Snohomish County 4-H

Strategic Plan

2020-2023

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Introduction

The Snohomish County 4-H program has undergone significant transition in the past two years, with nearly all staff being new to the organization. Currently the program consists of two coordinators (one program, one volunteer), one administrative assistant, and one 4-H faculty. The 4-H faculty member took over leadership of the office in August of 2019, and one of the first tasks undertaken was to conduct a needs assessment. Over a six-month period, existing data was gathered and analyzed, new data sources were created and disseminated, and office and program procedures, policies, and cultural norms were evaluated in order to better inform the needs assessment. The proceeding document contains information about the Snohomish County community, the 4-H program, Washington State University, and the constituents that they all serve. The information presented informs the strategic goals that will guide programming through 2023. A careful analysis of the organizational vision and mission (presented below) was done in order to ensure the strategic plan does not deviate or lead to mission drift. The Snohomish County 4-H's mission is to use a "systemic approach of foundation and mission driven science to meet our goals" and this plan is an attempt to adhere to that mission.

Vision

Washington State University 4-H Youth Development is developing young people to become productive citizens who are engaged in positive change, meeting the needs of a diverse and changing society.

Mission

4-H youth development education creates supportive environments for all youth and families to reach their fullest potential. This will be accomplished through a systemic approach of foundation and mission driven science to meet our goals.

Purpose

The primary purpose of a strategic planning process is to deliberately, and in a purposeful way, shape and guide the actions of an organization in a way that furthers its mission and vision. It is a big picture approach to setting an agenda that will guide the organization toward specific goals (Poister, Aristigueta, & Hall, 2015). In addition, strategic planning, which often involves

data collection and analysis to identify community and organizational needs, can be used to guide a strategic management process that will orient the daily organizational activities toward fulfillment of the strategic goals. (Poister, Aristigueta, & Hall, 2015). The importance of ensuring that goal development is purposeful and guided by the organization's mission and vision, as well as informed by a needs assessment process, cannot be overstated. Grounding all planning work in a broader agency purpose is essential to avoid mission drift, and to ensure that the programming is reaching and having a positive impact on the intended audience.

Needs Assessment

The needs assessment is a process that is used to research and evaluate community, organizational, and population-specific needs that could be addressed by the Snohomish County 4-H program. This process should not be done in a vacuum; communities are made up of organizations whose goals are to reach and impact the same or similar populations as those reached by the 4-H program. In this way, the Snohomish County 4-H needs assessment is not full of unique or novel conclusions, but instead borrows from and builds on those conclusions drawn by community organizations, local and national surveys, and a variety of other sources.

Strategic Plan and Strategic Management

Strategic planning is the final process that takes the data and information collected during the community profile building and the needs assessment process, and then connects that data to the capacity of the Snohomish County 4-H program to address some or all of those community needs. The strategic plan will involve broad goals that will help further the mission of Snohomish County 4-H, as well as Washington State University. By using a SMART (specific, measurable, attainable, reasonable, and time-bound) approach, each broad goal will include objectives that will be used to strategically manage daily activities of 4-H.

Methodology

The Snohomish County 4-H Strategic Plan followed a step-by-step process using multiple sources of information, including secondary data (information that already exists in some other form, such as US Census data) and primary data (data that Snohomish County 4-H created). A three-stage approach to the planning process was followed:

Stage 1: Data was collected from secondary sources as well as existing needs assessments from the community. This information was compiled and evaluated for goodness-of-fit with the Snohomish County 4-H program. In addition, gaps in the data were identified, and those gaps helped to develop primary data collection methods that would be used to collect more specific and rich data to better inform programmatic and populations needs.

Stage 2: Primary data was collected via a survey that was created to ask specific questions about the Snohomish County 4-H population. A focus group was conducted to collect more rich data from volunteers and parents at an in-person workshop. For the focus group, a Group Level Assessment methodology was utilized, as this method allowed participants to respond to broad topics as well as analyze and thematically organize the information they collected. This process also provided opportunity for the participants to spend time analyzing the information and themes that they developed to begin developing broad goals.

Stage 3: Once data was collected, an analysis of the strategic plans for Washington State University, the WSU 4-H, as well as the National 4-H Council was conducted to identify relevant goals that could coincide with the mission of Snohomish County 4-H as well as the identified needs discovered in the previous stages. Those goals were considered and incorporated, where appropriate, into the goals that were developed in the Strategic Management Plan that is outlined below, and that will guide Snohomish County 4-H faculty, staff, and volunteers as they deliver programming to youth, families, and the community over the next three years.

Primary Data Sources

4-H Program Reviews

A process that was implemented prior to the new faculty coming on board is the annual 4-H Program Review. The 4-H program will be described in detail later in this report. Program reviews are qualitative interviews between volunteer program leaders and the Snohomish County 4-H program coordinator. The goal of these interviews is to gather information about the activities taking place in the programs as well as the challenges that program leaders are facing. These interviews are valuable tasks that allow face-to-face discussions to take place with some regularity that act as both a data collection activity but also an important social

connection that continues to reinforce the concept that the office staff is available to support volunteers.

Adult Focus Group

This year was the first year that an adult focus group was conducted. The focus group process utilized was the Group Level Assessment technique described above. The purpose of using this method was to allow the participants to not only provide information to staff, but to also be a part of the data analysis and planning activities that often happen behind the scenes. The focus group included 11 participants (9 volunteers and 2 parents) and occurred over one 6-hour session.

Adult Annual Survey

The adult annual survey was created when it was clear that there was not an existing data source that could provide answers to a variety of questions regarding the 4-H experience of Snohomish County volunteers, youth, and families. The survey consisted of 70 questions and was open to any adult volunteer, parent/guardian, or 4-H family member. 276 individuals responded to the survey; however, after eliminating those respondents that did not select "yes" that they consented to the survey, or did not provide their age or were under the age of 18, the number of respondents dropped to 251. The survey was sent to 721 unique emails which puts the response rate at 35%. An analysis of the survey results is presented in the needs assessment section below.

Secondary Data Sources

4-H Online Enrollment Data

4-H Online is an enrollment system that has been utilized by 4-H in Washington for the past four years and tracks demographic, 4-H involvement, volunteer status, and family data. This information is particularly useful in tracking participant and family documents (such as media release and enrollment documents), level of involvement in specific clubs and programs, and enrollment trends over multiple years.

Financial Reports

Various financial reports for Snohomish County 4-H were available and utilized extensively when considering the fiscal health and needs of the program. These reports existed in various formats, including PDF summary documents and detailed Excel spreadsheets.

Census

U.S. Census data used in this assessment is the 2018 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates. This dataset is the most reliable and contains data for all census areas, though it is not the most current (U.S. Census Bureau, 2018).

WA Healthy Youth survey

The Washington Healthy Youth Survey has been tracking data since 2004 on a number of youth metrics, including substance use, dietary behaviors, physical activity, mental health, school climate and protective factors (Washington State Healhty Youth Survey, 2018). This data was used extensively to create a picture of the overall health of the youth in Snohomish County and the state of Washington.

County Health Rankings

County Healthy Rankings is a collaborative project that measures factors such as graduation rates, obesity, smoking, unemployment, income inequality, and other metrics that help researchers develop a picture of their community as well as compare themselves to other communities (County Health Rankings & Roadmaps, 2020).

Community Needs Assessments

Community needs assessments are another valuable source of information that often utilize data from the sources listed above, but also may include valuable data from their own organizations or primary data sources that inform and add to a more detail picture of Snohomish County. In addition, the work that is required when creating a needs assessment is often extensive, and drawing from or building on existing documents is a more efficient use of faculty and staff time, as well as the time that organizations in the community may need to commit as they start their own planning process. The needs assessment referenced in this document includes the following:

- Snohomish Health District 2016 Community Health Assessment Update for Snohomish County
- Snohomish County Human Services 2019 Low Income Community Needs Assessment
- Washington State Department of Children, Youth, and Families 2019 Report on Outcome Measures and Progress on Agency Goals
- Providence Regional Medical Center Everett, Snohomish County Community Health Needs Assessment 2017-2019

Community Profile

Snohomish County

Snohomish County is the 13th largest county by land area in WA covering 2900 square miles. The county includes both rural and urban areas with just under half (44%) of the population living in unincorporated county and just over half (56%) living in incorporated cities (Snohomish County Washington, 2019).

According to the US Census 5-year estimates, Snohomish County is home to nearly 772,000 residents, 145,180 of whom are 4-H aged youth (5-19). The image at left shows the population densities of Snohomish County youth by zip code regions.

The demographic breakdown of Snohomish County includes a majority of residents reporting "White" as their race (80.5%) with the second highest race being "Asian" (12.5%). Black or African American residents make up 4.5% of the population, American Indian and Alaska Native make up 2.8%, Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander make up 1.10%, and the remaining 3.4% of the population reporting being "some other race." 9.8% of Snohomish County residents report being Hispanic or Latino (of any race) and 90.2% report not being Hispanic or Latino (U.S. Census Bureau, 2018).

Washington State University

The Snohomish County 4-H program is a part of the Washington State University Extension system, which operates jointly with the U.S. Department of Agriculture and Snohomish County Government. WSU is a land-grant institution with a mission to "build the intellectual, creative, and practical abilities of individuals, communities, and institutions." This mission is accomplished by stationing Extension offices in every county in WA. At these offices, WSU

faculty and staff provide educational and experiential services in partnership with county officials and staff, nonprofit and private organizations, and dedicated volunteers, designed to meet local challenges. The Snohomish County 4-H office is housed in Everett, one of the 39 extension locations within the state. Falling under the WSU College of Agricultural, Human and Natural Resource Sciences, Youth and Families Unit, the Snohomish County 4-H staff consists of one full-time 4-H faculty member, one full-time program coordinator, one full-time volunteer coordinator, and one full-time 4-H administrative assistant, in addition to support from numerous WSU faculty and county staff members.

4-H

4-H is a national youth development organization that has been in operation for over 100 years in the United States. 4-H uses a hands-on approach in which qualified volunteers guide youth as they complete projects in areas such as health, science, agriculture, and leadership. 4-H currently boasts over 500,000 volunteers and 3,500 professionals, reaching nearly 6 million children (What Is 4-H?, 2019). The 4-H impact on youth has been thoroughly explored in academic literature. 4-H youth have been found to report higher grades, were less likely to report engaging in risky behaviors such as smoking and drinking while driving, were more likely to report better relationships with adults and peers, and were more likely to be engaged in their communities (Seevers, Hodnett, & Van Leeuwen, 2011; Goodwin, Carroll, & Oliver, Accentuating the Positive: Colorado 4-H Impact Study, 2007; Goodwin, et al., 2005). It is the goal of the Snohomish County 4-H program to positively impact youth in the same manner, and to measure and report on those impacts.

Snohomish County 4-H

Snohomish County 4-H Quick Facts 2018-2019

- Total Chartered Clubs: 72
- Total Enrolled Youth: 1,224
  - Male: 366
  - Female: 858
- Total Active Volunteers: 572
  - Youth: 177
  - Adult: 395
- 4-H Community Groups: 14
  - Group Enrolled Adults: 14

- o   Group Enrolled Youth: 82
- Total 4-H Activities (events, meetings, etc.): 2,631
    - o   Engineering & Technology: 178
    - o   Animal Sciences: 1388
    - o   Expressive Arts: 378
    - o   Family & Plant Sciences: 476
    - o   Natural Resources: 67
    - o   Shooting Sports: 144

The Snohomish County 4-H program is comprised of 72 community-based clubs where over
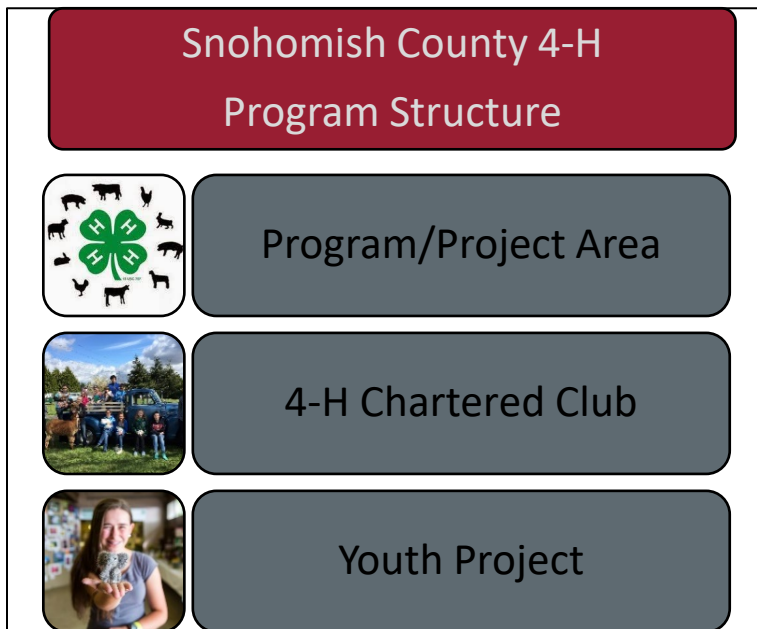
1,200 youth participate in programming (as of the 2018-2019 4-H year). Each youth belongs to one or more chartered 4-H clubs which typically meet regularly withing a geographic area (close to where youth live). Clubs are either formed and operate under a specific topic (such as a robotics or horse club) or can encompass a variety of interest areas representing the interests of youth who are involved. Each club member participates in projects under one of the six main Project categories: 4-H Natural Resources, Animal Science, Engineering and Technology, Expressive Arts, Family and Plant Sciences, and Shooting Sports. Youth are encouraged to participate fully in their club but are also given the chance to branch out and complete projects based on their varied interests. In this way, many clubs include youth who are completing projects in many different project areas. By following the program structure above, the Snohomish County 4-H combines structured programming and club-specific topics with an independent study model that allows for freedom of movement and choice for youth.

Current 4-H Enrollment

Currently, the Snohomish County 4-H program has about 1200 youth actively enrolled, however, not all Snohomish County 4-H members reside in Snohomish County. In fact, many youth travel to Snohomish County 4-H programs and clubs from surrounding counties. The map at right shows the concentration of 4-H youth by their home zip code. Currently, the highest

Enrolled 4-H Youth by Zip Code - 2018
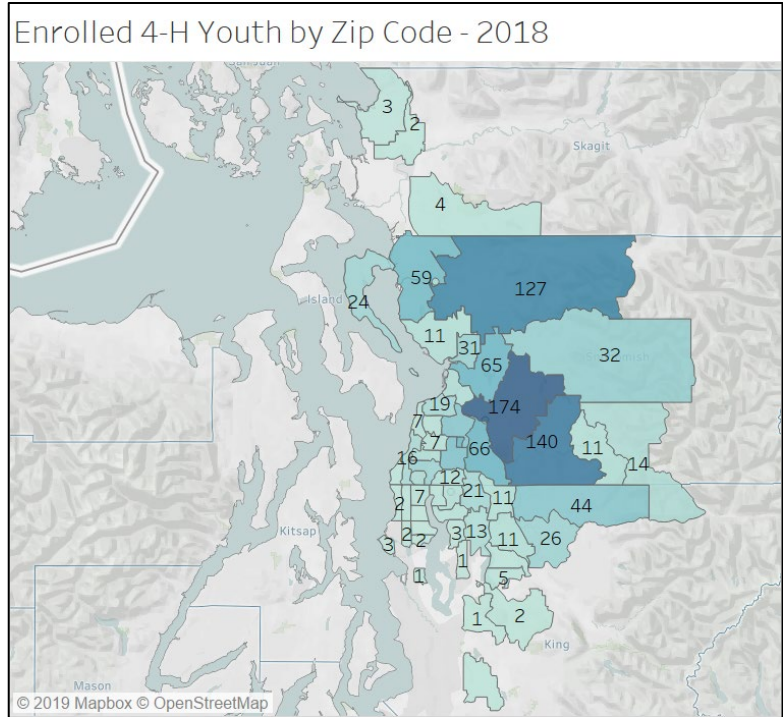
concentration of enrolled 4-H do not live in the most densely populated areas of Snohomish county, but instead live in more rural communities.

Enrollment History

Enrollment in 4-H has remained mostly stable in the past five years, though the highest numbers for both adult and youth enrolments were in the 2014-2015 4-H year. The five year trend can be seen in the figure below.

4-H Youth and Adult Enrollment Numbers
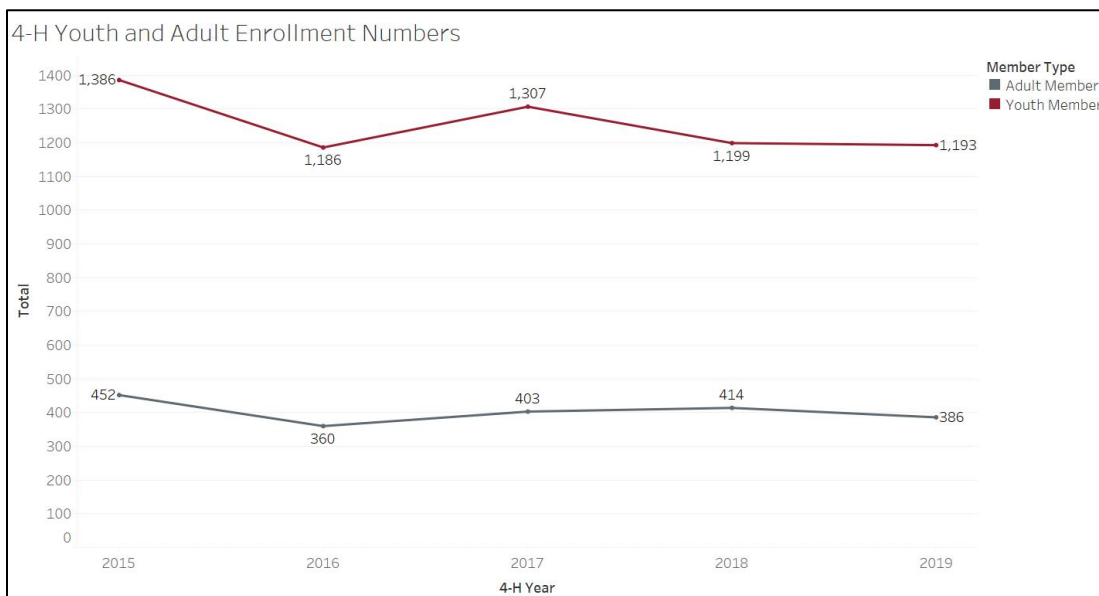
Current Snohomish County 4-H Projects Areas

At the highest level of organization is the 4-H project area. 4-H projects are organized and managed by programs, which are led by volunteers and youth leaders. These leaders act as a volunteer middle manager in the 4-H hierarchy. Programs and their leaders are responsible for the educational direction and contest/fair requirements for all projects that operate under their specific umbrella. For example, Snohomish County 4-H has a Dog Program leader who oversees the dog projects within the county. That leader is responsible for ensuring that all dog program-specific requirements are met for competitions or for participation in Fair, is responsible for establishing rules and guidelines that are specific to each dog project, and is responsible for organizing county-wide educational opportunities for all youth to participate in a dog project. 4-H projects all fall under one of these six broad program categories (also listed above): 4-H Natural Resources, Animal Science, Engineering and Technology, Expressive Arts, Family and Plant Sciences, and Shooting Sports. Below is a list of all active Snohomish County 4-H projects.

- **4-H Natural Resources**
  - Exploring Your Environment
  - Outdoor Adventures
  - Sportfishing
- **Animal Science**
  - Beef
  - Cat
  - Cavy
  - Dairy Cattle
  - Dairy Goat
  - Dog
  - Exploring 4-H: Cardboard Beef Cows
  - Exploring 4-H: Cardboard Dairy Cows
  - Goat - Market
  - Horseless Horse
  - Horsemanship
  - Llama
  - Alpaca's
  - Meat Goat
  - Novelty Goat
  - Poultry
  - Poultry: Pigeons
  - Pygmy Goat
  - Rabbit
  - Sheep
  - Swine
  - Veterinary Science
- **Engineering and Technology**
  - Aerospace
  - Computers
  - Woodworking
  - Robotics
  - Small Engines: Model Trains
  - Small Engines: Motorcycles/ATV's
  - Small Engines: Tractors
- **Expressive Arts**
  - Communication: Public Presentations
  - Creative Arts
  - Know Your Government
  - Leadership
  - Photography
  - Performing Arts
  - Theatre Arts
  - Visual Arts

- **Family and Plant Sciences**
  - Clothing & Textiles
  - Food & Nutrition
  - Food Preservation
  - Garden
  - Needle Arts
    - Plant Science
    - YA-4-H!
- **Shooting Sports**
  - Archery
  - Riflery

Current Snohomish County 4-H Clubs

Clubs are formal, chartered groups that consist of youth members and adult and youth volunteers from the community. In a chartered club, youth can focus on one or more projects depending on their intertest and the availability of volunteer project leaders within their club. While some clubs are comprised of members from around the county, most are comprised of club members who are in close geographic proximity. Clubs that grow too large may break up into multiple clubs with separate volunteer leaders to better facilitate youth learning. Below is a list of all Snohomish County 4-H clubs. This list is constantly changing as new clubs are added or as clubs combine or disband.

14 Carrot Rabbit 4-H Club	Emerald City 4-H Rabbit & Cavy
4* Ever Green	EquiStar 4-H Club
4-Happy Hooves	Esprit de Corps
Bark N Time	Fall City Flames
Barn Bums	Farm Kids 4 Life 4-H Club
Bicycle Tree	Fiber, Feathers, and Friends
Big Four	Four Seasons
Bits of Luck	Friendly Critters
Blue Chips	Friends 4-ever
Blue Ribbon Riders	Glacier Peak Institute
Boot Stomp'n Fun	Golden Wings
Boots & Bridles	Greensleeves
Broken Bits	Handlers
Byte by Byte	High Water Wranglers
Caballeros Too	Hog Wild & Beef it Up
Canine Connections	Hoofs N Paws
Classic Power	Hoot 'n Holler 4-H
Clay Slayers	Hy-Lo
Creative Kids	Let It Goats
D.O.G.S.	Little Rascals
Dirt Flickers	Lynnwood 4-H Friends
Dizzy D 4-H	Marysville Marauders
Eager Hands	Midnight Riders

Moondust Equestrians
Mudslingers
New Horizons
Nock & Fire
Oso Sewing Club
Our Gang
Paws N Claws Too
Pawsabilities
Pet Patrol
Pilchuck Valley Riders
Platinum Performance 4-H Club
Puppy Power
Rising Stars
RoundPen Rowdies
Royal Riders
Sharpshooters
Show Biz Kids
Show Stoppers
Silvana Adventurers
Silvana Lads & Lassies
SnoCo Youth 4 Change
Sties and Stalls
Strong Tower 4-H Club
Sunset Riders
Sweat & Sparkle
The New Pioneers
The Roost
Top Dogs
Velveteen Rabbits
Whittier Wildcats 4h
Wild N Woolies
Withers N Wits
Wranglers

4-H Group Enrollments, Special Interest Clubs, and other Participation Methods

Not all youth interact with 4-H via the traditional club model. Some clubs that are too small or do not meet the policy standard for a club may operate as a special interest group or short-term program. School enrichment is another way that youth can interact with 4-H programming.

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Needs Assessment

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Snohomish County - Capacity

While recognizing gaps and services or community needs is important, recognizing the existing strengths in a community is equally important. Snohomish County is geographically diverse in that it contains both urban and rural populations. The percentage of the population below the poverty level is 7.7% for Snohomish County, which is less than the 12.2% for Washington state and nearly half the 14.6% rate of the United States. Snohomish County residents also have higher rates of educational attainment, with 91.9% of residents obtaining a high school diploma or higher versus 90.8% in Washington and 87.3% in the United States (U.S. Census Bureau, 2018). According to the Washington School Report Card (2020), 10 of 14 Snohomish County school districts with public high schools have higher 4-year high school graduation rates than Washington State as a whole, and the average rate for Snohomish County is 85.0%, 4% higher than the 80.9% rate for the state.

Snohomish County residents also have access to an abundance of outdoor spaces. According to the Snohomish County Parks, Recreation & Tourism (2020), Snohomish County is home to nearly "12,000 acres of parks and open space; over 110 park properties; 100's of miles of trails and access to fresh and saltwater shorelines" (para.1).

The Snohomish County community is also supported by industries that are based in Washington, including Microsoft and Boeing, which support communities through grants and matching donations; the Snohomish STEM Network, whose goal is to enhance STEM learning in Snohomish County, and countless other nonprofit, corporate, and private supporters.

A goal of any program aiming to strengthen communities should be to tap into those existing supports to build strategic partnerships that both support programming and further the overall health of the community.

Snohomish County - Needs

An important step in any planning process is to identify the specific needs of the population being served in order to match programming to those needs. By considering the WSU mission to advance, extend, and apply knowledge, as well as the Snohomish County 4-H mission to create "supportive environments for all youth and families to reach their fullest potential," it was important to explore the areas in which Snohomish County youth and families were struggling to reach their fullest potential. This is a broad area, however, so it was important to explore the perceived needs of the community in order to prioritize goals and objectives for the Snohomish County 4-H program.

Youth Mental Health

According to the Washington Healthy Youth Survey (2019), which gathers data from youth in even-numbered grades, youth mental health outcomes have been getting worse since 2008: 33% of youth report feeling hopeless, 35% report suicidal thoughts, and 39% report planning a suicide. These statistics are worse for LGB (lesbian, gay, or bisexual) youth than those youth who identify as straight. For Snohomish County youth specifically, the statistics are very similar. In 2018, 31% of 8th graders, 38% of 10th graders, and 44% of 12th graders reported depressive feelings. 18% of 8th graders, 22% of 10th graders, and 26% of 12th graders considered attempting suicide in the past year and 14%, 16%, and 20% of youth (respective grades) reported that they made a suicide plan in the past year. The reports of depressive feelings have been increasing since 2010 (with the exception of 2014 and 2016 where they stayed the same at 36%) for 10th graders, have increased since 2012 for 12th graders, and have increased since 2012 (with the exception of 2016) for 8th graders.

Substance Use

Snohomish County youth report similar instances of use and attitudes about marijuana as their WA state peers. 1% of 6th graders, 6% of 8th graders, 17% of 10th graders, and 25% of 12th graders reported using marijuana in the previous 30-day period which is within 1% of youth from WA as a whole.

Vapor products was the only substance use category that saw an increase in recent use)in the past 30-days): 10% of youth in Snohomish County reported recently using vapor products in

2018 compared to 7% in 2016. 75% of youth in 8th grade who reported using vapor products reported getting them from a social source (such as taking from a store or family or getting them from someone 18 or older).

Youth Physical Activity

Snohomish County youth consistently report not being physically active, with 74% or greater of youth in grades 8-12 reporting not meeting the recommended 60 minutes of daily physical activity (Washington State Healhty Youth Survey, 2018). In addition, the majority (over 60%) of youth in 10th grade reported 2+ hours per day of computer screen time (a rising trend) while just under 40% reported 2+ hours of television per day (Snohomish Health District, 2019). These numbers suggest the presence of sedentary behaviors that could lead to problems later in life, including obesity. In Washington, 28% of adults are obese, slightly less than the 29% of adults in Snohomish County according to the County Health Rankings (2020) website. In order to combat later-life obesity in our youth, it is imperative that we help instill healthy habits at a younger age that will follow them through life, including access to healthy foods, physical exercise, and more opportunities to choose healthy activities instead of videogame or television time.

Youth Protective Factors

Snohomish County youth reported participating in after school activities slightly less than other WA youth, 10th and 12th graders and 61% of 10th graders reporting after school activity participation. This is compared with 60% of 8th graders and 62% of 10th and 12th graders statewide. Afterschool activity participations has dropped for 8th, 10th, and 12th graders since 2014 (Washington State Healhty Youth Survey, 2018).

Snohomish County 4-H Office

The Snohomish County 4-H office has undergone significant turnover in recent years. Of the four-person 4-H dedicated team, only one staff member has been in her position for more than 2 years. The faculty lead position had been vacant for more than 12 months, and the program coordinator had retired prior to the new faculty start date in August of 2019. As is common in organizational turnover, especially leadership turnover, established roles and norms, organizational culture, and even physical space utilization was in flux at the beginning of the

2019-2020 4-H year. While existing and new 4-H staff, as well as the extension director and other 4-H faculty from surrounding counties stepped in to provide supplemental leadership and provided crucial support, it was clear that the organization was struggling with maintaining workflow and responding to volunteer and programmatic needs in a timely and efficient manner. As a result, a significant amount of time was spent by the new faculty lead and the new and established staff exploring the established job descriptions, typical work processes, and both office and programmatic needs. Through a series of staff meetings and conversations, the following immediate needs were identified:

Lack of understanding of position descriptions and responsibilities in 4-H team. While position descriptions exist for all staff and faculty members of the 4-H team, the staff operating at ¾ or half capacity for over a year resulted in many staff stepping in to fill roles that they were not traditionally required to fill. As a result, staff roles and duties had shifted and orienting new staff to their expected roles and duties had been a challenge. While the team was able to start the process of establishing professional boundaries and adjusting volunteers to the new hierarchy, there still exists a lack of clear separation of roles and responsibilities within the team.

Need for spending priorities. Snohomish County 4-H receives funding for 4-H programming from a variety of sources including Snohomish County funding (salaries, office space, and more), 4-H enrollment fees, volunteer/employer matching donations, cooperate fundraising (Tractor Supply Paper Clover Campaign and Joann Fabrics Clover for Kids), and direct donations. With leadership and staff turnover, the established spending priorities for these funds needs to be reevaluated to match current community and programmatic needs.

Reorganization of 4-H physical space and inventory/disposal of outdated or inoperable inventory. Snohomish County 4-H has significant physical resources, including curriculum, technology, outreach and promotional supplies, and basic office supplies. While much of the inventory is used regularly, there are items, especially in the curriculum and technology category, that are out of date and no longer relevant. Since these resources take up significant space in the office, organization, and disposal (either through donation to clubs or other programs or recycling) of materials needs to be considered.

4-H Programs - 4-H General

Adult volunteers and family members were asked a series of questions designed to gauge their general feelings of 4-H. The figure below shows that most respondents felt that 4-H was beneficial in many ways. The statement with the fewest number of respondents who selected "Somewhat Agree" to "Strongly Agree" were "I feel that 4-H is meeting the social/emotional needs of youth today" and "Youth that participate in 4-H are generally better off than youth that don't." However, the percentages were not far below those of the previous statements. A full breakdown can be seen below.
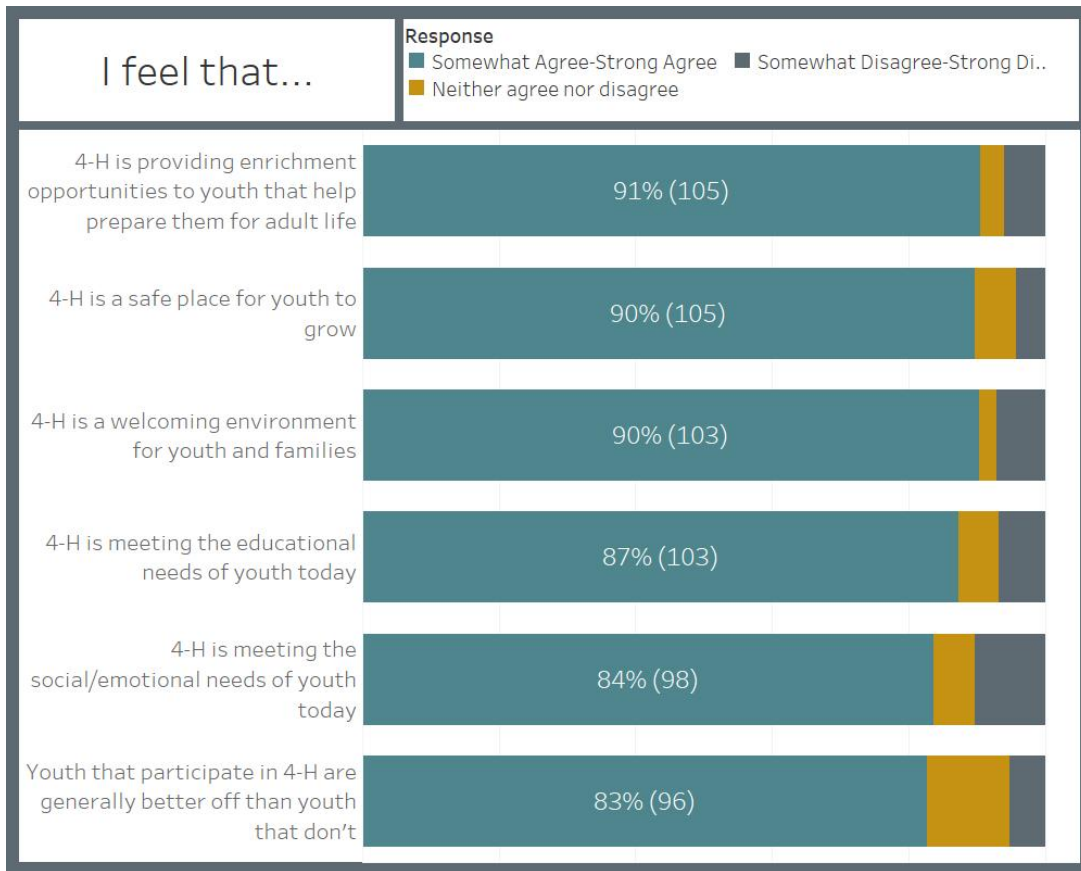
Snohomish County 4-H Programs – Areas for Improvement

Through a series of one-on-one interviews with volunteer program leaders, the Program Coordinator was able to identify several areas that the Snohomish County 4-H program can improve or change and streamline processes.

Emphasize a welcoming atmosphere. While it is impossible to make every volunteer or youth who comes to us "happy," it is certainly possible for the 4-H faculty and staff to ensure that the

office environment is as welcoming as possible. This is the message that many program leaders communicated to our team through the one-on-one interviews. They expressed concern that the busy lives they lead do not always allow for 4-H trainings, requirements, paperwork, and other processes to be completed as quickly as the office would like, and that they sometimes felt pressure to do so in a way that caused stress.

This concept of a welcoming environment or feeling was echoed in the adult focus group. Participants used terms such as "professional", "listening", "open communication", and "trust" as they described desired communication and the relationships between the 4-H community and the faculty and staff.

Strive for consistency within programs, between various projects under that program, and between programs. Having a consistent process or procedure reduces the stress and frustration of those individuals who are attempting to navigate that system, and consistency is a topic that came up frequently with program leaders. However, consistency is also a very challenging goal when programs, projects, and clubs all operate within difference spaces and have their own unique culture and style. Despite this challenge, program leaders expressed a desire to provide consistency.

The adult focus group echoed this sentiment strongly in multiple topics of discussion. Consistency in listening, guidance, and programs are a few examples. They also expressed a need for consistent information to come from office staff. Overall, consistency was a common theme across all data sources.

Standardize and communicate universal policies. While some processes are different from club to club, there are some universal polices, especially established state-wide 4-H polices, that are universal across all programs and clubs. A challenge presented by program leaders included not feeling as if those polices are universally communicated and/or enforced across all programs. Program leaders specifically expressed frustration around feeling "scolded" when not following a policy that they did not understand or did not know existed. From these conversations it is clear that universal policies need to be clearly communicated, that training and/or intensive support needs to be given to ensure understanding, and that enforcement needs to occur in a supportive way, rather than punitive.

An additional policy related result that came from the adult focus group was a view that there are too many requirements, or that the requirements needed to be streamlined. These comments point to challenges faced by the 4-H community that should prompt faculty and staff to investigate policies and procedures with the goal of clarifying, and where possible, simplify any process requirements to make them easier to understand and follow for families and volunteers.

Grow programs by increasing participation and membership. Every program leader expressed a desire to see their programs grow, both through participation in learning activities and events, and via new member enrollment. This theme is common throughout 4-H nationally, especially with older youth who tend to drop out when they reach high school years. Program participation can take many forms, and each poses its own unique challenges. Programs that support projects within a club face the challenge of ensuring an appropriate number of volunteers with the skill to mentor youth, as well as having enough access to materials, space, and time to provide appropriate learning activities throughout the 4-H year. For programs that provide short-term workshops to youth from all programs (not just their own), a challenge of space and materials for the event, as well as incentive to ensure good attendance, is a consistent struggle.

The adult focus group also discussed growth (increasing enrollment) as an area that needs improvement. Participants described the importance of growing and diversifying both the youth and volunteer population in 4-H. Barriers such as competing activities for youth, lack of diversity, lack of older youth, and youth retention were discussed.

Improve curriculum support. Each program operates under a learning topic that filters into clubs to provide learning experiences for youth. Those learning experiences can follow established 4-H curriculum, can utilize curriculum that exists outside of the 4-H environment, or can follow no set curriculum. Program leaders were not consistent in their use of curriculum and did not do any evaluation activities to determine the outcomes for youth using curriculum. An evaluation of the curriculum currently being used, the curriculum available to program leaders, and methods of evaluating implementation and outcomes is a need identified by faculty and staff conducting the program reviews and volunteer interviews.

Clarify and mediate the relationships between program leaders (4-H) and Evergreen State Fair Superintendents (Snohomish County Parks). An important activity in many 4-H youth's year is participation at the Evergreen State Fair. This participation is not mandatory but is a common goal of many youth. Participation at Fair requires youth to complete tasks throughout the year, including attending club meetings and completing their 4-H enrollment. At Fair, the youth present their projects and, in some cases, compete in a variety of contests. This event is co-organized and managed by the 4-H program staff, 4-H program leaders, who are certified 4-H volunteers, and a Fair Superintendent, who have a dual-role acting as both a certified 4-H volunteer and a Snohomish County Parks department representative for Fair. Since qualification for participation at Fair is managed by the 4-H program leader, and the Fair exhibits are organized by the superintendents, it stands to reason that the relationship between the two should be a collaborative one. However, many program leaders reported a problem in their relationship with the superintendents, specifically there were reports of misunderstandings of roles and responsibilities. Many explained that this was a serious challenge that causes significant stress and hardship, not only for themselves, but for the youth participating in Fair.

The adult focus group also emphasized the need for clarification of Fair participation requirements and procedures for new and existing families as this can be an area of confusion for many.

4-H Parents and Volunteers

The data used to assess 4-H parent and volunteer needs came from two sources: The Adult Annual Survey and the Adult Focus Group. Results from both sources are explored in detail below.

Adult Annual Survey

The adult annual survey asked numerous questions regarding the respondents' perceptions of 4-H, 4-H programming, the services offered by 4-H staff (such as training), and other general satisfaction questions. One question allowed volunteers to agree or disagree with a series of statements that described the benefit of volunteering with 4-H. The graphic below summarizes those results.
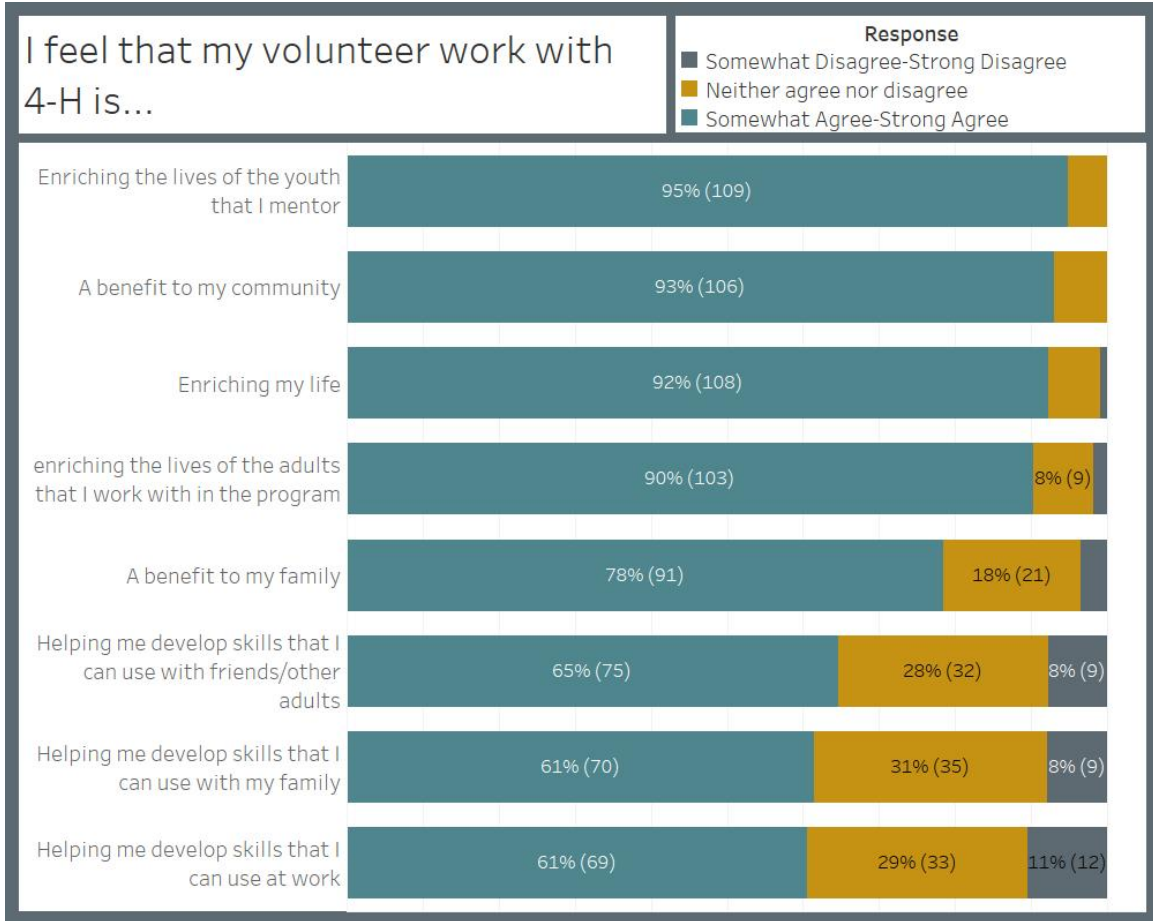
The graphic above shows that, generally, volunteers feel that their volunteer experience is enriching and beneficial. However, the last three statements show the least amount of "Somewhat Agree" to "Strongly Agree" responses. From these results, it is clear that less than 65% or fewer respondents feel that their volunteer experience helps them develop skills that are applicable outside of 4-H.

Another important question that was asked of volunteers attempted to gauge their level of agreement with the following statements: "I feel that Snohomish County 4-H has provided training and materials to ensure my club/program is inclusive and allows [youth and families AND volunteers] from all backgrounds to participate in 4-H." Most respondents somewhat agreed to strongly agreed with those two statements (86% and 84% respectively). To better understand perceptions of volunteers from different backgrounds, the same statements were also analyzed based on multiple demographic groups. The total number of respondents who selected a race other than "White" and/or the ethnicity option "Hispanic or Latino/Latina" were

so few that this question could not be analyzed using those options, however, there were over 20 respondents who identified as either belonging to the LGBT community or consider themselves as an ally. As a result, this question could be analyzed to determine if perceptions were different based on at least this demographic variable. When looking at the same question broken down by non-LGBT or Ally and LGBT or Ally, there is a slight difference. LGBT or Ally respondents were slightly less likely to feel that Snohomish County 4-H provides training and materials to ensure an inclusive environment for youth and families (77% compared to 90%) and volunteers (77% compared to 87%). This disparity is an important one, and one that should be tracked longitudinally as the survey is repeated and as additional trainings and materials are provided to help 4-H volunteers ensure inclusive environments. A breakdown of the responses can be seen in the graphic below.
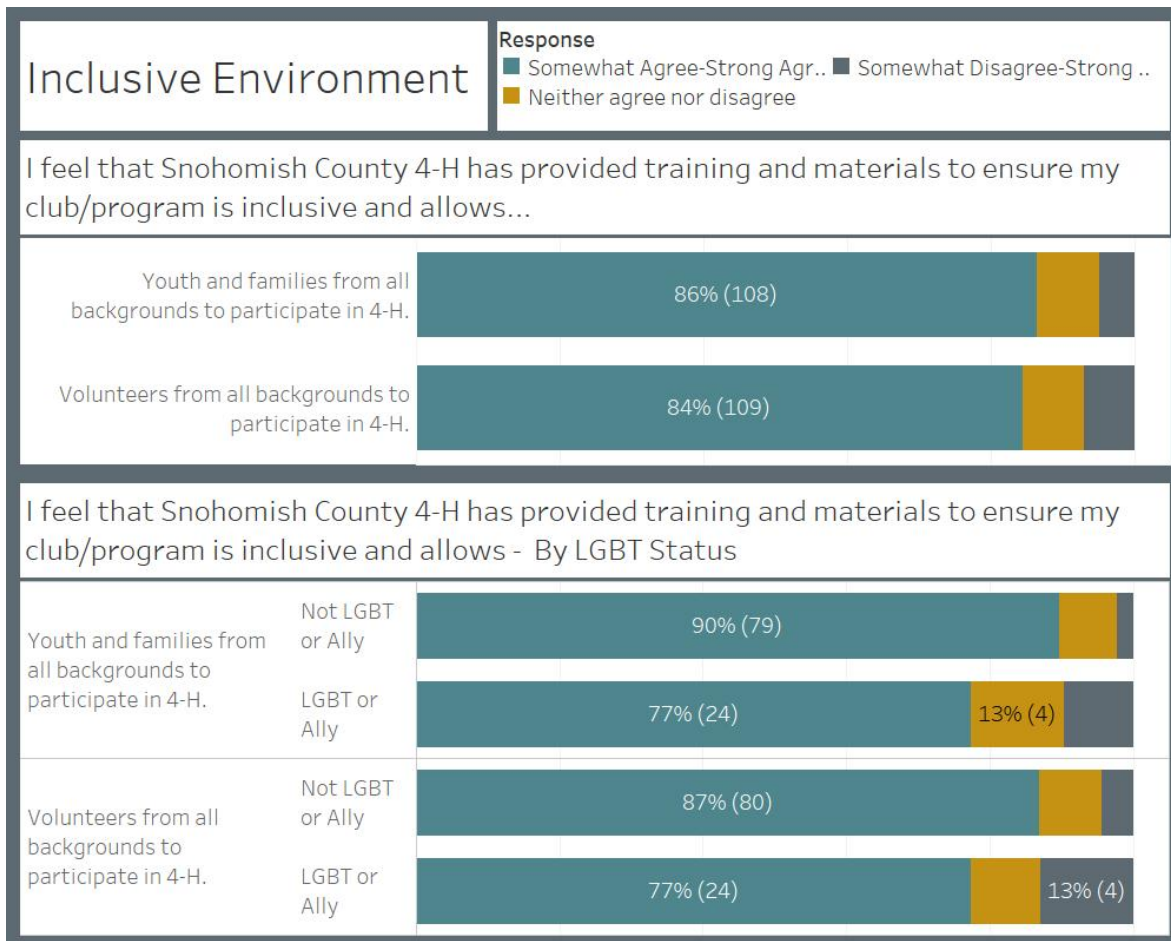
Adult Focus Group

While some results were reported in the Program Review section above, this section will focus only on the adult focus group data.

Focus Group Procedure

The focus group activity followed a very specific procedure outlined in academic literature. The process used was the Group Level Assessment; a participatory method of collecting information from individuals. The process unfolds in seven steps:

1. Climate setting – Prepare participants for the day (agenda, overview, etc.).
2. Generating – Participants walk around the room and write reactions and comments to pre-developed topics posted on posters.
3. Appreciating – Participants are given time to silently view the reactions and comments.
4. Reflecting – Participants are instructed to reflect, silently, on the information created by themselves and fellow participants. They can do this in writing if they wish.
5. Understanding – Participants are divided into groups and are provided several posters with topics and reactions and are asked to organize or group them into themes (a quick overview of how to develop themes precedes this step).
6. Selecting – Each small group presents their themes to the entire group and facilitator encourages questions and comments. All participants further condense themes based on the discussion.
7. Action – The final step allows participants to brainstorm some goals and action plans that could possibly address the challenges that were discovered during the previous six steps (Vaughn, 2014).

Participants created a wealth of qualitative data and then organized that data into the following themes: Communication, Inclusivity, Youth Leaders, and Community. A deeper analysis of the data by the 4-H team expanded those themes to the following: Communication, Barriers, Information, Involvement, Youth Opportunity, Resources, Environment, and Volunteer Acknowledgement. Overall, both the volunteer thematic analysis and the 4-H faculty and staff analysis came to similar conclusions and identified several specific needs.

Primary is the need for consistent, clear, respectful, and professional communication between the 4-H office and the 4-H community. This was a consistent theme across focus group discussion topics as well as in the adult survey comments.
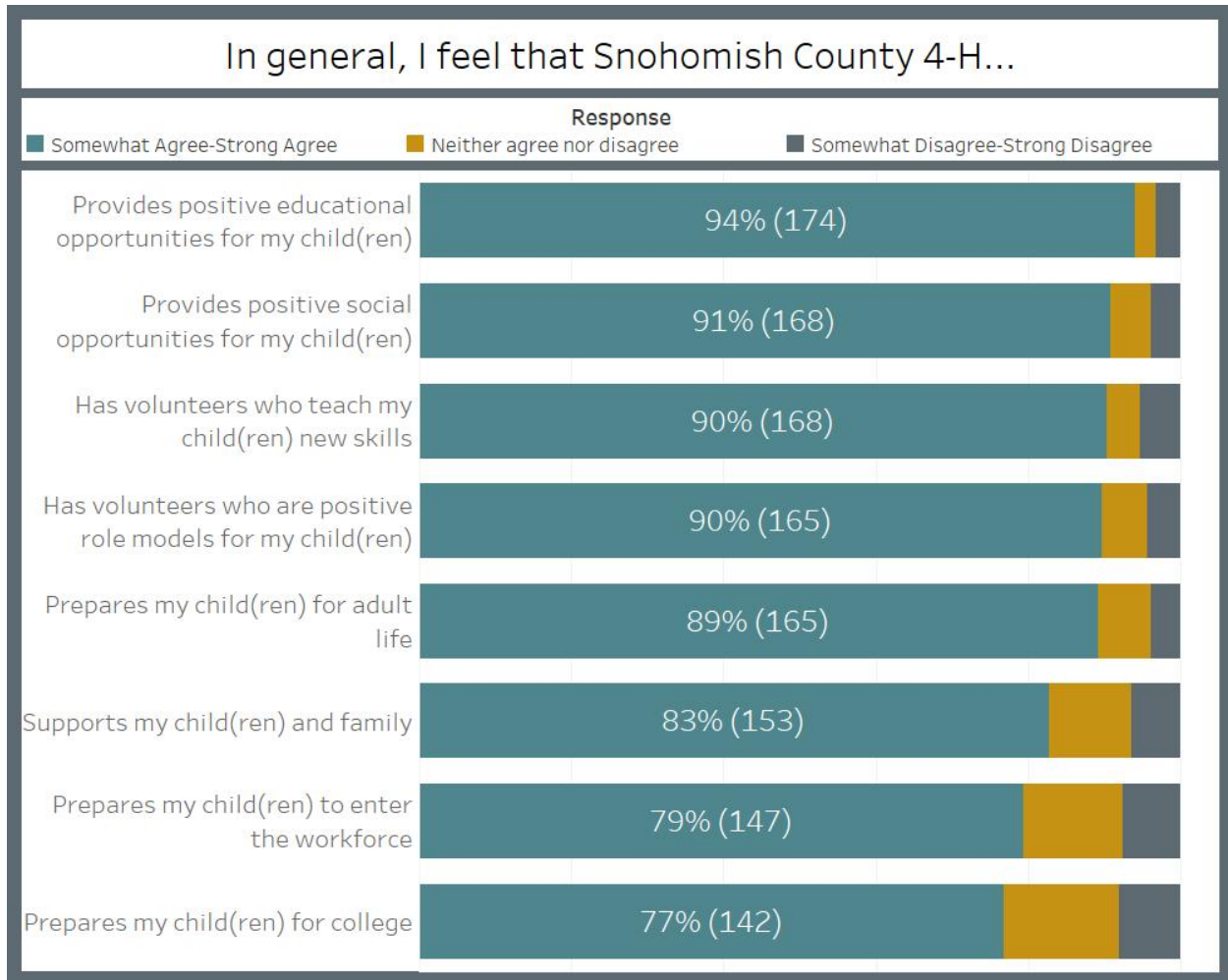
Another important theme that was recognized was the need for clear and consistent information, be it training on how to implement policy, how to manage difficult situations with volunteers or youth, or how to address diversity and the special and unique needs of youth.

The group also provided insight into the desire to be involved in the decision-making process with phrases such as "volunteer feedback solicited," "youth input in goal setting" and "solicit caregiver feedback."

One of the themes with the most comments was the Environment. In this category, participants expressed a desire to have the 4-H club and the 4-H office environment be one that is inviting, respectful, relaxed, and flexible, youth focused, as well as safe and confidential.

Overall, many of the needs expressed by the participants in the adult focus group centered around the relationship that 4-H faculty and staff have with the 4-H community, and that the 4-H adult leaders have with the youth and families in their clubs. A clear desire for volunteers to have a chance to learn and grow was present.

4-H Youth - Adult Survey

A series of questions were posed to adults in the Snohomish County 4-H system regarding their general feelings of 4-H. As is shown in the graphic below, overall, respondents feel that 4-H is a positive influence in the lives of youth and the community. The two statements with the lowest number of "Somewhat Agree" to "Strongly Agree" responses are "In general, I feel that Snohomish County 4-H prepares my child(ren) to enter the workforce" and "In general, I feel that Snohomish County 4-H prepares my child(ren) for college."

In general, I feel that Snohomish County 4-H...

Response
■ Somewhat Agree-Strong Agree   ■ Neither agree nor disagree   ■ Somewhat Disagree-Strong Disagree

Statement	Response
Provides positive educational opportunities for my child(ren)	94% (174)
Provides positive social opportunities for my child(ren)	91% (168)
Has volunteers who teach my child(ren) new skills	90% (168)
Has volunteers who are positive role models for my child(ren)	90% (165)
Prepares my child(ren) for adult life	89% (165)
Supports my child(ren) and family	83% (153)
Prepares my child(ren) to enter the workforce	79% (147)
Prepares my child(ren) for college	77% (142)

4-H Youth - Adult Focus Group

The adult focus group provided a wealth of information about the perception of needs with regards to youth. The Youth Opportunity theme included comments such as:

- "Ambassadors and Toastmasters – where did they go?"
- "Provide specific training"
- "Provide education for members and empower youth to speak"
- "Putting youth #1"

There was a general consensus, both in the comments and during the focus group discussions that youth need to be provided genuine leadership opportunities, opportunities to learn new and valuable skills, and that the youth need to be put first in 4-H.

Volunteers also expressed a desire to gain skills in areas such as increasing diverse youth membership, providing better assistance to youth with special and unique needs, and involving

youth in the decision-making and planning processes. They also expressed a lack of skill and experience in managing diverse groups or groups with diverse needs.

Snohomish County 4-H 2020 – 2023 Strategic Plan

The Snohomish County 4-H strategic plan goals and objectives are influenced by several sources. First, the data from the needs assessment provided most of the context and inspiration for the goals that will inform programming for the next three years.

In addition to the needs assessment data, goals and objectives were also informed by goals and objectives that exist in our partnering organizations and the broader WSU and 4-H community.

Matching Goals to Partner Strategic Plans

Identifying goals and objectives in the broader WSU and 4-H community is essential to place the Snohomish county 4-H program in the context of the organizations in which it co-exists. The following goals were identified as matching the Snohomish County 4-H mission as well as aligning with the goals that will address pressing needs:

Washington State University 2020-2025 System-Wide Strategic Plan (draft)

- Goal 1: Research, Innovation, and Creativity
    - Objective 2: Increase WSU's ability to highlight our achievements and their societal impact.
- Goal 2: Student Experience
    - Objective 3: Ensure every WSU student will participate in experiential learning and community engagement (e.g., service learning, internships, undergraduate research, creative discovery, study abroad, and/or leadership).
- Goal 3: Outreach, Extension, Service, and Engagement
    - Objective 1: Improve and implement cohesive, system-wide mechanisms for assessing and communicating the impact and value of outreach, Extension, service, and engagement.
    - Objective 3: Increase outreach, Extension, service, and engagement activities across all colleges, all campuses, and throughout the state, as an essential element to achieving WSU's land-grant mission.

- o Objective 4: Increase and enhance partnerships with diverse and under-represented communities.
- Goal 4: Institutional Effectiveness and Infrastructure
  - o Objective 1: Budget and planning: Align financial resources with strategic plan goals and engage in integrated planning of current educational programs and research efforts to maintain and strengthen their quality.

2018-2019 4-H Faculty Strategic Plan Draft

- Theme 1: Advancing the field of Positive Youth Development.
  - o Goal/Initiative: Increase the breadth of PYD through community and statewide partnerships, and program implementation.
- Theme 2: Effective and intentional organization of systems and culture.
  - o Goal/Initiative: Evaluation.
  - o Goal/Initiative: Strategic Partnerships.

2019-2021 National 4-H Council Strategic Plan

- Objective 1: Elevate 4-H's role in expanding economic mobility in America.
  - o Strategy A: Connect 4-H outcomes to university-wide goals.
- Objective 2: Engage a community of alumni and supporters to help grow 4-H
  - o Strategy A: Increase the quality and quantity of media exposure.
  - o Strategy B: Create a comprehensive digital experience to engage alumni and friends.
- Objective 3: Broaden corporate and foundation support for 4-H outcomes.
  - o Strategy A: Build the capacity of workforce development programming.

Needs to Address

Community:

Youth mental health. As is evident through the Washington Healthy Youth Survey, the number of youths experiencing depressive feelings, thoughts of suicide, and those who have made a suicide plan are high (30% or more in some cases).

Youth vaping. Youth vaping is the only substance use on the Healthy Youth Survey that has increased in recent years and should be addressed. That does not mean that vaping is the only

substance that should be attended to, but it should be given special attention given its current trend.

Physical health and activity. Youth are spending a significant amount of time (3+ hour) on a screen and not getting the physical activity that is recommended to maintain health. This is an area that needs to be addressed for long-term personal health, health of the community as a whole, and the health of future generations that our youth will eventually be raising.

4-H Volunteers

Volunteers need to be prepared to mentor utilizing the Positive Youth Development method. Volunteers expressed a clear desire to increase their skill level. Focusing on the Positive Youth Development model is a way to accomplish that goal. As identified in the 2018-2019 4-H Faculty Strategic Plan Draft, specialized training is needed (and desired) for volunteers to acquire the skills necessary to effectively deliver this technique.

Volunteers need to be prepared to address diversity, inclusivity, and youth with special and unique needs. Increasing diversity in 4-H is a goal that can be tied to every strategic goal that was used in this plan as well as the desires and needs of the volunteers. In addition, the Snohomish County 4-H members and volunteers do not currently represent the diversity of the population that is served. Increasing skills and knowledge around diversity and special needs is essential.

Volunteers need to be prepared to handle difficult situations with youth, parents, and fellow volunteers. A core component of the Positive Youth Development model proposes that the "adolescent years [are](U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 2020). Using this model, volunteers can be trained to effectively manage difficult behaviors and situations with youth by learning how to capitalize on strengths and direct those strengths to positive outlets. Additional educational opportunities could give volunteers specific skills dealing with a variety of unique situations such as trauma, special needs, developmental differences, and cultural norms both with youth and adults.

4-H Office/System and Communication

Improved and consistent communication of policies, expectations, news, and opportunities.

Volunteers consistently reported challenges understanding requirements or policies, communicating with faculty and staff, and/or struggling to navigate differences between office policy, state policy, and project or program requirements.

Communicating Program Activities and Impacts. Volunteers reported a general lack of communication regarding community and 4-H activities: 4-H activities and accomplishments need to be communicated to the broader community and community events and opportunities need to be communicated to 4-H youth and families. At least two strategic plans pointed to a need to communicate scheduled 4-H events and accomplishments to the broader community on a regular basis.

Communication with office staff and faculty needs to be professional, consistent, and must encourage trust. Volunteers consistently reported the desire to be able to communicate with 4-H staff on a variety of issues and reported a desire to have a comfortable and welcoming space to come to. They used words like "professional" many times and expressed a desire to see an "open door" policy at the 4-H office.

4-H Youth

Leadership and learning opportunities. Volunteers, parents, and data from the community consistently pointed to the need for youth to have opportunities to practice genuine leadership opportunities. In addition, Snohomish County volunteers and parents were less likely to report that 4-H prepared youth for future employment and life after high school. Engaging youth and providing a variety of leadership and learning opportunities will be essential in meeting those needs.

Goals and Objectives

The following goals and objectives are informed by the needs assessment, the data collected from various sources, the goals and objectives outlined in partner plans, as well as the identified needs that were selected after analysis of all of the above. The goals are broad, while objectives are specific and measurable. Each objective also has a measurement method or tool attached to it to measure the progress toward accomplishing that objective. In addition, at the end of each goal, links to the data source used to develop the goal as well as links to the

partnering strategic plans, are identified. Goals are presented in order of urgent need and implementation priority, which was informed by parent organizational strategic initiatives.

Goal 1: Improve electronic, in-person, and print communication with volunteers and community.

- Objective 1: Increase Snohomish County 4-H exposure to local, state, and national audiences via publications, articles, and social media posts.
    - **Measures used to track progress:** Count of published articles (local, statewide, WSU, and national), social media likes/shares, website visit metrics
- Objective 2: Increase availability and visibility of 4-H faculty and staff to volunteers and clubs via meeting attendance, clear and consistent office hours, and method of reaching staff outside of office hours during large or out-of-state events.
    - **Measures used to track progress:** Incoming calls, counts of meetings/events attended, adult annual survey.
- Objective 3: Standardize and improve written and electronic communication methods between office, programs, clubs, and projects.
    - **Measures used to track progress:** Templates created, email reads, website and social media traffic, adult volunteer survey, adult focus group.

Data used to inform goal: Adult annual survey, Adult focus group.

Partnering strategic plans: National 4-H Council, Objective 2, Strategy A & C; WSU, Goal 1; WSU, Goal 3, Objective 1.

Goal 2: Increase engagement and recruitment of diverse volunteers, youth, and community partners.

- Objective 1: Recruit and retain volunteers from diverse backgrounds.
    - **Measures used to track progress:** 4-H Online, adult volunteer survey.
- Objective 2: Improve the perception of inclusive environment for all participants by providing training on use of materials designed to foster physically inclusive spaces (signage, disability resources, etc.).
    - **Measures used to track progress:** Training evaluations and follow-ups, adult volunteer survey.

- Objective 3: Engage with community partners whose mission is to increase diversity and inclusion in order to form partnership and recruit/retain volunteers.
    - **Measures used to track progress:** Number of partnerships, meeting, and event attendance.

Data used to inform goal: Adult annual survey, 4-H Online, adult focus group, U.S. Census.

Partnering strategic plans: WSU Goal 3, Objective 4; 4-H Faculty Strategic Plan, Theme 2, Strategic Partnerships.

Goal 3: Grow the 4-H volunteer pool and strategically evaluate and improve the volunteer training program currently in existence.

- Objective 1: Offer training to volunteers on youth leadership and Positive Youth Development to increase the use of these strategies at the club/project level.
    - **Measures used to track progress:** Adult annual survey, training attendee counts, training evaluations.
- Objective 2: Analyze current workshops and trainings and determine if they are (1) perceived as valuable, and (2) align with volunteer needs, other goals, and current research.
    - **Measures used to track progress:** Training and workshop evaluations (past), adult annual survey, adult focus group.
- Objective 3: Utilizing existing data and established research to create a training plan that aligns volunteer continuing education workshops with (1) program/club needs, (2) skills that volunteers can use outside of 4-H, and (3) skills that address the broader community needs including youth mental health, substance use (especially vaping products), college/career readiness, and physical health.
    - **Measures used to track progress:** Workshop evaluations and follow-up, adult annual survey, adult focus group, youth focus group.
- Objective 4: Develop a training evaluation plan to measure workshop reaction, learning, behavior change, and results at the club/program level.
    - **Measures used to track progress:** Workshop evaluation (including follow-ups).

Data used to inform goal: Adult focus group, adult annual survey.

Partnering strategic plans: WSU Strategic Plan, Goal 3, Objective 1; 4-H Draft Strategic Plan, Theme One & Three; National 4-H Council, Objective 1, Strategy A, & Objective 3, Strategy A.

Goal 4: Grow and strengthen Snohomish County 4-H/community partners and outreach activities.

- Objective 1: Establish and track a list of community partners that can help further the goals and objectives outlined in this strategic plan.
    - **Measures used to track progress:** List of partners, meeting attendance, event attendance.
- Objective 2: Develop workshops that can appeal to community partners to give back and spread Positive Youth Development techniques.
    - **Measures used to track progress:** List of partners, meeting attendance, event attendance.
- Objective 3: Create a list of annual outreach activities and develop a plan to regularly attend events.
    - **Measures used to track progress:** Outreach opportunity list, event attendance, count of individuals reached.

Data used to inform goal: Adult focus group.

Partnering strategic plans: 4-H Faculty Draft Strategic Plan, Theme two, "Strategic Partnerships", WSU Strategic Plan Goal 3, Objective 3 & 4.

Goal 5: Improve youth development educational, leadership, and college/future preparedness offerings.

- Objective 1: Develop a youth advisory committee that will advise the Snohomish County 4-H faculty and staff on youth priorities, and will help plan educational, leadership, and experiential activities.
    - **Measures used to track progress:** Events and activities data (attendance sheets, fundraising reports, etc.), youth focus groups.
- Objective 2: Provide workshops and trainings for youth at the county level that focus on specified priorities and that help to increase college and career readiness.

- o **Measures used to track progress:** Workshop evaluations, follow-up surveys, youth focus groups.
- Objective 3: Explore the development of programs and curriculum that link current 4-H activities to future careers options.
  - o **Measures used to track progress:** Program plan complete with timeline and measures.
- Objective 4: Develop a program that connects youth to professionals in a variety of careers to expose them to options after high school.
  - o **Measures used to track progress:** Adult annual survey, youth participants in developed programs, program evaluations, youth follow-ups (post high school), youth focus groups.

Data used to inform goal: Adult annual survey, adult focus group.

Partnering strategic plans: National 4-H Council, Objective 3, Strategy A; 4-H Faculty Strategic Plan, Theme two, "Strategic Partnerships".

Goal 6: Develop and implement a spending plan, revenue generation plan, and reporting process.

- Objective 1: Evaluate spending from previous 3 years and create a report and dashboard designed to understand and communicate income and expense distribution.
  - o **Measures used to track progress:** Pervious spending statements, report, dashboard.
- Objective 2: Using volunteer and youth feedback, create a budget with spending priorities that align with program needs and strategic initiatives.
  - o **Measures used to track progress:** Adult focus groups, adult annual survey, feedback from meeting presentations, spending plan.
- Objective 3: Create a budget tracking sheet that will feed into a public dashboard that will be available to volunteers and community members.
  - o **Measures used to track progress:** Dashboard website traffic, adult focus group.

Data used to inform goal: Snohomish County 4-H Office analysis.

Partnering strategic plans: WSU Strategic Plan, Goal 4; National 4-H Council, Objective 2, Strategy D.

Goal 7: Build a data collection, analysis, and reporting plan that will tell the Snohomish County 4-H story.

- Objective 1: Evaluate current data sources and methods of data collection and combine into one useable data source.

    o **Measures used to track progress:** Data source creation.

- Objective 2: Evaluate 4-H (county) measures that are important for strategic planning, program planning and delivery, reporting to community partners, evaluation activities, and fiscal planning, and create a data management and reporting plan based on results.

    o **Measures used to track progress:** Data management and reporting plan.

- Objective 3: Create a long-term data management plan with goals and objectives for the next 5 years.

    o **Measures used to track progress:** Long-term data management plan.

- Objective 4: Create dashboards for common metrics, including enrollment, youth and volunteer retention, workshop attendance, workshop evaluation, and fiscal data.

- **Measures used to track progress:** Dashboard, dashboard clicks/downloads.

Data used to inform goal: Snohomish County 4-H Office analysis.

Partnering strategic plans: National 4-H Council, Objective 1, Strategy A & Objective 2, Strategy B; 4-H Faculty Draft Strategic Plan, Theme two, "Evaluation"; WSU Strategic Plan, Goal 1, Objective 2.

Goal 8: Strategically plan and improve the office environment for volunteers, youth, and public.

- Objective 1: Create a plan for a welcoming environment by manipulating physical space, providing comfort items, and access to items needed to facilitate a meeting or discussion with volunteers, youth, or public.

    o **Measures used to track progress:** Adult Focus Group, Adult Annual Survey, tracking sheet for meetings, phone calls, and emails.

- Objective 2: Develop, clarify, and train staff on a "customer service" approach to handling all volunteer, youth, and community communications that emphasizes service and professionalism.
  - **Measures used to track progress:** Adult Focus Group, Adult Annual Survey, staff training guidelines,

Data used to inform goal: Adult focus group and adult annual survey.

Partnering strategic plans: WSU, Goal 3, Objective 3.

Conclusions and Next Steps

This strategic planning process has not been done in Snohomish County 4-H in many years. The next and most important steps will be to disseminate this proposed plan to all stakeholders via website postings, direct emails, and presentations at 4-H and community meetings. Soliciting feedback on the content of the assessment as well as the strategic goals, and incorporating that feedback, will ensure community buy-in, but will also ensure that the goals and objectives match the needs of the population that they are meant to benefit.

For many organizations conducting a needs assessment, the fundamental mistakes made are (1) not connecting the needs that were found with actionable goals and objectives, (2) not following through with the tasks designed to meet those goals, and (3) not reporting those activities and results to the constituents involved in the process.

Because there are many goals in this document, it is essential that 4-H faculty and staff revisit this document no less than quarterly to assess the progress toward meeting them. By building a schedule to revisit the strategic plan, and by developing goals and objectives that include specific measures, it is more likely that the Snohomish County 4-H program will reach some or all the goals listed by 2023. In addition, by consistently revisiting the plan, new information and community feedback can be incorporated as it is collected, and goals and objectives can be strategically adjusted based on emerging needs or in response to external factors (such as staff turnover or changes in funding or policies).

Finally, by partnering with 4-H youth, families, and volunteers to both develop and accomplish the goals outlined in this plan, the entire Snohomish County 4-H community, as opposed to just

faculty and staff, will be able to take ownership of and share in the successes and positive changes that are sure to follow.

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