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in Extension  
Volunteers

# Transitioning to Youth Boards

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Youth Boards are replacing the 4-H & Youth Development Program Area Committee. This is one of the most significant changes in the INVEST Plan associated with Program Area Committees.

The main reason for the change was the Volunteer Steering Committee indicating and providing proof that the current structure of the 4-H & Youth Development Program Area Committee was not properly functioning statewide. That does not mean that there were not outstanding 4-H & Youth Development Program Area Committee in certain areas of the state, but overall, when it came time to compare the effectiveness of the 4-H & Youth Development Program Area Committee to other established program area committees, there was a large gap.


So, the proposal of a Youth Board was developed to see if it would be more appropriate.

The following slides will help outline the Youth Board. Also, you may want to follow along in the Program Area Committee / Youth Board publication as this presentation supplements the publication.




## Youth Board Tasks

- Assist the CEA with the planning programs.
- Assist the CEA with the implementation phase of programming.
- Assist the CEA with the evaluation phase of programming.



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Program Area Committees need to be selected and organized to function differently depending on the program direction. For new program needs in which limited or no program resources are available the following the six steps below apply more directly.

In addition, if the County Extension Agent is implementing a banner program then it is important to understand that there is a variation of tasks for a committee. For example, the Program Area Committee should not be as involved in the program design and evaluation tasks because the banner program has these tasks already included in the banner program design. In summary, when Banner programs are being implemented where Program Area Committees are in place, the need for a "task force" or coalition still exists if that is part of the Banner program design. In such cases, the Program Area Committee may help in identifying marketing strategies for audience participation, and provide support for implementing the program.

Nevertheless, the following six tasks of a Program Area Committee are outlined to assist in the program development process. Obviously, the execution of each task will depend on the program plan of the County Extension Agent. In other words, if the County Extension Agent is using a banner program with clientele, then the Program Area Committee would not be as involved in the program design, but may be more involved in the implementation of the program.


### HERE ARE THE FIRST THREE TASKS!!

- 1) **Assist the County Extension Agent with the planning phase of programming.**
  - Annually review the county situation, program evaluation/needs assessment results and the TCCF County Action Plan related to the program area for which the Program Area Committee has advisory responsibility.
  - Identify and prioritize programming needs, goals and opportunities for the coming year and appoint or organize task forces, coalitions as needed to provide more specific direction to high priority issues.
  - Select best practice programs to address high priority needs.
- 2) **Assist the County Extension Agent with the implementation phase of programming.**
  - Determine significant implementation strategies and efforts to address each identified programming need. *If best practice or banner program is being implemented, review program strategies with committee.*
  - Determine ways to access/market to the target audience and set target dates for each educational event/activity.
  - Determine effective educational methods and techniques to convey the information to the people the educational event/activity is intended to reach. *The subject matter specialist should be involved in this as well. A best practice could be the County Extension Agent communicating with the subject matter specialist for feedback prior to meeting with program area committee.*
  - Engage potential resource people and information to implement and present the program.
- 3) **Assist the County Extension Agent with the evaluation phase of programming.**
  - Review evaluation strategies to implement before the program initiates. *Banner program evaluations can NOT be changed because of statewide interpretation evaluation design.*
  - Review proposed program evaluation/needs assessment instruments developed by County Extension Agent.
  - In conjunction with Regional Program Directors/subject matter specialists/evaluation specialists, review results of program evaluation/needs assessment and utilize results to assist in directing/redirecting program priorities and program delivery methodologies accordingly for the coming year.




## Youth Board Tasks

- Assist the CEA with the interpretation phase of programming.
- Assist the CEA with committee membership rotation to insure optimum representation and diversity.
- Utilize the best management practices for the management of external support funds.



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### HERE ARE THE NEXT THREE TASKS

#### **Assist the County Extension Agent with the interpretation phase of programming.**


- Identify programming successes and evaluation results to highlight in program interpretation/promotion events to interested stakeholders and the leadership advisory board.
- Identify stakeholders (individuals and groups) to target as strategically important audiences for program interpretations.
- Assist with scheduling and presentation of programming successes and evaluation results for the county leadership advisory board, County Commissioners' Court, and other identified stakeholders.

#### **5) Assist the County Extension Agent with committee membership rotation to insure optimum representation and diversity.**

- Review membership rotation clause in Program Area Committee by-laws and act accordingly to identify potential replacement for those committee members whose term has expired.
- Assist with contacting of potential committee members.
- Assist with orientation of new committee members.


#### **6) Utilize the best management practices for the management of external support funds in accordance with the Texas A&M University System and Texas Extension.**

- Assist with determining how the external support fund (account) will be managed and controlled by committee/task force/coalition members and follow up with assignment of member responsibilities and best management practices.




## Youth Boards

- This is a Program Area Committee that meets face-to-face at least **twice** annually
- The County Youth Board is a recommended **8-15 people**
- Membership on the Board should be a majority of youth with some adult membership
- Membership on the board should be diverse in it's representation of county demographics and other youth serving entities.
- The youth board will develop and sponsor one major educational activity during the year.




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This is just the overarching characteristics of the youth board. We will talk in more detail about this. I just thought it would be good to have a slide to say what is expected on the front end.

These are also very similar to the others except for the last one. In order for the Youth Board to be completely engaged, it is imperative that they have lead responsibility for one activity. This is discussed in much greater detail later in this presentation.




## Youth Boards: Task Forces / Coalitions

- Once the **Youth Board** has helped decide on the program efforts for the coming year, then a smaller group of people would help address the program (range of 3-10 people). There are two types of smaller groups:
  - **Task Force**
  - **Coalitions**



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**UNLIKE THE PAC'S FOR ANR, FCS, CD**, where counties have the options / flexibility to have smaller groups to address prioritized issues, the YOUTH BOARD is strongly encouraging that the outcome program support be made up of a smaller group of people that have a greater interest in that subject matter.

Once the committee has helped the County Extension Agent decide on the programming efforts for the coming year, then the County Extension Agent would assign a much smaller group of people to help address the programming efforts for that year. This smaller group is a **task force** or **coalition** that would provide specific direction for outcome programs and other significant efforts. These task forces or coalitions (recommended 3-5 people) provide specific direction to a program because of their interest in that particular educational area in a one-year time frame. Task force / coalition membership would change yearly based on the educational programming issues. In addition, multiple task forces / coalitions could be appointed as needed and could also include resource people or other key leaders who are not currently members of the Program Area Committee.

**Task Force** – This educational planning group may be used when 1) the committee membership has strong professional and personal interests in the issue and 2) the outcome program will be addressed in one year or less.


**Coalitions** – This is an educational planning group that is comprised mostly of individuals that are going to meet for a longer time period than one year.




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## Youth Board Functions

- Their function would be more strategic in nature to help the County Extension Agent determine what programs need to be implemented in the county year to year
- Review yearly educational impacts and outreach to new youth audiences and project areas
- Help decide how task forces / coalitions can address priority issues.




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These will be very similar to Program Area Committees that were noted in the PAC discussion.



## Why the Change to Youth Boards?

- Expectations developed by adults without youth involvement set youth up for failure (Natriello & Dornbusch (1984).
- Program Area Committees (comprised predominantly of adults) that attempt to predict educational programs for youth will have *far less impact* because youth are not represented.





**Introduction.** For many years program development for youth serving entities has been driven by the social ills of youth. Over the last two decades the reshaping of the youth serving field has seen formation of youth-adult partnerships and youth development.

Most youth programs are still deficit-based by design; they focus on particular problems or risks experienced by young people and offer to “keep kids out of trouble” or to expose them to positive activities and relationships. It is also clear that most programs still rely heavily on adults and “experts” in the field to design, implement and evaluate youth programs. We must take a closer look at the concept of “youth engagement” –an essential ingredient of a successful youth development approach. Several key factors of engagement are critical to explore, including the role of young people in youth programs, the relationship between adults and youth, and the settings in which programs take place (The Innovation Center for Community and Youth Development, 2003).


**Previous Research.** To further illustrate the importance of having youth partnering with County Extension Agents and adult volunteers to develop, implement, evaluate, and interpret youth educational programs, the following research bullets provide the impact youth in educational partnership roles.

Expectations developed by adults without youth involvement set youth up for failure (Natriello & Dornbusch (1984). In other words, having a Program Area Committee (comprised predominantly of adults) attempt to predict educational programs for youth will have far less impact and success because youth are not represented. Thus, having a youth board comprised of a majority of youth allows them to provide insight about youth activities in a county and allows them the comfort to express their thoughts because other members of the board are youth as well.



## Why the Change to Youth Boards?

- Youth and adult partnerships have revealed that youth involved in boards with America-Corp show improvements in:
  - communication,
  - interpersonal,
  - problem-solving, and
  - understanding-organizations skills



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**American Youth  
Policy Forum, (1999)**

• Youth and adult partnerships have revealed that youth involved in boards found that 76% of youth members participating in AmericaCorp showed significant increases in communication, interpersonal, problem-solving, and understanding-organizations skills (American Youth Policy Forum, 1999).



## Why the Change to Youth Boards?


- **Yates and Youniss (1999) note that one adult on a board of directors that involves both youth and adults said:**
  - “if you can get folks to sit at the table with a group of committed young people, ***transformation will occur.***
  - The key is to be dealing with ***real issues from youth.***”



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•The limited number of adults and the County Extension Agent should facilitate the role of a coach with the youth board to more effectively empower them while guiding them and making them accountable (The Innovation Center for Community and Youth Development, 2003). This means the County Extension Agent responsible for the youth board should allow for creative, free thinking, and open communication with the youth board. Yates and Youniss (1999) note that one adult on a board of directors that involves both youth said “if you can get folks to sit at the table with a group of committed young people, transformation will occur. The key is to be dealing with real issues *from youth.*”



## Why the Change to Youth Boards?


- Bronfenbrenner (1979) suggested that youth that are in a caring mode for other youths develop in all areas of their lives. This includes:
  - jobs,
  - school,
  - relationships,
  - community, and
  - health.

**This “caring” is exactly the role youth will serve on the county youth board as they develop, implement, evaluate, and interpret youth educational programs in their local counties.**


Bronfenbrenner (1979) suggested that youth that are in a caring mode for other youths develop in all areas of their lives. This includes jobs, school, relationships, community, and health. This “caring” is exactly the role youth will serve on the county youth board as they develop, implement, evaluate, and interpret youth educational programs in their local counties.

### ***SUMMARY OF THE LITERATURE***

These individual studies as well as many others justify the need for a county youth board providing input and assistance to the County Extension Agent to develop 4-H and Youth development educational programs.



# Moving to Youth Boards



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Because this is one of the biggest changes in the INVEST curriculum, we thought it would be important to talk about how to transfer to the YOUTH BOARD concept. This picture is supposed to show the balancing act we may have to do develop to successfully do away with the traditional 4-H Program Area Committee and move to the Youth Board concept.

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## Transitional Period

- September of 2006 kickoff
- You can start before that!!



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Remember, we are due to have these Youth Boards in place by the fall of 2006. You can move ahead of the game if you wish.

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## What do I do with my Current 4-H PAC?

- Keep the good ones!!!
- Rotate some off!!!
- Shift others to project support
- Have them identify youth that could possibly be members

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One of the biggest questions surrounding Youth Boards is what to do with the current 4-H PAC. The answer is first show them why the move is being made. This is done by showing them the research that **STRONGLY CONNECTS** programmatic impact to programs where youth at the table discussing youth issues and strategies to deal with these issues.

After explaining this, the next concept is to discuss what to do with existing members. Remember, the Youth Board can have some adult membership. So, if there are some excellent members, it may be best to keep them on the youth board. If you decide to do so, make sure you help them understand that Youth are coming to the table and that there are some items adults need to understand when that happens (SEE SLIDE 15). In addition, some of the adults currently on the committee might be better served on a smaller task force that addresses a specific outcome program or other task force. Some County Extension Agents have developed smaller task forces that address traditional 4-H projects that a lot of these folks might be interested in.


It is okay to rotate some of them off. It might be time to get a fresh look. If this is the case, the youth data describing why the move toward a Youth Board should provide sufficient evidence on why the change is important.

Also, these individuals should be able to provide youth names that could possibly serve on the Youth Board.




## Tricks for Smooth Transition of Change

- Prepare Adults for Youth Members
- Create the Youth Position
- Recruiting Youth
- Selecting Qualified Applicants
- Educating Youth Members
- Completing the Details




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There is plenty of “tricks of the trade” provided by Youth – Adult Partnership Initiatives that suggest how to transition to Youth Boards. The next few slides discuss these six items in greater detail.




## Prepare Adults for Youth Members

- Adults must be willing to be flexible with meeting times to accommodate school schedules.
- Culture change from doing things for youth to – *with youth*

**A CLEAR VISION STATEMENT WILL TAKE CARE OF THIS!!!**



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The first point focuses on working with adults so that they clearly understand that youth are going to be an active member of the board. This means that adults must be more flexible in meeting times because of youth schedules. This could mean that the group may meet at times more appropriate for youth and it could also mean that the group may use technology to meet to accommodate all parties.


The big change is the culture change that must take place between adults that have traditionally spoke on behalf of youth instead of speaking with youth.

One activity that could help with this transition is to develop a “Youth Board Vision Statement.” This exercise can also be found on the volunteer website.  
**<http://texasvolunteer.tamu.edu/vol-curriculum.htm>** this allows individuals to get “on the same page” and all believe in the same general concept of the Youth Board.




## Create the Youth Position

- The general requirements can be found in the Program Area Committee / Youth Board publication.
- Youth members should have equal opportunities as adults on Youth Board.
- Clearly define expectations




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The Youth Position has already been developed. So, make sure you are using that one-pager. Also, there is another document that you can utilize with the youth to make sure they clearly understand their roles. It is entitled, “**For Youth Board Members.**” It helps describe to youth how their voices count and how to prepare for Youth Board meetings.




## Recruiting Youth

- Make a list of youth that you personally know.
- Invite current adult members to make the same list.
- Ask your youth collaborators to make a list.
- Develop a brief questionnaire for youth



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This may be the most difficult item to do. Especially as we think about recruiting individuals “outside of 4-H.”

This was taken from a Youth Adult Partnership curriculum developed and adopted by the National 4-H Council.

First of all, make a list of youth you know personally. This list should be generated based on groups that you work with and collaborate with. This includes such groups as local student council groups, FFA, church groups, boy scouts, etc.

Also ask adult members to identify youth who may be interested. This would also include collaborators that could help develop a list.

There is already a Youth Board questionnaire that can be used to market and recruit youth members, You can download it on the “Transition to Youth Board” resource. It is entitled “**You Want to be on the County Youth Board?**”.




## Recruiting Youth Cont.


- **SPEAK TO THEIR MOTIVATION**
- Sell the benefits of involvement

**Questions for the group:**


- 1. What would motivate them to participate on the Youth Board?**
- 2. What could we sell as benefits of their involvement?**



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It is also important to speak to their motivation. As you start, you may ask how it could benefit youth from serving on the Youth Board. Reasons include: support the community, make a difference, be looked upon as a true youth leader in the community, help with scholarship applications, and help build a resume resulting in more college choices, etc.




## Selecting Qualified Applicants

- Conduct interviews with youth.
- Ask for references.
- A conversation with a parent/guardian is essential.
- Seek out evidence of positive contributions each applicant would make.




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Good Youth Boards should be hard to get on. In other words, as the Youth Board evolves, you want this to become somewhat competitive so youth are lining up to become members of the board. This should lead to interviews and references for potential members.

One item that is overlooked is the involvement of the parent / guardian. As we move to the Youth Board, we need to remember to keep the parent / guardian in the loop so they know of the expectation of the Youth Board member so they can help stress things at home and ensure that there is communication between the youth and parent / guardian related to meetings, responsibilities, etc.




## Educating Youth Members

- Orientation vs. training
- Full understanding of board's role
- Include meeting minutes (from previous meetings) for new members
- Provide agenda ahead of time
- Be patient
- Have an open dialogue about dress code
- Hold meetings at appropriate times for youth to attend.



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These are all pretty self explanatory. There is a difference between orientation and training. Remember that orientation implies teaching the Youth Board how they fit into the Texas Cooperative Extension picture and providing them the roles the Youth Board play in the county educational program. Training means they are learning specific individual items to be successful as a Youth Board member.

Always provide minutes of previous meetings and the current meeting agenda ahead of time so Youth Boards members have it. That way they will be not worried about catching up and can concentrate on contributing.


BE PATIENT!!! This is a new concept for us in this agency. We will need to move slowly and **facilitate** effectively to allow all members to actively participate in discussions related to youth issues in the county.

As mentioned previously, ensure meetings are at appropriate times for youth to participate.




## Completing the Details

- Have a transportation system in place.
- Call parent / guardian of new members to compliment them on their child after first meeting.
- Notify the organization (school, FFA, church group) they represent concerning the youth being appointed to the youth board.




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This slide highlights other items to consider. First of all, we need to develop a transportation system for face-to-face meetings. This means we need to provide sufficient advanced notice so that members can arrange transportation to and from the meeting. This also means that an agenda should be clear in terms of starting and ending times for youth that are needing to coordinate transportation.

One good rule of thumb is to call or notify both the parent / guardian and organization about the youth's appointment to the board and meeting schedules. This will allow these individuals to be fully engaged in what the youth are doing and help remind them of their responsibility of serving on the Youth Board.




## Relationship with Youth Board, 4-H Council, and VLAT

Group	Function
<b>Youth Board</b>	Support in providing high quality, outreach educational programs and service to the people of Texas
<b>4-H Council</b>	Promote 4-H Program
<b>VLAT</b>	Support County 4-H Program



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**YOUTH BOARD:**

**Function: Support in providing high quality, outreach educational programs and service to the people of Texas**

- Planning phase of programming.
- Implementation phase of programming.
- Evaluation phase of programming.
- Interpretation phase of programming.
- Committee membership rotation to insure optimum representation and diversity.
- Utilize the best management practices for the management of external support funds

**4-H COUNCIL**


**Function: Promote 4-H Program**

- Implement leadership educational sessions for county 4-H membership (club officer trainings and club programs)
- Develop opportunities for the 4-H membership to provide service to their communities (community service and service learning)
- Promote inclusion and mutual respect among 4-H members (exchange trips and social and recreational events)
- Recognize Adult Volunteers Working with Youth
- Identify 4-H Training Needs
- Serve as advocates for the County 4-H Program

**VLAT**


**Function: Support County 4-H Program**

- Identify leader training needs
- Promote Idea Exchange and Mutual Respect
- Help Explain 4-H to the Public
- Involve Leaders in 4-H Activities
- Recognize Leader Accomplishments
- Help develop program resources




## Youth Board Activity

- In addition to providing program development support, we want the Youth Board to sponsor one large marketable program activity.
- This will allow them to have ownership to at least one significant effort yearly.
- This should be something youth can market and have a high impact on the county.




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In addition to providing support in outcome programs associated with youth, another responsibility is that the entire youth board sponsor and develop one highly marketable educational activity.

This can be an existing activity already happening, but we want them to be highly involved in an activity.




## Examples of Activities

- **Leadership Workshop-** a one-day leadership workshop sponsored by the youth board, focused on bringing potential youth leaders together and provide subject matter to help them lead.
- **County-wide Community Service Project-** a one-day event sponsored by the Youth Board that identifies local youth partners to help with a one day community service project.
- **Farm Safety Day Camp-** a one-day event sponsored by the Youth Board that is focused on teaching youth about safety on the farm.



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These are just some examples of activities.




## Other Examples

- Safety Day Camp
- Entomology Camp
- County Kid's Day Event
- Youth at Risk After School Program
- Coordinate Curriculum Enrichment Projects in Schools
- Sponsor Club Tour
- Community Service Event
- Parent or Volunteer Appreciation Event




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## Summary

- Youth development clearly notes that when youth are decision makers in youth programs, IMPACT IS GREATER.
- Let's empower our youth to positively impact our educational programs.
- Position descriptions and example agendas are included as attachments in the back of the publication.



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This is a new door we are opening. It is going to take some work on the front end, but will lead to greater impact in the long term. Think strategically, think positively and help promote change.