



Self-Determined Project



The Kansas 4-H Self-Determined project empowers youth to become Beyond Ready by designing a project experience based on their own passions, interests, and future goals. Whether exploring a hobby, sport, career pathway, community need, or unique area of study not currently offered, members create personalized learning experiences through hands-on exploration, goal setting, and real-world problem solving. Youth build leadership, communication, creativity, and life skills while researching new ideas, developing projects, and sharing what they learn with others. The possibilities are endless as members discover their spark, strengthen confidence, and create a project experience that is uniquely their own.

Starting Out *Beginner:*

- Identify and pursue a personal passion, hobby, or interest.
- Set goals for what you want to learn and accomplish.
- Research your topic using books, videos, or mentors.
- Explore through hands-on learning.
- Share what you are learning with others.

Learning More *Intermediate:*

- Build your knowledge through research and practice.
- Track progress and evaluate completion of your goals.
- Try new techniques to expand your project ideas.
- Share your hobby, interest, or activity with others.
- Investigate future careers and community involvement.

Expanding Horizons *Advanced:*

- Refine advanced skills and explore related topics.
- Evaluate goals and reflect on what you have learned.
- Teach others or mentor younger members.
- Apply your skills in real-world or community-based experiences.
- Create, lead, or showcase a project experience.

Beyond Ready

Ready to Lead

Youth involved in 4-H are **two times more likely to have the goal of becoming a leader**. Through real-world experiences and the guidance of caring mentors, they develop the confidence, communication, and decision-making skills needed to lead in today's changing world.

Ready to Serve

Youth who participate in 4-H are **three times more likely to engage in community service**. Service learning provides them with purpose and connection at a time when **more than 53% of Gen Z report feeling lonely**. Through 4-H, youth are empowered to serve with compassion and make a meaningful impact.

Ready to Build

With nearly **10 million unfilled jobs and 77% of employers seeking real-world skills**, 4-H helps youth build what matters. Through hands-on projects and career exploration, youth gain adaptability, problem-solving, and workforce readiness.

Ready to Conquer

While 52% of young people feel like they're failing at life goals, 4-H youth rise with resilience. Backed by research and supported by caring adults, they learn to overcome challenges, set goals, and take charge of their future with confidence.

***Building a Ready
Generation in a
World of Change!***

Self-Determined Project

Expand Your Experiences!

Healthy Living:

- Build confidence, independence, and resilience through new experiences and challenges.
- Practice goal setting, time management, and financial decision-making skills related to your project.
- Explore activities and projects that support mental, physical, and emotional wellness.

Science and Agriculture:

- Explore connections between agriculture, technology, natural resources, and the environment.
- Conduct experiments, research activities, or hands-on investigations.
- Discover how science and innovation apply to everyday life, future careers, and community challenges.

Community Vitality:

- Share your project experiences, skills, and accomplishments with your club and community.
- Volunteer your time, interests and talents to support local needs and service projects.
- Make a positive impact by using your knowledge and creativity in your community.

Communication and the Arts:

- Develop communication skills through speaking, writing, interviewing, and presenting project ideas.
- Use creativity and artistic expression to showcase your interests, experiences, and accomplishments.
- Create displays, demonstrations, exhibits, or visual presentations that share your learning journey.

Career Exploration:

- Explore and research careers related to your project.
- Interview or job shadow professionals.
- Explore training programs, technical schools, colleges or universities.
- Connect project experiences to future opportunities.
- Build workplace skills: responsibility, teamwork, and communication.
- Create a real/conceptual product or service business and participate in a YEC (Youth Entrepreneurship Challenge) competition.
- Explore cybersecurity jobs in career areas of your project.

Contact Information

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Resources & Events:

Participating in educational events and learning opportunities will expand your knowledge and skills in your chosen project area. Contact your local K-State Extension office for local opportunities.

- Attend workshops, field days, or project-specific events.
- Connect with mentors, volunteers, or Extension staff.
- Participate in fairs, contests, or showcases.
- Use online tools, videos, and publications.

Curriculum & Resources:

- Use books, articles, and online materials related to your project.
- Seek guidance from mentors or Extension professionals.
- Create your own learning plan based on project goals.
- Keep organized records and notes.
- Explore workshops, community experiences, or hands-on activities.

4-H Record Keeping:

Learning to keep accurate records is a life skill.

- [Setting 4-H Project Goals \(4H1100\)](#)
- [Kansas 4-H Record Keeping](#)
- Complete a Self-Determined journal:
 - Track activities, progress, hours spent, and learning experiences.
 - Reflect on successes, challenges, and growth.
 - Maintain records for project reports and recognition.

Project Exhibit Ideas:

- Create a display board highlighting your project journey.
- Present a demonstration or illustrated talk.
- Exhibit a finished product, collection, or portfolio.
- Share a notebook or display/visual summary.
- Highlight goals, learning, and results.
- Explore other local showcasing opportunities.

