Building a Ready Generation in a World of Change.





Beyond Ready

NC 4-H ANNUAL REPORT

2025-26

Youth who participate in 4-H programs emerge:

2X more likely to have the goal of being a leader

3X more likely to participate in community service

2X more likely to report living life with intentionality & purpose

NC COOPERATIVE EXTENSION

N.C. A&T STATE UNIVERSITY

NC STATE UNIVERSITY

A Message from NC 4-H

Competent, confident and connected youth of outstanding character are shaping our tomorrow now. That is why 4-H is building the child that is 'Beyond Ready' to embrace the future head-on.

From 4-H staff that work weekends, at night, and still keep office hours, to volunteers that not only show up, but who nurture and grow young lives, to the donors who believe in the 4-H experience enough to ensure that future generations benefit from it, 4-H is deeply ingrained in the lives of our participants, both past and present.

Thank you for joining us as we reflect on 2025 in the pages that follow. Let's celebrate the close of another great year in 4-H as we continue looking forward to all the possibilities that lie ahead.

Our Mission

4-H creates opportunities for young people to build positive relationships and develop the skills needed to become responsible, productive citizens.

4-H uses a "learn by doing" approach, combining hands-on experiences with research-based knowledge from land-grant universities to help youth develop life skills that last a lifetime.



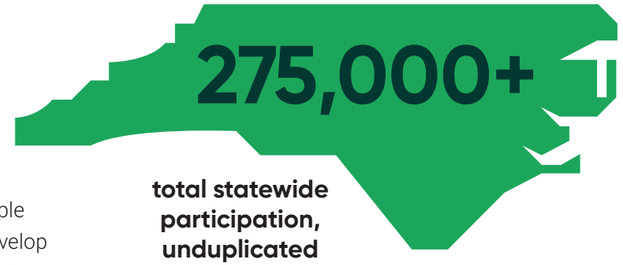


The four H's represent the core values developed through 4-H:

- **HEAD** — Clearer thinking, decision making and problem solving
- **HEART** — Loyalty, relationships and emotional awareness
- **HANDS** — Service, teamwork and practical skills
- **HEALTH** — Personal well-being and making healthy choices

Growing Skills. Building Purpose.

As the largest youth development program in the state, North Carolina 4-H serves more than 275,000 youth. Administered by NC State Extension, Cooperative Extension at N.C. A&T State University, and local government partners statewide, 4-H provides young people with hands-on opportunities to explore their interests, develop valuable life skills and make a difference in their communities.



The research-based 4-H experience grows young people who are:

- **4X** more likely to contribute to their communities
- **2X** more likely to make healthier choices
- **2X** more likely to be civically active
- **2X** more likely to participate in STEM programs

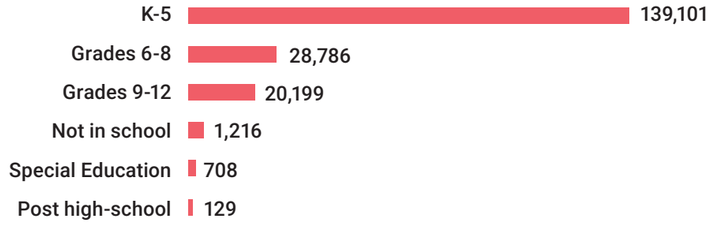
Preparing Youth

Through hands-on programs in leadership, STEM, health, agriculture and career readiness, 4-H equips North Carolina youth with the skills to succeed in college, careers and life.

- **32,916** Communication & Expressive Arts
- **8,635** Community / Volunteer Service
- **3,370** Civic Engagement

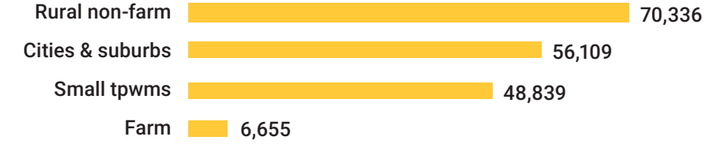
Serving All Ages

From the youngest cloverbud to high school seniors, 4-H provides learn-by-doing experiences based on youths' interests, guiding them as they develop their own pathways and passions.



Reaching Urban & Rural

4-H provides programming that resonates with youth wherever they live - from the biggest city to the most rural farm.



Learning Takes Flight Everywhere

21,525

YOUTH IN ORGANIZED 4-H CLUBS

18,591	4-H Community clubs
2,229	4-H After-school clubs
662	4-H In-school clubs
43	4-H Military clubs

CLUB SPOTLIGHT



Washington County Sew 4-H Club Leader Jill Manring and local 4-H'ers created a quilt to demonstrate all that is special about their home. In addition to this quilt, the club participated in a national project to connect all of the Washington counties in the U.S. by contributing a quilt square to a collective national quilt.

171,111

YOUTH IN SCHOOL ENRICHMENT

165,112	School enrichment programs
1,491	Individual study / Mentoring / Family learning programs
4,008	After-school programs using 4-H curricula / staff training
500	Instructional TV / Video / Web Programs

Winged Wonders

By Emily Carson, Kaley Lawing

During the 2025-2026 school year, roughly 2,546 Moore County students participated in the 4-H Winged Wonders Butterfly School Enrichment Program. The 145 classrooms in the program ranged from preschool to high school across the county. The program provided at least one butterfly larva per student, butterfly nets and a workbook for second grade classrooms aligned with North Carolina curriculum standards.

The 4-H Winged Wonders program is a hands-on educational activity studying the four stages of butterfly growth: egg, larva (caterpillar), chrysalis and adult. The research-based curriculum is intended for youth ages 6-8, but can be easily adapted for younger and older age groups. In this curriculum, youth observe the wonders of the natural world unfolding in front of them by raising painted lady butterflies from larva through adulthood. Youth experience the mystery of the butterfly life cycle while learning about the role everyone can play in environmental stewardship



"My students gained a better understanding of nature and metamorphosis. I feel like this activity increased interest in science and exploration. They were asking questions almost daily and some students even named 'their' butterfly.

— Participating educator

Volunteers Build Beyond Ready Youth

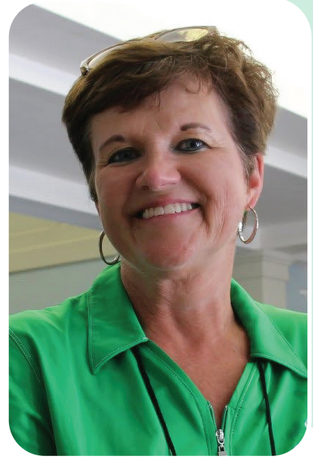
Longtime 4-H Volunteer Retires From Duke Energy District Management

(Excerpt From the *Lincoln Times-News)*

Rebecca Jones, Staff Writer, Sept. 14, 2026

For decades, Lincoln County youth have benefited from the leadership and mentorship of Robin Nicholson, Duke Energy's longtime District Manager for Lincoln County and a dedicated 4-H volunteer whose involvement with the organization began when she was a child. Nicholson participated in 4-H growing up and has remained actively involved in North Carolina 4-H programs for more than four decades.

Throughout her career, she served communities across the region while building a successful career with Duke Energy, where she will retire at the end of this month after more than 45 years of service. Nicholson says, "I credit 4-H with helping me develop my communication, leadership and public-speaking skills that have served me throughout my professional career."

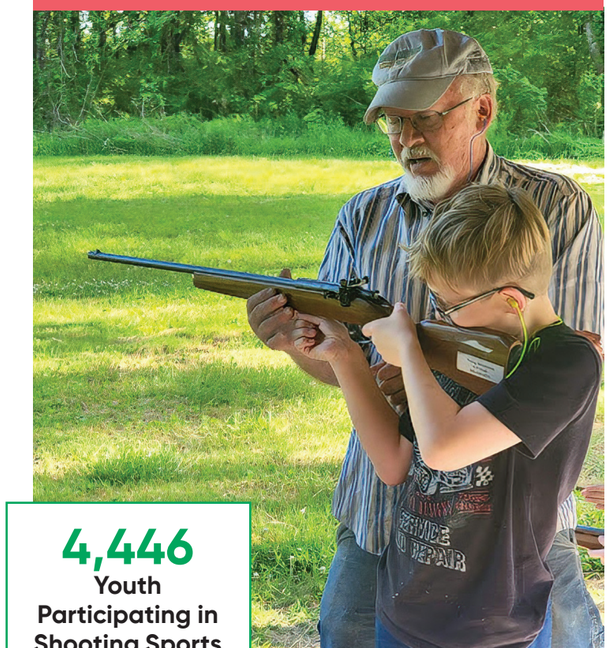


Robin Nicholson
Devoted volunteer for 4-H's Electric Congress

"I credit 4-H with helping me develop my communication, leadership and public-speaking skills that have served me throughout my professional career.

Link to full article

VOLUNTEER SPOTLIGHT



4,446
Youth Participating in Shooting Sports

For 20 years, Chip Worrell has devoted himself to Henderson County youth through **4-H shooting sports**. "It is counterintuitive for most people, but this is the safest sport there is," Worrell said. "You are teaching adult responsibilities. Procedures are important. In shooting sports you follow the rules. 4-H is geared toward the making of a child as a successful adult."

Worrell followed his wife, Renae, into volunteering for 4-H. "Renae is the club director and teaches wildlife and forestry. She has been doing this for 25 years. It is nice to be able to share what we think the children need - we have this common link in our lives," he said.

Worrell has taught many-a-champion through his volunteer career, fielding a national 4-H shooting sports team in addition to his work with Henderson County 4-H. "It's good therapy for me, working with these 8-to-18-year-olds. I'm the richer for doing it, and I think that this is my place."

Beyond Ready

4-H Beyond Ready Initiative

The 4-H Beyond Ready initiative bridges the gap between knowing essential life skills and applying them, directly answering what employers and communities need most in a rapidly shifting, technology-driven world. By centering on communication, confidence and critical thinking, our initiative equips young people to articulate their ideas persuasively, navigate complex modern problems with resilience, and step into leadership roles with self-assurance. Rather than preparing youth for a single career path, these core competencies ensure that whether teens pursue college, trade training, military service or the workforce, they leave with the practical readiness to adapt, lead and thrive wherever their future takes them.



Opportunities to Reach Beyond

- Dinah Gore 4-H Healthy Food Challenge
- NC 4-H Camp Leader-In-Training Programs
- NC 4-H Presentation Program
- Career Pathways (Caminos a Carreras)
- NC 4-H Youth Leadership Model
- NC 4-H Project Records
- Record Books with Kaleidoscope
- NC 4-H AIRE Program
- Apple Community Education
- AI Literacy Curriculum
- 4-H Health Rocks!
- NC 4-H Clover JAM

Beyond Ready youth participation

Leadership and Personal Development	Health	Food and Nutrition	Community / Volunteer Service	Communications and Expressive Arts	Biological Sciences	Animal
80,399	29,377	35,240	8,635	32,910	138,682	83,426

NC 4-H Hosts Inaugural Senior Signing Event

By Jacob Hanlon



North Carolina 4-H celebrated its graduating seniors in a new way this year, hosting its first-ever 4-H Signing Season event on July 21, 2026, during State 4-H Congress. As part of the Beyond Ready initiative, the ceremony recognized 45 graduating seniors representing 32 counties and all five Extension districts.

Inspired by traditional athletic signing days, 4-H Signing Season celebrates the many pathways young people pursue after graduation. The initiative reinforces that every 4-H member leaves the program with the confidence, communication and critical thinking skills needed to thrive wherever life leads.

Logan Sundbom, a 4-H member in Edgecombe County, shared her thoughts on participating in North Carolina's first Signing Season celebration.

"It was a cool way to end my time in 4-H," Sundbom said. "Walking across the stage while everyone cheered was a really special way to celebrate everything I've experienced over the years. I'm really glad I got to share that moment with my 4-H family."

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>
> **Logan Sundbom**
> 4-H member,
> Edgecombe County

Link to full article

4-H Agents Lead By Doing



There's a place for everyone in 4-H, no matter where you are now or where you want to go in the future. 4-H can help youth discover their strengths and prepare for what comes next. That is what 'Beyond Ready' means to me, helping young people not only be ready for their next step, but confident enough to believe they can take it.

Cecelia Tadt
New Hanover County

The teen leadership program is a passion project of mine. This program gives teens the tools to become involved citizens. The teen council plans and leads programs in the county, serve as ambassadors for the county 4-H program, advise the 4-H agent on programs they would like to see, and help create and lead those events. This program is empowering youth to become 'Beyond Ready.'



Ruth Perkins
Perquimans County



In a world where people say "that is too inconvenient," a 4-H'er should say, "of course I can help," because that is what being beyond ready means. Our county council youth assist with officer training, achievement night and county activity days. I have had some 4-H'ers who once refused to speak in a meeting now eager to teach others, speak at achievement night and lead at their local county activity days.

Hannah Peeler
Henderson County

We are intentional in how we set our young people up for success by instilling crucial self confidence. Our teen county council and history of leadership at the county, district, and state levels is something we are very proud of. Our teen leaders are some of the best in the state. That is not an accident, it comes from building a strong sense of commitment, trust, and real connection with each one of our young leaders.



Matt Barber
Davidson County

NC 4-H'er to NC 4-H Agent



Lee Brimmage
Hyde County

From livestock showing to summer days at Nature Week as a kid in Hyde County 4-H, to now serving as the local 4-H Extension Agent in my hometown, my journey with 4-H has come full circle.

I am proud of how far this journey has brought me and excited for all that's ahead. THANK YOU to all that have been a part of the journey thus far.



Laura Allen
Rowan County

The opportunities that 4-H provides help to ensure that today's youth can be the best parents, employees, servant leaders, and engaged citizens in an ever-changing world. Rowan County 4-H has a strong 4-H Presentations program. At State 4-H Presentation Finals in 2026, 14 of our 4-H'ers competed with all ranking in the top 3 in their category and age division. 4-H is helping give them the confidence they need.

Camps and Special Interest

By Angela Brisson

Partnership with Vaya Partners Provides Opportunities for Youth in Hurricane Helene-Impacted Communities

This summer, NC 4-H Camps partnered with Vaya Partners to expand access to the transformational experience of summer camp for youth in communities impacted by Hurricane Helene. Through the partnership, 137 full camp scholarships totaling $75,000 were provided to youth across 24 counties, giving children an opportunity to build friendships, learn new skills and simply enjoy being kids during a challenging time.

"We are incredibly grateful to Vaya Partners for helping make this experience possible for young people and families. These scholarships allowed us to reach youth who may not otherwise have had the opportunity to attend camp," said Tory Lukasina, NC 4-H camping specialist.



NC 4-H Camps are Awarded a Character at Camp Grant from the American Camp Association

NC 4-H Camps is also investing in the future of youth development through selection as a grantee in the American Camp Association's Character at Camp Grant Program. Through this three-year grant, running through 2028, NC 4-H Camps will enhance and expand its Leader-in-Training program for youth ages 15–17. Program enhancements will include leadership training, new opportunities for skill development and a progression of leadership roles, including paid Junior Counselor positions at all three 4-H camps. These efforts will help prepare young people to become confident leaders who value teamwork, character and service to their communities. To learn more, visit go.ncsu.edu/leadersatcamp



YOUTH IN 4-H **CAMPING PROGRAMS**

YOUTH PARTICIPANTS
7,934

3,154
County Summer Fun Day Camp Participants

CAMPING PARTICIPANTS
July 2025 - Sept. 2026
20,635
total participants

Retreat / rental participants	13,181
Summer campers	4,780
School field trip participants	3,366

4-H SUMMER CAMP SUPPORT

684
scholarships awarded

$266,751
camping investments

Coming Together, Celebrating Impact

Donors make it possible for NC 4-H to offer meaningful experiences and recognition opportunities that celebrate achievement, foster connections and inspire the next generation of leaders. Their generosity opens doors for youth to participate in statewide events, develop leadership skills and engage in educational experiences that leave a lasting impact.



North Carolina 4-H Congress brings youth from across the state together to share experiences, build friendships and make lasting connections. Beyond these shared experiences, Congress also provides an opportunity to celebrate the lasting impact of 4-H through the 4-H Alumni Awards, which honor individuals whose exceptional contributions have supported programs across North Carolina. This spirit of recognition and appreciation continues at the Youth and Donor Event, where scholarship recipients, national trip delegates and major award winners are celebrated alongside the generous supporters who help make these opportunities possible.

612
Donors

$1,010,086
Gifts and new commitments
to the North Carolina Agricultural Foundation, Inc. in support of 4-H youth across the state

Learn more and support 4-H.
go.ncsu.edu/Support4-H

The 4-H Development Fund provides vital private support for North Carolina 4-H programs and activities statewide. The fund expands educational opportunities, strengthens local programs and supports leadership and recognition experiences for youth and volunteers. Made possible through the generosity of individuals, corporations, foundations, Extension employees, alumni and friends of 4-H, this support reflects a shared commitment to positive youth development across North Carolina.



Volunteer Leaders Make a Lasting Impact

Electric Cooperatives Support 4-H Youth

By Allyson Farmer



10,272
Adult Volunteers

4,979
Youth Volunteers

For more than a decade, North Carolina's Electric Cooperatives have partnered with NC 4-H to build stronger communities by investing directly in youth civic engagement and local adult volunteer development. A central pillar of this enduring partnership is their sponsorship of the NC 4-H Volunteer Leader's Conference, which provides adult mentors across all 100 counties with vital leadership training, resources and recognition to effectively guide local clubs.

By continuously empowering both active youth and the dedicated volunteers who mentor them, North Carolina's Electric Cooperatives demonstrate a deep-rooted commitment to strengthening local leadership and community service from the ground up.



I PLEDGE

my HEAD
to clearer
thinking,

my HEART
to greater
loyalty,

my HANDS
to larger
service,

my HEALTH
to better
living,

for my **CLUB**, my **COMMUNITY**,
my **COUNTRY** and my **WORLD**.

Join us in helping youth be Ready for Anything.
More youth. More community. More ready.

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