an all-encompassing view of human health into all aspects of 4-H programming?

Integrating Healthy Living into All Aspects of 4-H

To identify needs, participants were asked to respond to the following question: “The same national study indicated that 4-H could help youth be healthier if 4-H camps, conferences, club meetings, project activities, etc. addressed all dimensions of 4-H Healthy Living (physical activity, unintentional injury, injury prevention, social/emotional development, healthy eating, and/or substance abuse prevention). In your role as a 4-H professional or adult or teen leader volunteer, what do you need to help accomplish that goal?” This was an open-ended question. Results are separated by local 4-H professionals, state 4-H professionals and volunteers.

Local 4-H Professionals – Thirty local 4-H professionals did not respond to this question. The remaining 67 respondents provided at least one need related to accomplishing the goal.

Engaging curricula, activities and games was identified as the top need by 45% of local 4-H professionals. Several respondents indicated that these activities needed to be interactive, quick and easy to implement. Furthermore, curricula need to be developed for all ages including teenagers as well curricula that addresses social/emotional youth development. Comments included:

- “Always need updated curricula—programs that really catch the interest of the youth to make an impact”
- “Substance abuse prevention materials are ample but injury prevention and emotional health are not.”
- “I appreciate comprehensive lesson plans that have lesson plans that include a ‘lesson’ for each component—physical activity, unintentional injury, injury prevention, social/emotional development, healthy eating and substance abuse prevention—that coordinate and can be used together but can also be broken apart and used independently. This would make the lessons most accessible and useful.”

Resources and tools were described as a need by 20% of local 4-H professionals. Specific resources included:

- 1) Funding including grant opportunities (3 respondents)
- 2) Promotional materials with 4-H healthy living messages (3 respondents)
 - “Healthy Living message needs to be incorporated into all trainings for 4-H professionals as well as youth and adult volunteers so materials need to be applicable at a variety of levels. Materials need to take into account regional, economic and cultural differences.”
 - “I need materials to help recruit and train interested teens and adults to this type of information.”
- 3) Time (1 respondent)
- 4) Volunteers (1 respondent)
- 5) Incentives (1 respondent)

Training and information was identified as a need by 17% of local 4-H professionals. Specific training needs included:

- 1) Social and emotional developmental issues
- 2) Substance abuse prevention
- 3) Physical activity
- 4) Learning how to effectively deliver hands-on, interactive activities and for opportunities to practice these methods

Healthier options for 4-H activities and professional meetings were identified as a need by 13% of local 4-H professionals. Specific needs included:

- 1) Healthier camp menus
- 2) Healthier concession foods sold at fairs as fundraisers for 4-H
- 3) Healthier club meetings
- 4) Healthier meetings for professionals
 - “I have been to plenty of meetings where there are no healthy options. . . If we are making healthier choices ourselves then it will get it in our minds to offer healthier choices to our youth.”
 - “I also would like to see more physical activity at meetings. We do hours of sitting and very little physical activity.”

Models and examples of ways to integrate healthy living into 4-H activities were described by 13% of local professionals. This included providing examples of how programming would look and operate as well as the need to provide adult role models for youth. Specific examples included:

- 1) Ways to help spread the message
- 2) Strategies for effective integration
- 3) Methods for involving and guiding parents
- 4) Adults who demonstrated how to successfully integrate healthy living behaviors into their daily lives.

Recruitment was indicated as a need by five local 4-H professionals. Respondents mentioned the need to recruit more youth to 4-H Healthy Living programs specifically teens and underserved youth. In addition, respondents mentioned the need to recruit volunteers who could assist with these programs including teens who could serve as teachers.

In addition to these issues, three respondents also indicated the need for community outreach, engagement and the involvement of partners in this initiative. In addition, two local professionals identified the need to take diversity and cultural issues into account. One local professional identified the need to help empower youth to incorporate healthy living. One mentioned that it is important that everyone in 4-H agrees that this is a priority.

State 4-H Professionals – Seven state 4-H professionals did not answer this question. Nineteen identified at least one need. Several major themes emerged and several were similar to needs identified by local 4-H professionals.

Curricula and activities were described as the top need by 47% of state 4-H professionals. Specific suggestions included:

- Short lessons that could be delivered in 10 to 15 minutes.
- Curricula that could be adapted and delivered in different time increments as needed.
- “Integrated curriculum and holistic approaches that are not so content specific, but also process oriented. So for example, learning about video making, but the curriculum also includes healthy living suggestions, like take a walk for creative process.”
- “Do sneaky teaching and be on the lookout for opportunities to teach”

Training was identified by 26% of respondents. Specific professional development included:

- 1) Emotional and social development
- 2) Injury prevention
- 3) Substance abuse prevention
- 4) Abuse prevention

Resources and tools were identified by 26% of respondents. This included:

- 1) Toolkits/promotional materials (2 respondents).
 - “A toolkit that describes what it means to create a camp, conference, meeting, etc. that addresses all dimensions of healthy living”
- 2) Staff such as a full-time Specialist who works only with Healthy Living programs (1 respondent)
- 3) Increased funding for Healthy Living programs (1 respondent)

In addition to these needs, several other needs were identified by state 4-H professionals. Three respondents identified staff buy-in as a need. One respondent stated: “The youth seem to be motivated to include Healthy Living in their project and events. However, the adults seem reluctant.” Two respondents indicated the need for national standards including this comment: “Suggested national standards to meet for food and physical activity, perhaps they could be at Bronze, Silver, and Gold award levels to encourage people to meet them at their statewide activities.”

Volunteers – Six volunteers did not answer this question. The remaining 16 volunteers identified at least one need.

Training was identified by 44% of volunteers. Specific training included:

- 1) Working with at risk youth
- 2) Training for interactive programs
- 3) First aid training

Curricula and materials were identified as a need by 25% of 4-H volunteers. There was a specific need for activities that would keep youth engaged and interested.

Resources were described by 25% of 4-H volunteers as a need. Specific resources included:

- 1) Increased time for healthy living programs at camp and during state meetings
- 2) Places to meet to provide healthy living programs
- 3) Increased funding

- 4) Ability to share ideas about healthy living.
 - “It is hard coming up with ideas that are engaging. I think there should be a community where people can collaborate and share healthy living educational ideas.”

Two volunteers responded that there needed to be more **role models and examples** of ways to integrate healthy living into programs. This included the comment: “Leadership by example for the top. Meaning, healthy foods at ALL 4-H adult events and 4-H leaders who are leading healthy positive lifestyles as role models for our leaders and adults. Make it COOL to be healthy.”

See Table 6 for categories of needs by respondents.

Table 6

Categories of Needs for Integrating Healthy Living into All Aspects of 4-H by Respondents

Categories of Needs	Local 4-H Professionals (N = 97)	State 4-H Professionals (N = 26)	Volunteers (N = 22)
No comment	30	7	7
Curricula, activities and games	29	9	4
Resources (time, funding, staff, materials)	13	4	4
Training	11	4	7
Healthier options at meetings	11	0	0
Models and examples	8	0	2
Recruitment	5	0	0
Other	7	5	2

Barriers

To identify barriers towards reaching the goal of integrating healthy living throughout 4-H programming, participants were asked to respond to the following question: “What are some barriers to reaching that goal?” This was an opened-ended question. Responses reported here are divided into the three groups—local 4-H professionals, state 4-H professionals and 4-H volunteers.

Local 4-H Professionals – Thirty-one local professionals did not respond to this question. Sixty-six reported at least one barrier.

Lack of resources was identified by 73% of respondents as a top barrier for integrating healthy living into 4-H programming. Specific resources that were identified included:

- (1) Limited funding (25 respondents) with several stating that healthy foods would be more expensive to purchase and the need for additional funds to purchase other supplies related to healthy living
- (2) Constraints on time (18 respondents)

- “I don’t have the time to develop these programs with everything else that is considered ‘high priority’ in my job”
 - “There is so much demand of my time it is hard to fit it all in”
- (3) Lack of staff and trained volunteers (8 respondents)
- “I believe that a lack of willingness to learn and share information with the youth is the barrier. Too many parents are looking for someone else to work with their children. They don’t understand that we need people who are willing to be trained to teach/share/work with the youth.”
- (4) Lack of access to technology (1 respondent)
- (5) Lack of space to conduct programs (1 respondent)

Lack of interest in healthy living behaviors was a barrier identified by 30% of local 4-H professionals. Respondents identified that youth, volunteers and staff were not interested in healthy living programs. Comments included:

- “People are NOT motivated to be disciplined or make changes in their lives unless it affects them personally.”
- “Many professionals themselves do not practice healthy habits, and children are sometimes not even given the option to make healthy choices. For example, I recently went to an event where two of our country’s youth presented in diabetes awareness, and were then provided only one lunch option: a fried chicken sandwich without even tomato or lettuce, a bag of potato chips and a large cookie. . . This is too much of a disconnect between what they are learning, and us helping them find ways to apply it in their daily lives.”
- “Most of the people who need this information the most are low income, urban youth who are less likely to be able to participate in 4-H activities (especially those with cost associated: camp).”
- “Youth don’t think it will ever happen to them; there’s an attitude of invincibility that deters youth from taking it very serious”

Lack of engaging curricula was mentioned by 18% of respondents. Comments included:

- “Lack of teachable, relevant, FUN curriculum related to healthy lifestyles”
- “Current lessons are too long. Shorter lessons provide more time for an evaluation, and may prevent a turn off for a follow up activity”
- “Unless multiple lessons are available the active 4-H’ers who attend district and state events and camp numerous times may tire of the SAME presentations”
- “Most curricula is focused on ONE of these areas and there are not separate curricula focusing on the other areas that are similar enough to easily pair and use together”

Five or fewer people mentioned the following barriers:

- **4-H traditions and history** (5 respondents)
 - “I am always bogged down with traditional 4-H activities. Camps, retreats, conferences, competitions, congress, etc. take time, planning, and more time. It leaves little time to use new research to develop new programs or new materials. Tradition is great, but it should not hinder progress.”

- “A resistance to following ‘decrees from on high.’ We need to demonstrate that by adopting this way of doing 4-H our volunteers are responding to a very real need of the youth they are serving.”
- **Lack of training** especially related to hands-on teaching techniques (5 respondents)
- **Lack of evaluation tools** (3 respondents)
 - More user friendly evaluation tools
 - Evaluation tools that were not too lengthy
- **Controversial topics** related to healthy living (3 respondents)
 - Topics addressing mental health
 - Topics addressing sexual identify issues with youth
 - Restrictions on what information can be taught in schools including smoking cessation, drug addiction, or abuse within families are topics that are banned by their school system
- **Other barriers** (4 respondents)
 - Dealing with allergies or dietary restrictions
 - Large 4-H caseloads
 - Facilities that do not offer healthy choices
 - Not being able to fit physical activity into current information

State 4-H Professionals – Eleven state professionals did not answer this question. The remaining 15 identified at least one barrier.

Similar to barriers identified by local 4-H professionals, 67% of state 4-H professionals who answered this question identified **lack of resources** as a barrier for integrating healthy living into 4-H programs. Specific resources included:

(1) Lack of funding (7 respondents)

- “Healthy food is generally more expensive to offer for large groups of youth”
- “There needs to be a sustained effort that is focused. Too often we start something and do not provide the funding or other resources to see it through to a long-term conclusion”
- Lack of funding related to curricula development

(2) Limited time (5 respondents)

- “We have so much to do, so little time and our focus keeps changing it seems”

(3) Limited staff and volunteers (2 respondents)

- “Our current HL specialist only has a 20% time commitment. If HL is the ‘way things should be done’ then we need to have a full-time person dedicated to this duty at the state level.”

Over 25% of state 4-H professionals identified **lack of curricula** related to healthy living. One respondent commented that “social emotional programming can be very hard to make popular—there is less interest in it.” Another respondent suggested developing “social guides for youth, such as a curriculum on making friends, dealing with special needs, etc.”

Three or fewer people identified the following barriers

(1) **Lack of interest** (4 respondents)

- “Adults that do not adhere to healthy living standards”

- “Non interest of youth and then seeing them later return to their old habits”
 - “In terms of physical activity, youth are often not dressed for it, even if they are asked to do so.”
 - “There are still a lot of people who are not willing to give up high-sugar, high-fat foods and beverages at 4-H activities, events, and facilities”
- (2) **Traditions** (3 respondents)
- “Some traditions are hard to break like taco in a bag or cupcakes at meetings.”
 - “Changing the tradition (sleep schedules at camp, ‘playful’ hazing practices, snack options)”
- (3) **Training** (2 respondents)
- Lack of subject matter knowledge
 - Volunteers need to be educated on healthy habits and the importance of those habits
- (4) **Other** (3 respondents)
- Inability to pay for food with university funds
 - Inflexibility of children’s eating habits
 - Difficulty recruiting new audiences

4-H Volunteers – Seven volunteers did not answer this question. Fifteen volunteers identified at least one barrier related to integrating healthy living into 4-H programming.

As with the other two groups, 60% identified **limited resources** as a barrier to meeting this goal. Specific barriers identified included:

- (1) Limited time (6 respondents)
- “Lack of time for coming up with and implementing ideas that I may have. Few adult volunteers want to participate outside of times when their own children are participating”
- (2) Limited space or facilities (2 respondents)
- (3) Limited funding (1 respondent)

Over 25% of respondents indicated that **training** was a barrier. Comments included:

- “Extension staff get training but don’t share knowledge with Volunteer Leaders.”
- “Getting the training and having co-leaders support the activities”

Three themes were identified by only one volunteer:

- (1) Tradition
- “The way we’ve always done it is easier.”
- (2) Lack of interest in healthy living programs
- “unhealthy leadership at the top”
- (3) Curricula
- “Some activities may be interactive and fun, but the lessons do not come across”

Table 7 has the categories of barriers that were identified across the three groups. Lack of resources was identified by most respondents in all three groups as a barrier to integrating healthy living behaviors into 4-H programming.

Table 7

Categories of Barriers by Respondents

Categories of Barriers	Local 4-H Professionals (N = 97)	State 4-H Professionals (N = 26)	Volunteers (N = 22)
No Comment	31	11	7
Lack of resources (time, money, staff, other)	48	10	9
Lack of interest in healthy living programs	20	4	1
Lack of curricula	12	4	1
Traditions	5	3	1
Lack of training	5	2	4
Lack of evaluation tools	3	0	0
Controversial topics	3	0	0
Other barriers	4	3	0

Training Needs

Respondents were asked to describe their training needs using a range of zero to seven where zero indicated “none” (the respondent does not need additional training) and seven indicated the respondent needed “a lot more” training. Means were used to analyze this scaled data. The major training needs identified across the three groups were nearly identical:

- Teen mental health (Local Professionals \bar{x} =5.8; State Professionals \bar{x} =5.8; Volunteers \bar{x} =6.0);
- Coping with stress (Local Professionals \bar{x} =5.4; State Professionals \bar{x} =5.3; Volunteers \bar{x} =5.8); and
- Interpersonal conflict skills (Local Professionals \bar{x} =5.4; State Professionals \bar{x} =5.1; Volunteers \bar{x} =5.8).

For both Local and State 4-H Professionals, the next highest area for training was bullying prevention (Local Professionals \bar{x} =5.2; State Professionals \bar{x} =5.0). However, for 4-H volunteers, the next highest area of training was substance abuse prevention (Volunteers \bar{x} =5.5). All three groups identified safe driving/seatbelt use as the area with the least training needs (Local Professionals \bar{x} =3.8; State Professionals \bar{x} =3.8; Volunteers \bar{x} =2.8); see table 8.

Table 8

Training Needs of Local Extension 4-H Professionals, State Extension 4-H Professionals, and Extension 4-H Volunteers

Training Needs	Local 4-H Professionals	State 4-H Professionals	4-H Volunteers
	Mean (N=97)	Mean (N=26)	Mean (N=22)
Physical Activity	4.2	4.3	4.3
Healthy Eating	4.1	4.1	4.1
Food Safety	4.1	4.2	3.9
Bullying Prevention	5.2	5.0	4.5
Safe Driving/Seatbelt Use	3.8	3.8	2.8
All-Terrain (ATV)/Sports/Recreational Vehicles	4.8	4.3	4.9
Bicycle Safety/Helmet Use	4.2	3.9	3.6
Hunting/Firearms Safety	4.6	4.3	4.8
Substance Abuse Prevention	5.0	4.7	5.5
Coping with Stress	5.4	5.3	5.8
Interpersonal Conflict Skills	5.4	5.1	5.8
Empathy/Working with Others	4.8	5.0	5.1
Diversity/Respecting Others	4.6	4.8	4.8
Teen Mental Health	5.8	5.8	6.0

Note. Scale ranged from zero to seven where zero indicated “none” (the respondent does not need additional training) and seven indicated the respondent needed “a lot more” training.

Study Question Three – What are the preferred learning methods to receive 4-H Healthy Living training?

Webinars were preferred by local 4-H professionals (79.3%) and state 4-H professionals (73%). Volunteers preferred online modules (73.7%). National, face-to-face conferences were least preferred by local 4-H professionals (18.5%) and volunteers (27.2%). The least preferred method for state 4-H professionals was “apps on my phone” (19.2%); see table 9.

Table 9

Preferred Learning Methods

Learning Methods	Local 4-H Professionals		State 4-H Professionals		4-H Volunteers	
	N=97	%	N=26	%	N=22	%
Webinar	77	79.3	19	73.0	12	54.5
Online Modules	63	64.9	16	61.5	16	73.7
Face-to-face Conferences, Statewide	49	50.5	12	46.1	10	45.4
Face-to-face Conferences, In my area	62	63.9	16	61.5	13	59.0
Face-to-face Conferences, National	18	18.5	8	30.7	6	27.2
Apps on my Phone	19	19.5	5	19.2	7	31.8

Note. Percentages do not equal 100% as respondents were asked to indicate all methods they preferred.

Study Question Four – What is 4-H “doing well” and “what would strengthen” the 4-H Healthy Living initiative as identified by local and state Extension 4-H professionals and volunteers?

“Doing Well” (Assets)

County Level – Respondents were asked, “What is 4-H doing well related to Healthy Living programming in your county?” Among local 4-H professionals, 36 respondents (37%) did not provide a comment. Twenty local professionals (20%) mentioned various nutrition programs, including: “Engagement and collaboration with SNAP-ED funded projects” and “We conduct seven 4-H food/nutrition contests at our local fair. Most of our contests don’t reflect the healthiest foods, so we encourage youth to compete for the special Healthy Lifestyles award by preparing a healthy version of pizza, cookies, muffins, eggs, chili, etc.”

Other categories identified by local professionals are described below with example comments:

- Programs – General (15%)
 - “4-H Health Jam”
 - “Up for the Challenge...Stress Management...”
 - “Integrating gardening with healthy living programs such as Heroes 4 Health Youth Voice Youth Choice”
- Programs – Health Rocks (7%)
 - “Health Rocks”
 - “Health Rocks and Less Stress on the Test”
- Delivery – Individual Club Efforts (6%)

- “We are working to integrate health into our Community Clubs and county-wide programming.
- “Starting new 4-H clubs that involve healthy eating and physical activity.”
- Promotion/Setting the Example (10%)
 - “Promoting active meetings and programs rather than sitting and listening.”
 - “We also do a 4-H 5K every fall to promote healthy living”
 - “We strive to promote healthy eating (snacks and/or meals) at all of our 4-H events, when it is cost-effective to do so.”
- Other (3%)
 - “California has a Healthy Living Committee that leads workshops at all major 4-H conferences for adults and teens and provides incentives to increase healthy living in all venues.”
 - “Incorporating healthy living calendar and messages into the monthly calendar.”

Regarding state 4-H professionals, seven (54%) identified various programs being conducted at the county level including this comment: “Tucson Village Farm and Tucson Garden Kitchen are both superb examples of seed to table programs that incorporate both healthy lifestyles and physical activity.” Other respondents identified all-terrain vehicles safety programs, hunter’s safety programs, and community and school gardens. Two respondents identified 4-H camp and four identified other items including: “Certain counties do very well where there is an agent interested in healthy living.”

Of the 17 volunteers in this study, five (29%) mentioned various programs:

- “We have had youth participate in Health Ambassadors”
- “Using grants in a practical manner to reach students.”
- “We have a great push in our county for local foods and that encompasses a lot of the healthy living aspects.”

Table 10 shows the categories of county assets that were identified across the three groups.

Table 10

Categories of County Assets by Respondents

Categories of County Assets	Local 4-H Professionals (N=97)	State 4-H Professionals (N =26)	Volunteers (N =22)
No Comment	36	13	17
Programs – Nutrition	20	0	0
Programs – General	15	7	5
Promotion/Setting the Example	10	0	0
Programs – Health Rocks	7	0	0
Delivery – Individual Club Efforts	6	0	0
Other	3	4	0
Delivery – Camps	0	2	0

State Level – Respondents were asked, “What is 4-H doing well related to Healthy Living programming in your state?”

Among local 4-H professionals, 62 respondents (64%) did not provide a comment. Eleven local professionals (11%) mentioned nutrition programs and eleven mentioned sharing resources, information, and curriculum. Categories identified by local professionals are described below with example comments:

- Programs – General (12%)
 - “Healthy Lifestyles Competition”
 - “Programs on healthy behaviors.”
 - “Offering several curriculums or lessons on a variety of topics”
- Programs – Nutrition (11%)
 - “There are more spin clubs being started that focus on healthy eating choices.”
 - “Healthy Lifestyles open invitational contest...Recipe Rally video contest.”
- Sharing Information and Curriculum (11%)
 - “Professional development opportunities, resources”
 - “Proving lesson plans and Friends Healthy Lifestyle books for each youth in class club meetings.”
- Programs – Health Rocks (10%)
 - “Health Rocks is a wonderful program that is being implemented throughout the state and is very well known.”
- Other (7%)
 - “Connecting 4-H with the College of Public Health at our university.”
- Staffing (6%)
 - “We have a Healthy Living Design Team that is beginning work in this area.”
- Programs – Health Jam (3%)
 - “Support for Health Jam”
- Programs – Teen Leadership (2%)
 - “We have held a Teen Health Summit for two years. Leadership programs for 4-H senior and junior members include healthy lifestyles activities/opportunities.”

Among state 4-H professionals, six (23%) listed programs in general terms, including “A physical activity/walking program” and “Healthy Lifestyles programming. Combining gardening and nutrition.” Six provided other comments such as: “One major study has made its way to counties across the state” and “...collaborative efforts with several community groups offering activities and campaigns related to Healthy Living.” Other areas mentioned were nutrition programs, Health Rocks, physical activity, and bullying.

The vast majority of volunteers (n=16; 72%) did not provide comments to this question. Three volunteers (13%) mentioned physical activity programs including:

- “Move across Missouri (Healthy Lifestyles) project”
- “The state offers many opportunities for the community to get involved with a healthier lifestyle. I enjoy the Walk Georgia campaign through Extension.”

Table 11 lists the state asset categories across the three groups.

Table 11

Categories of State Assets by Respondents

Categories of State Assets	Local 4-H Professionals (N=97)	State 4-H Professionals (N =26)	Volunteers (N =22)
No Comment	62	3	16
Programs – General	12	6	0
Programs – Nutrition	11	2	0
Sharing Information and Curriculum	11	0	0
Programs – Health Rocks	10	3	0
Other	7	6	1
Staffing	6	0	0
Programs – Health Jam	3	0	0
Programs – Teen Leadership	2	0	2
Programs – Physical Activity	0	3	3
Programs – Bullying	0	3	0

National Level – Respondents were asked, “What is 4-H doing well related to Healthy Living programming at the national level?” Table 12 shows the categories of answers from the three groups.

The majority of local Extension 4-H professionals (n=74; 76%) did not answer the question. Categories identified by local professionals are described below with example comments:

- Other (7%)
 - “They are trying to look at the current trends in healthy living issues and integrating the 4-H programs to address these issues.”
 - “Commissioning the study was a good start, the Teen Summit on Healthy Living was another.”
 - “Becoming aware of the issue and beginning to explore needs.”
- Programs – Health Rocks/Other (4%)
 - “Health Rocks, healthy lifestyles curriculum”
 - “Health Rocks and Up for the Challenge”
 - “Health Rocks and Health Jam”
- Programs – General (3%)
 - “There used to be a program called talking with tj”
 - “National has a committee also addressing healthy living”
- Resource Development (3%)
 - “Grants available to states”
 - “Acquiring grant funds from national corporations”
- Programs – Nutrition (2%)
 - “Foods and nutrition”
- Sharing Information and Curriculum (2%)
 - “The updates/emails are very helpful”

- Programs – Youth Voice, Youth Choice (2%)
 - “Youth Voice, Youth Choice project”

The majority of state Extension 4-H professionals (n=18; 69%) did not answer the question. Categories identified by state professionals are described below with example comments:

- Other (7%)
 - “Bullying Prevention”
 - “I’m glad we are finally having a national discussion on healthy living. I think emotional/mental health is critical and much, much too underrepresented in 4-H.”
- Programs – Health Rocks/Other (7%)
 - “Health Jam/Health Rocks”
- Resource Development (7%)
 - “The programs from National 4-H Council like United Healthcare are great; need more of those that trickle down to the local level.”
- Sharing Information and Curriculum (7%)
 - “Participating in reviewing National Healthy Living curriculum.”
 - “New curriculum developed, new app”

The vast majority of volunteers (n=19; 86%) did not answer the question. The three comments received were:

- Programs – Healthy Living Ambassadors (9%)
 - “I heard that they are implementing 4-H Health Ambassadors for the national level.”
 - “Healthy Living Amb”
- Sharing Information and Curriculum (4%)
 - “Working with professionals to come up with helpful and safe programs”

Table 12 shows the categories of national assets across the three groups.

Table 12

Categories of National Assets by Respondents

Categories of National Assets	Local 4-H Professionals (N=97)	State 4-H Professionals (N =26)	Volunteers (N =22)
No Comment	74	18	19
Other	7	2	0
Programs – Health Rocks/Other	4	2	0
Programs – General	3	0	0
Resource Development	3	2	0
Programs – Nutrition	2	0	0
Sharing Information and Curriculum	2	2	1
Programs – Youth Voice, Youth Choice	2	0	0
Programs – Healthy Living Ambassadors	0	0	2

“What Would Strengthen” (Improvements)

County Level – Participants were asked to answer: “What can 4-H do to strengthen the 4-H Healthy Living programming in your county level?” Among local 4-H professionals, 30 respondents (31%) did not provide a comment. Eighteen local professionals (19%) mentioned the need for more resources and eighteen mentioned the need for curricula. Categories identified by local professionals are described below with example comments:

- Resources – (19%)
 - Funding (11 respondents)
 - “Make more funds available for youth to have gardens.”
 - Staff (3 respondents)
 - “It would be nice to have a paid staff member that can focus on Healthy Living programming, both delivery of programs and creating ways to weave Healthy Living ideas into existing curricula.”
 - Marketing materials (2 respondents)
- Curricula (19%)
 - “Update the 4-H cooking curriculum to focus on fruits, veggies, healthy grains.”
 - “Provide additional curriculum and program ideas to attract middle and high school youth”
- Expand healthy living programs (13%)
 - “Expand our Healthy Living program to all 4-H’ers whether in club meetings or special programming outside of club meetings.”
 - “All clubs need to promote this issue at club meetings.”
- Training (11%)
 - “We need to make it an important part of our volunteer training and reflect a healthier lifestyle in all trainings and activities.”
 - “We are just starting the Health Rocks and any webinars or programs we can download and view would be great.”
 - “Provide several trainings (hands-on) that focus on all aspects of healthy living without omitting the bullying, suicide and drop out relevance to health”
- Models and examples of healthy living (5%)
 - “Focus on healthy living habits at everything we do. Repetition is the key to making changes.”
- 4-H projects (4%)
 - “I think it would be a great idea to gets kids (4-H students) involved in summer projects in the county growing gardens, learning how to preserve them for winter and helping out with homeless shelters over summer break.”
 - “Continue the Youth Voice-Youth Choice project”
- Other (4%)
 - “Help me with strategies to work with other youth-serving organizations. How do I overcome the resistance I face?”

Among state professionals, most (73%) did not answer this question. The two county needs that were identified were curricula (15%) and training (4%). Specific ideas related to curricula included having access to the yoga curriculum and developing 5 to 10 minute grab and go healthy living activities

Among volunteers, 9 respondents (41%) did not answer this question. The two county needs that were identified were training (23%) and one respondent indicated that healthy living programs needed to be expanded. This respondent stated: “Our community focus is on fundraising for a few youth. The 4-H model has been forgotten. Community service should be the norm.”

See table 13 for categories of county improvements across the three respondent groups.

Table 13

Categories of County Improvement Needs by Respondents

Categories of County Improvement Needs	Local 4-H Professionals (N= 97)	State 4-H Professionals (N = 26)	Volunteers (N = 22)
No Comment	30	19	9
More Resources	18	0	0
Curricula	18	4	0
Expand healthy living programs	13	0	1
Training	11	1	5
Models/examples	5	0	0
Projects	4	0	0
Other	4	0	0

State Level – Participants were asked to answer: “What can 4-H do to strengthen the 4-H Healthy Living programming at the state level?” Among local 4-H professionals, 40 respondents (41%) did not provide a comment. Eleven local professionals (11%) mentioned the need for curricula. Categories identified by local professionals are described below with example comments:

- Curricula (11%)
 - “Continue to promote Health Rocks program and encourage more counties to utilize the program.”
- Resources (9%)
 - “I am at the limit for what my schedule allows. I’d like to be more efficient with the time I have.”
- Programs and 4-H projects (7%)
 - “Promote a program like Walk Kansas for youth”
 - “We need a statewide project that clubs and volunteers can work towards a common goal with healthy living.”
- Promotion of healthy living (5%)
 - “Have it be as much a priority as STEM or provide evidence that healthy living curriculum includes STEM actions.”
 - “Get the word out to all 4-H volunteers, staff members, etc. that Healthy Living is just as important as STEM programming and community service programming.”
- Training (5%)
 - “More state-wide conferences that focus on healthy living for youth of all ages.”

- “Provide more trainings on ways to recruit 4-H youth into healthy living programs and how to address issues in an engaging way once they are here.”
- Models and examples (5%)
 - “Encourage agents to practice what they preach.”
 - “Integrate a healthy living program into all trainings . . . regardless of the specific focus of that training or meeting. It has to be an adopted lifestyle by the entire organization not just as ‘4-H Healthy Living’ program.”
- Other (2%)
 - “Help staff understand evaluation and reporting to share what we already do.”

Among state professionals, ten (38%) did not answer this question. Categories identified by state professionals are described below with example comments:

- Training (15%)
 - “Offer more trainings to cover stress management, resiliency training, coping skills, etc. as we have had many teen suicides in the past year.”
- Curricula (12%)
- Resources (8%)
 - “Better aids to help us say healthy living is more than just eating healthy!”
 - “Financial support—healthy food costs more.”
- Programs/projects (1 respondent)
 - “Help rural kids get out in active programs.”
- Other (1 respondent)
 - “Continue to bring research based information to the field.”

Among volunteers, thirteen (59%) did not answer this question. Categories identified by volunteers are described below with example comments:

- Training (2 respondents)
 - “Have training and do workshops for teens and adults at state events”
- Curricula (1 respondent)
- Resources (1 respondent)
- Promotion of healthy living (1 respondent)
- Other (1 respondent)
 - “Work with representatives to improve government nutrition programs that involve youth.”

Table 14 shows categories of state improvements across the three groups.

Table 14

Categories of State Improvement Needs by Respondents

Categories of State Improvement Needs	Local 4-H Professionals (N= 97)	State 4-H Professionals (N = 26)	Volunteers (N = 22)
No Comment	40	10	13
Curricula	11	3	1
Resources	9	2	1
Programs/projects	7	1	0
Promotion of healthy living	5	0	1
Training	5	4	2
Models/examples	5	0	0
Other	2	1	1

National Level – Participants were asked to answer: “What can 4-H do to strengthen the 4-H Healthy Living programming at the national level?” Among local professionals, 59 (61%) did not answer this question. Promotion of healthy living and resources were identified as the top needs. Categories identified by local professionals are described below with specific examples:

- Promotion of healthy living (8%)
 - “Healthy living needs to be at the forefront for everyone. With obesity on the rise, 4-H needs to step up to the plate and really encourage their Healthy Living programming.”
 - “Youth empowerment is an integral part of a healthy lifestyle and overcoming the power of the media message, particularly as it applies to women and girls, is an area where national programming could become involved.”
 - “More promotion that healthy living is a 4-H mandate and that we have tools to help kids who need more healthy living practices as part of their everyday life.”
 - “Make the information more available. I’m sure there are programs going on that I know nothing about at this time.”
- Resources (8%)
 - “I think our cooking classes go a long way at getting kids to stuff but limited facilities and funds to put on each year.”
- Curricula (7%)
- Training (4%)
- Other (6%)

Among state professionals, 16 (62%) did not answer this question. Most suggested needs fell into the other category. Categories identified by state professionals are described below with specific examples:

- Resources (2 respondents)
 - “Continue funding opportunities.”
- Promotion of healthy living (1 respondent)
 - “Youth and adults need healthy living programs to help us all prioritize this in all of our regions.”

- Curricula (1 respondent)
 - “Offer more peer reviewed curricula”
- Training (1 respondent)
- Other (23%)
 - “Continue to bring research based information to the state”
 - “More focus on holistic approaches that include emotional health, social connectedness, and mental health”
 - “Continue to strengthen the evaluation portion of the programs.”
 - “Less specific focus on youth programming and more on healthy living for anyone involved in 4-H (adults as well).”
 - “interdisciplinary focus”
 - “More coordinated efforts (ex. National Science Day, but Health focused).”
 - “Target national partners and help bridge those connections locally”

Among volunteers, 16 (73%) did not answer this question. The two categories selected by volunteers were curricula (3 respondents) and promotion of healthy living (2 respondents). One volunteer stated: “Make the healthy living curriculum as popular and valuable as Market Livestock.” Another volunteer stated: “Many improvements have been made on the National level with the current First Lady promoting healthy eating and more daily and fun exercise suggestions. More programming needs to be directed toward at risk youth that lack parental or family support to make good choices and avoid risky behaviors.”

Table 15 shows categories of state improvements across the three groups.

Table 15

Categories of National Improvement Needs by Respondents

Categories of National Improvement Needs	Local 4-H Professionals (N= 97)	State 4-H Professionals (N = 26)	Volunteers (N = 22)
No Comment	59	16	16
Promotion of healthy living	8	1	2
Resources	8	2	0
Curricula	7	1	3
Training	4	1	0
Other	6	6	0

Conclusions

The major conclusions from this study follow:

Development needs – “Hands-on” learning techniques that promote engagement were the most important development need identified for local and state Extension 4-H professionals and volunteers. That is, respondents perceive that 4-H professionals and volunteers need to know how to lead hands-on learning to gain youth interest and engagement. Beyond the need for “hands-on” learning, groups tended to select development needs that were related to their role. Local 4-H professionals and volunteers identified practical aspects of program delivery such as interactive teaching techniques, easy to use, low-budget activities, and movement games. In contrast, state 4-H professionals tended to select broad development needs such as strategies to incorporate healthy living practices into all aspects of 4-H programming.

Barriers – Among all respondents in this study, 46% identified a lack of resources as the major barrier to integrating an all-encompassing view of human health into all aspects of 4-H programming. This was also the barrier identified by the highest number of respondents in each group (48 local 4-H professionals, 10 state 4-H professionals, and 9 volunteers). Respondents described the major resource issues as limited funding, time constraints, lack of staff, and lack of trained volunteers. Other barriers were lack of interest among youth, professionals, and other adults and a lack of 4-H Healthy Living curricula. The resource limitations described by respondents underscore the need to integrate 4-H Healthy Living into existing 4-H environments (programs, events, projects, clubs, meetings, etc.) rather than creating new, stand-alone programs to address healthy living.

Training Needs – The major training needs for local and state 4-H professionals and volunteers were in three areas: teen mental health, coping with stress, and interpersonal conflict skills. Teen mental health was ranked highest by all three groups of respondents. For both Local and State 4-H Professionals, the next highest area for training was bullying prevention. However, for 4-H volunteers, the next highest area of training was substance abuse prevention.

Preferred Learning Methods – Webinars were preferred by local 4-H professionals (79.3%) and state 4-H professionals (73%). Volunteers preferred online modules (73.7%). National, face-to-face conferences were least preferred by local 4-H professionals (18.5%) and volunteers (27.2%) while the least preferred method for state 4-H professionals was “apps on my phone” (19.2%).

Assets – Respondents noted numerous local efforts as something that “4-H is doing well related to Healthy Living programming” in their county. These included “integrating gardening with healthy living programs...” and safety education programs, specifically all-terrain vehicle safety education and hunters’ safety education. Other major assets at both the local and state levels were nutrition education programs and Health Rocks. At the national level, respondents reported the assets in general terms as illustrated by this representative comment from a local 4-H professional: “They are trying to look at the current trends in healthy living issues and integrating the 4-H programs to address these issues.” Other assets noted were resource development, Health Rocks, and sharing information and curriculum.

Discussion/Recommendations

Design development and training for Extension professionals and volunteers to address areas of greatest need and preferred learning methods – “Hands-on” learning techniques that promote engagement represent the single greatest development need for local and state Extension 4-H professionals and volunteers. It is recommended that professional and volunteer development focus on *4-H Hands-On Healthy Living* to build capacity for engaging youth in 4-H Healthy Living programs. In the previous study, this theme was identified by the panel of State Extension 4-H professionals as important for volunteers (Donaldson, Franck, Toman & Moody, 2013). In the present study, this theme is identified as important for all groups, local and state 4-H professionals and volunteers. *4-H Hands-On Healthy Living* should be structured to address these additional needs:

- Easy to use, low-budget activities,
- Interactive teaching techniques,
- Movement games, and
- Strategies to integrate healthy practices into all aspects of 4-H programming.

The preferred delivery methods for this professional and volunteer development program are webinars, online modules, and face-to-face conferences in the local area. Additional professional and volunteer development is recommended for local and state Extension 4-H professionals and volunteers in human development, specifically teen mental health, coping with stress, and interpersonal conflict skills. While a holistic approach that encompasses all aspects of human health is recommended, these three training needs received the highest mean scores among 14 different areas. Therefore, it is recommended that webinars, online modules, and face-to-face conferences in the local area be developed specifically to build the competencies of professionals and volunteers in teen mental health, coping with stress, and interpersonal conflict skills.

Use barriers, assets, and strengths to prepare a comprehensive strategy for 4-H Healthy Living programs – It is recommended that a National 4-H Healthy Living plan address the barriers, assets, and strengths identified in this study. Lack of resources was perceived as the major barrier to integrating an all-encompassing view of human health into all aspects of 4-H programming. Action plans for 4-H Healthy Living programs need practical, sustainable approaches to increase funding, reduce time constraints, increase dedicated staff, and provide trained volunteers.

Develop easy-to-use, short Healthy Living activities that fit into existing 4-H programs – Respondents indicated that limited time and existing programming demands were barriers to implementing 4-H Healthy Living. Respondents also highlighted the need for easy to use activities. Given the previous research on the need to make healthy living *the way we do business* in all 4-H environments, it is recommended that easy-to-use activities be developed that can be integrated into existing 4-H programs, events, projects, clubs, meetings, etc.

Pursue future research in 4-H Healthy Living programs – Additional research is needed to examine the issue of time constraints and lack of interest that create barriers for infusing healthy living throughout all 4-H programs. Case studies and interviews with local Extension personnel would shed light on both issues. Questions to address include:

- What are the time constraints and how can these constraints be mediated, especially for local Extension 4-H educators and volunteers?
- How can interest be increased in 4-H healthy living programs among professionals, volunteers, and most importantly, youth?

The *National 4-H Healthy Living Program Environmental Scan and Evaluability Assessment Report* is important for communicating programs that are ready for replication to Extension 4-H professionals and volunteers (Peterson and Downey, 2014). Nutrition, physical activity, and alcohol, drug, and tobacco intervention programming are covered in the report. It is recommended that the National 4-H Healthy Living Management Team publish a similar compendium for programs that address teen mental health, coping with stress, and interpersonal conflict skills. If effective programs in these areas cannot be identified, it is recommended that programs be developed with first priority to teen mental health.

Limitations

This study had several limitations. First, the vast majority of respondents were white (91%), non-Hispanic (96.6%), and female (85.5%), not reflecting the population of 4-H professionals, volunteers, nor those youth served by 4-H Healthy Living programs. The perspectives are skewed to the methods used to recruit participants. Since participants were recruited from the eVolunteerism Conference, the respondents reflect those professionals and volunteers who participate in webinars and are interested in volunteerism. Likewise, the state 4-H healthy living liaisons likely shared the survey with those professionals and volunteers working in the 4-H Healthy Living initiative. From the perspective of 4-H Healthy Living programming, 4-H Health Rocks may have been over-represented by this groups of respondents. This project was approximately eight weeks, and this limited timeframe precipitated the participant recruitment limitations.

Acknowledgements

JoAnne Leatherman, Erica Mabry, Suzanne Le Menestrel, Ed Bender, Doug Swanson, and Jeanine Goldsmith are acknowledged for their valuable advice and assistance with this project. We appreciate Walmart for their generous support of 4-H Healthy Living programs, including this research, and we also acknowledge the contributions of the National 4-H Healthy Living Mission Mandate Management Team, National 4-H Council, and 4-H National Headquarters within the USDA's National Institute of Food and Agriculture.

References

- Donaldson, J.L., Franck, K.L., Toman, J.J. & Moody, T. (2013). *National 4-H Healthy Living Professional and Volunteer Development Needs Assessment: A Delphi Approach*. Available at: <https://tiny.utk.edu/hlr2013>
- Peterson, D.J. & Downey, L.H. (2014). *National 4-H Healthy Living Program Environmental Scan and Evaluability Assessment*. Available from Author.

Contact Information

Joseph L. Donaldson, Ph.D., Extension Specialist
The University of Tennessee Extension
Department of Extension Evaluation and Staff Development
2621 Morgan Circle, 212-D Morgan Hall
Knoxville, TN 37996-4525
Phone: 865-974-7245
Email: jldonaldson@tennessee.edu

Karen L. Franck, Ph.D., Extension Specialist
The University of Tennessee Extension
Department of Family and Consumer Sciences
Phone: 865-200-4530
Email: kfranck@tennessee.edu

John J. Toman, Ph.D., Extension Information Technology Specialist
The University of Tennessee Extension
Department of Extension Evaluation and Staff Development
Phone: 865-974-7245
Email: jtoman@tennessee.edu

Author Biographies

This section provides brief descriptions of the research team. The team members' evaluation, professional development, and healthy living experiences are detailed.

Dr. Joseph L. Donaldson is an accomplished program evaluator, teacher and researcher. Dr. Donaldson is an Extension Specialist for the University of Tennessee Extension. He is the primary author of the *Program Evaluation Network*, online software used by 700 Extension employees in five states. He teaches the UT College of Agricultural Sciences and Natural Resources graduate course in program planning and evaluation, an online course with 25 graduate students. He has developed numerous staff development courses for Extension employees on needs assessment, program planning, evaluation, and accountability topics. His online Extension courses regularly have 800 employees enrolled. Donaldson has served as evaluator for numerous projects and has published on topics including Extension Agent performance appraisal. He is an active member of the National Association of Extension 4-H Agents, and he received the organization's Air Force Recruiting Salute Award in 2012. As an Extension 4-H Agent, he provided healthy living programs for 2,500 youth enrolled in 80 4-H clubs in Giles County, Tennessee.

Dr. Karen Franck is an Extension Specialist for the University of Tennessee Extension Family and Consumer Sciences (FCS). She is the program evaluator for two federally funded nutrition education interventions including the Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program (EFNEP) and the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program Education (SNAP-Ed) program. She has been serving as co-chair of a national EFNEP committee tasked to revise one of the behavior change measures for adults. Dr. Franck has conducted program evaluations for a variety of diverse programs including drug and alcohol rehabilitation programs for women with children, domestic violence programs, and programs for at-risk youth including runaways and youth in foster care. She has served as Co-Principal Investigator on several grants evaluating the effectiveness of nutrition education interventions on children and adults and is currently evaluating a state funded project looking at the effectiveness of health and safety interventions including teen seat belt use and the effects of graduated drivers' license laws. She is also coordinating the efforts to develop a valid and reliable tool to measure core competencies for FCS agents. She is proficient in a variety of statistical data analysis packages including SPSS, MPlus, Amos, STATA, and QDA Miner.

Dr. John Toman has been with the University of Tennessee Extension for twelve years. He is responsible for providing technical support for *System for University Planning Evaluation and Reporting* and the *Program Evaluation Network*, through database and computer programming, systems testing, working with end-users and providing technical guidance. While at Extension, he has implemented major information systems, taught numerous workshops to faculty, staff, and youth, introduced new technologies for learning and communication across the state of Tennessee, and developed and provided technical consultation for a variety of educational programs. He is the lead developer for eWellness an online nutrition and exercise program serving over 750 participants nationwide. Additionally, he developed and taught a masters level technology course to students across the state using both asynchronous and synchronous delivery methods.

Appendices

A. Representation by State/Territory

	Local 4-H Professionals	State 4-H Professionals	4-H Volunteers
	N=97	N=26	N=22
Unknown/No Answer	1	4	0
Alabama	0	2	0
Alaska	1	0	5
American Samoa	0	0	0
Arizona	0	0	0
Arkansas	0	0	0
California	3	1	0
Colorado	0	0	0
Connecticut	1	0	0
Delaware	0	2	1
District of Columbia	0	0	0
Florida	1	1	1
Georgia	12	1	2
Guam	0	0	0
Hawaii	1	0	0
Idaho	0	0	0
Illinois	7	1	1
Indiana	0	0	0
Iowa	0	1	0
Kansas	5	1	1
Kentucky	4	0	0
Louisiana	0	1	0
Maine	1	0	0
Maryland	1	0	0
Massachusetts	1	0	0
Michigan	0	0	0
Minnesota	0	1	0
Mississippi	0	0	0
Missouri	6	2	1
Montana	0	2	0
Nebraska	0	0	0
Nevada	2	0	0
New Hampshire	0	0	0
New Jersey	0	0	0

	Local 4-H Professionals	State 4-H Professionals	4-H Volunteers
New Mexico	0	0	0
New York	1	0	0
North Carolina	11	1	1
North Dakota	0	0	0
Northern Marianas Islands	0	0	0
Ohio	6	1	0
Oklahoma	3	0	2
Oregon	8	1	4
Pennsylvania	4	0	0
Puerto Rico	0	0	1
Rhode Island	0	0	0
South Carolina	4	1	0
South Dakota	0	0	0
Tennessee	0	0	0
Texas	4	0	0
Utah	0	1	0
Vermont	1	0	1
Virginia	0	1	0
Virgin Islands	0	0	0
Washington	4	0	1
West Virginia	1	0	0
Wisconsin	2	0	0
Wyoming	1	0	0

B. Survey

A Survey of Professional and Adult and Teen Leader Volunteers

We are conducting a needs assessment for the National 4-H Healthy Living Mission Mandate. We are assessing the development needs of professionals and volunteers, both teens and adults, for 4-H Healthy Living programs. We are asking selected participants of national 4-H events about their needs regarding 4-H Healthy Living. 4-H Healthy Living programs target one or more of the following: physical activity, unintentional injury, injury prevention, social/emotional development, healthy eating, and/or substance abuse prevention. Your answers will not be linked to your name, and the survey will take just 10-15 minutes. Your answers to the following questions will provide valuable information. Thank you for your interest and your participation!

Click Next to start the survey.

Next

Powered by **SurveyMonkey**
Check out our [sample surveys](#) and create your own now!

A Survey of Professional and Adult and Teen Leader Volunteers

1. A recent national study produced several needs for 4-H professional and adult and teen leader volunteer development related to healthy living. Please indicate your top five development needs as a professional or adult or teen leader volunteer.

- Increased understanding of where youth are today, i.e., trends and data regarding lifestyle choices, emotional challenges, sexual temptations, trending peer pressure, current drug, and alcohol use, etc.
- Strategies to integrate healthy practices into all aspects of 4-H programming
- How to develop a multi-disciplinary approach incorporating agriculture and health issues, healthy eating, menu planning, and cooking competitions
- How to translate healthy eating research and knowledge into practices
- Healthy options for food, activities, and environments at 4-H events and educational opportunities
- Easy to use, low-budget activities
- Movement games that take 5-10 minutes
- Strategies to empower youth to promote and adopt healthy living practices
- Tips for easy healthy living
- Ways to make programs interesting for participants
- Strategies to empower youth to promote and adopt healthy living practices
- “Hands-on” learning techniques that promote engagement
- Tips to motivate youth to adopt healthy behaviors
- Uniform and simple evaluation protocols and tools
- Research models and data collection methods to demonstrate impacts and behavior change

2. The same national study indicated that 4-H could help youth be healthier if 4-H camps, conferences, club meetings, project activities, etc. addressed all dimensions of 4-H Healthy Living (physical activity, unintentional injury, injury prevention, social/emotional development, healthy eating, and/or substance abuse prevention). In your role as a 4-H professional or adult or teen leader volunteer, what do you need to help accomplish that goal?

3. What are some barriers to reaching that goal?



4. To help young people develop healthy lifestyles, please select one answer to each of the following to describe your training needs. You may indicate training needs based on the range of 0 to 7 where 0 means none (you do not need additional training) and 7 means you need a lot more training.

	0-None	1	2	3	4	5	6	7-A Lot More
Physical Activity	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Healthy Eating	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Food Safety	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Bullying Prevention	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Safe Driving/Seatbelt Use	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
All-Terrain (ATV)/Sports/Recreational Vehicles Safety	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Bicycle Safety/Helmet Use	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Hunting/Firearms Safety	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Substance Abuse Prevention	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Coping with Stress	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Interpersonal Conflict Skills	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Empathy/Working with Others	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Diversity/Respecting Others	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Teen Mental Health	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

5. Please select learning methods relevant to you to receive 4-H Healthy Living training: (choose all that apply)

Webinar

- Online modules
- Face-to-face conferences - Statewide
- Face-to-face conferences - In my area
- Face-to-face conferences - National
- Apps on my phone

Other (please list)

6. What is 4-H doing well related to 4-H Healthy Living programming in your county?

7. What is 4-H doing well related to 4-H Healthy Living programming in your state?

8. What is 4-H doing well related to 4-H Healthy Living programming at the national level?

9. What can 4-H do to strengthen the 4-H Healthy Living programming in your county?

10. What can 4-H do to strengthen the 4-H Healthy Living programming in your state?

11. What can 4-H do to strengthen the 4-H Healthy Living programming at the national level?

We want to make sure we have contacted a representative sample of 4-H professionals and adult and teen leader volunteers. Will you please answer these last few questions to help us?

12. What is your role in 4-H?

- Extension Professional—Local
- Extension Professional—State
- Volunteer—Adult
- Volunteer—Teen
- 4-H Member
- Other

13. What is your gender?

- Female
- Male

14. What is your ethnicity?

- Hispanic
- Non-Hispanic

15. What is your race?

- White
- Black or African American
- American Indian or Alaska Native
- Asian
- Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander

16. In what state or U.S. territory do you live?

Prev

Done

Powered by **SurveyMonkey**
Check out our [sample surveys](#) and create your own now!