

**Washington State University**  
**Snohomish County 4-H COVID-19 Response Plan**  
**Finalized March 27, 2020**

Appended June 1, 2020

**Snohomish County 4-H Team**

Ashley Hall  
4-H Assistant Professor  
425-357-6006  
a.hernandez-hall@wsu.edu

Beth Wangen  
Volunteer Development Coordinator  
425-357-6005  
beth.wangen@wsu.edu

Kim Marie Baker  
4-H Program Coordinator  
425-357-6007  
kim.baker@wsu.edu

Kristi Boyd  
4-H Administrative Assistant  
425-357-6044  
Kristi.boyd@wsu.edu

Snohomish County 4-H General Email: [snoco.4h@wsu.edu](mailto:snoco.4h@wsu.edu)  
<https://extension.wsu.edu/snohomish/4h/>

## **Introduction**

The COVID-19 pandemic took our country by surprise and we are immensely proud of how quickly our 4-H community rose to the challenge of continuing positive youth development, stepping in to provide resources for families facing extended school closures, and working with all of WSU Extension to be a source of accurate information and positive messaging. While we work tirelessly to continue programming remotely, it is very important to respond to the actual needs of our community and implement strategies that are targeted, effective, and inclusive. Using data collected from a short survey as well as conversations with 4-H community members, the Snohomish County 4-H has developed the following COVID-19 Response Plan. This plan is both an informational guide to the services our community can continue to expect from us, as well as a resource for who to contact for specific needs that our 4-H community may have. As always, you can reach any 4-H faculty by calling our office (our office lines have been temporarily forwarded to personal devices) or by emailing us (contact information can be found on the cover page).

## **News and Information**

Snohomish County 4-H is committed to providing the most accurate and up-to-date information available to our 4-H Community; however, we have received feedback that families are overwhelmed with communication about COVID-19. In response, we have created a website on our Snohomish County 4-H website that will have the most recent announcements, resources, and links available to us. This website will also be pinned on our Snohomish County 4-H Facebook page, and will appear at the bottom of every CloverGram newsletter starting on 3/27/2020. If you would prefer to receive an email or need help navigating any Extension or 4-H systems, you can email or call us, and we will gladly provide you with email support on a weekly basis. If you are not currently receiving the CloverGram and would like to, please email, or call Beth Wangen, Volunteer Development Coordinator.

## **Office-led online programming**

We want to assure you that 4-H is continuing programming during this Stay Home, Stay Healthy period. While in-person meetings and come other activities must be postponed, we want to assure all 4-H community members that the 4-H staff are hard at work helping volunteers continue their club work virtually as well as providing programming ourselves. We have developed a list of regular activities that we will be coordinating at the office level to help youth stay engaged over the next several weeks. These activities include:

**Weekly 4-H Challenges.** We are developing challenges that youth can participate in from home or in safe outdoor spaces (think yards, patios, etc.). Each challenge will provide youth with a chance to earn a virtual badge. Collect enough badges and be eligible for a physical patch for your 4-H jacket or other prizes. Look for links to challenges on our Facebook page, our COVID-19 page on our website, and in the weekly CloverGram.

**Youth Advisory Council.** While this was an idea in the works long before the COVID-19 Stay Home, Stay Healthy order, we feel that this is a great time to engage youth in a new leadership opportunity. Snohomish County 4-H will be inviting all youth to attend a virtual information session where we will discuss the formation of the Snohomish County 4-H Youth Advisory Council. Our hope is that this council, with guidance from 4-H faculty and staff, will help inform the youth leadership and learning opportunities that will be provided by Snohomish County 4-H. Like a 4-H Club, the Youth Advisory Council will elect officers, and will be youth-lead. 4-H faculty and staff will provide policy and procedural guidance, learning opportunities for council members, and will provide advice and feedback on the ideas and plans created. The priority of this council is for youth to have a voice in the youth leadership opportunities provided by Snohomish County 4-H. Your club, project, and program leaders will be receiving an email about this opportunity they can pass along to you, and families will receive an email invite via 4HOnline once the information session date has been set. Expect to receive this communication in the very near future!

**Online Office Hours.** While email and phone calls are great, it is also important to provide 4-H community members with a chance to “drop in” and talk with faculty and staff. Using data from the COVID-19 online survey that we distributed, we have developed an online office hours schedule that will start the week of March 30<sup>th</sup>. From now until the Stay Home, Stay Healthy order has lifted, at least one staff member will be in an open Zoom room Monday, Wednesday, and Friday from 3:00pm – 7:00pm. Visit our COVID-19 Response website for those Zoom links. They will be updated often as our Zoom accounts are used for club/program meetings, so please use those links for the most current Zoom Invitation.

**Stress and Trauma-Informed Support.** As the COVID-19 stay-home order has progressed, and as youth and volunteers have faced increased strain and pressure related to cancellations, postponements, economic strain, and a host of other stressors, we have decided that addressing the stress and trauma of this pandemic should be prioritized. A list of qualified community mental health professionals willing to donate time to talk about trauma-informed positive youth development as well as address challenges and questions related to COVID-19 will be developed. Once a list of professionals is developed, the office will start hosting regular (preferably twice monthly) Zoom sessions in which professionals speak directly to families and volunteers about the challenges associated with the prolonged response to COVID-19. We anticipate Zoom sessions to start prior to the end of June, 2020.

### **Volunteer Support**

While the 4-H faculty and staff are hard at work trying to develop great virtual learning opportunities, we recognize that project, club, and program leaders are the front-line volunteers working with youth in Snohomish County 4-H. As such, we will be providing as much support as possible to our volunteers as they work to provide enriching learning opportunities to engage youth during their time at home. Our plan is multifaceted and includes the following elements:

**Maintaining Regular Contact with Club and Program Leaders.** Our Program Coordinator has been hard at work contacting all club and program leaders to find out what support is needed. Many club and program leaders are already offering online alternatives to many project activities and we are so proud of that effort! For those that are still getting their virtual legs under them, we are here to support in any way we can. It is important to remember that we may not always hear about challenges that are being faced by families and volunteers, so please, if you have not heard from us, or if you are facing a particular challenge, reach out to our Program Coordinator Kim Baker and we will do everything we can to assist.

**Providing Zoom Support to Club and Program Leaders.** Zoom is the primary tool used by Washington State University, and, as such, has been the primary online meeting tool used by 4-H. 4-H faculty and staff have accounts that allow for longer meetings (up to 24 hours) and more participants (100 or more). While Zoom can be used for free by anyone, volunteers may find the restrictions of the free accounts to be a barrier. As such, we want volunteers who do not have access to a Zoom Professional account to contact us if they need a meeting that requires professional features. You can request a meeting through this online form: [SnoCo 4-H Zoom Meeting Request Form](#) or email Ashley Hall or Kim Baker (see email on title page). Don't forget to send your meeting date, time, and participant email list in your email to Ashley or Kim.

**Personalized Distance Learning Consultations.** While our online resources page will have many links to learning resources for using distance learning tools, we feel that it is important to provide personalized help to those 4-H community members who need it. We recognize that not all learning styles are the same, and a phone call or live distance meeting might better assist some with their technical questions. Zoom has many features for such meetings, including screen sharing, video chat, and, when needed, remote control of computers! We also recognize that Zoom is not the only distance learning option out there. We wish we could provide consultation on every platform, but we do not have that level of expertise in our office. We can provide consultations for the following platforms:

- Zoom – Virtual meeting software
- Google Apps including Drive, Groups, Classroom, Docs, Sheets, Forms, and many others
- Facebook
- Quia and Quizlet – Online quiz and study programs

If you need a consultation on any of the software or applications listed, or you just need help figuring out what to use, email Ashley and she will set you up with a meeting with the correct person. If you, your child, or a youth in your club happen to be an expert in

any software or applications not listed, please contact Ashley if you would be willing to provide consultations to leaders who need it.

**Learning Ideas for Club/Project/Program Leaders.** The 4-H faculty and staff are here to help you with your learning activities! If you have activities that you want to do but don't know how to implement, let us know. We have a list of ideas that we have compiled based on conversations with community members and the COVID-19 online survey results, which include:

- Virtual social hours for youth in your club. Zoom can be used for this and can even accommodate sub-groups in virtual breakout rooms.
- Online story time. Again, Zoom is a great tool, but reading time can be pre-recorded and put on social media platforms or emailed to club members. Even better if older youth provides reading hours to younger!
- Weekly, bi-weekly, or monthly meetups with a specific focus. This could be club business, project-based, or just fun learning activities. For example, a weekly LEGO meetup could showcase cool LEGO creations that youth make during their time at home!

### **Learning from Our Experience**

Any time a program faces significant challenges, it is important to learn from those challenges and prepare for the future. The Snohomish County 4-H team is dedicated to collecting information, strategically planning our response to the COVID-19 situation, and using the lessons we learn now to better prepare us for situations that may disrupt 4-H activities in the future. Faculty and staff are closely tracking emails, contacts, questions, and interventions that are being implemented, and we will use that information, along with feedback and other data collected, to study how this situation has impacted our 4-H community. We want to learn how our responses shaped the positive youth development programs that we provide and develop a plan that can be quickly implemented should any interruption in our programming occur in the future. These lessons can also be communicated to programs across the country, so that 4-H programs everywhere can benefit from the hard work that our 4-H community has put into effectively responding to this current crisis.

### **Conclusion**

This plan has been informed by the Snohomish County 4-H community and will be revised and modified as new information and needs arise, and as the United States, Washington, and Snohomish County official responses to the COVID-19 pandemic evolve. If you have information or feedback, please email, or call Ashley Hall.

The immediate and overwhelmingly positive response that the 4-H community has had to this challenging situation has reaffirmed to us that the 4-H community is innovative, resilient, collaborative, and dedicated to the well-being of all. Your positive energy and willingness to

continue to provide positive youth development opportunities for our youth is nothing short of inspiring. Our team will continue to work hard to continue providing structure, support, encouragement, and certainty that not only with 4-H continue but will come through this situation stronger than ever before.