4-H Product Development

Our Mission:

ISU Extension and Outreach Mission: “provides research-based learning opportunities to improve quality of life in Iowa in partnership with ISU faculty and staff.”

- **Our Purpose**: ISU Extension and Outreach core purpose is to provide research-based educational programs
- **Our Partnership**: ISU Extension and Outreach accomplishes its goals through the development of diverse and meaningful partnerships on and off campus
- **Our Impact**: Through our purpose, and in partnership, ISU Extension and Outreach provides relevant, needs-driven resources and as a result, creates a significant impact in the state of Iowa

Iowa 4-H Mission: “empower youth to reach their full potential through youth and adult partnerships and research-based experiences.”

In Iowa 4-H, we have four interconnected domains to accomplish our work:

- Product Development Team
- Field Team
- Stakeholder and Partnership Development Team
- Organizational Learning and Accountability Team

Based on the 2011 Leadership Summit Executive Summary, we know that while it’s important to be flexible, we also need processes in place that staff, volunteers, and partners (at all levels) understand and follow, so everyone knows the parameters in which our organization operates. In an organization as complex as ours, systems must be transparent and understood, so that we all can connect and influence the processes.

Our guiding principles and our interconnected domains are important to the overall educational product development process within the Iowa 4-H program. For the remainder of this document, we will be focusing on the Product Development domain.

**Product Development in 4-H:**

An educational product is any program, process, or material that has been systemized for delivery to a 4-H audience in order to reach programmatic goals. Educational products may include curriculum, project outlines, research articles, trainings, events, activities, workshops, or online experiences, which could include videos, video simulations, etc.

Curricula refer to a group of planned educational offerings supporting a program. This usually includes agendas, materials, lessons, and activities intended to create a change in knowledge, behavior, or action. Additional information regarding the National 4-H curriculum philosophical framework, and other resources to develop high-quality educational products can be found at [http://www.4-h.org/resource-library/curriculum/development/](http://www.4-h.org/resource-library/curriculum/development/)
Our Commitment to Providing Quality Educational Products:

Whether developed by a county, Iowa State University, or acquired from another source (e.g., external land-grant university, National 4-H, community partner), all products must first meet the Iowa 4-H vetting criteria before implementation. Is the product:

- filling a documented need in the 4-H program (county, regional, statewide, national)?
- research-based?
- aligned with 4-H vision, mission, and program priorities?
- consistent with Positive Youth Development principles and practices?
- developed in a way that volunteers can implement the product?
- culturally competent and accessible to all potential audiences?
- aligned with elements of the Iowa Core Standards?
- sustainable based on capacity for development and implementation (e.g., funding, time, partnerships, resources)?

To be approved by the Iowa 4-H Youth Development Program, the answer to each of these questions must be “yes.” If the product does not meet one or more of the criteria above, it must be considered a pilot product. Pilot products must have a written plan and timeline to meet the vetting criteria.

Product and pilot product plans must be approved by the Iowa 4-H Youth Development Program before implementation. Furthermore, all new (beyond the pilot stage), high volume and high visibility curricula must undergo ISU Extension and Outreach’s curriculum review process.


Our Product Development Process:

Products should be developed based on assessed needs, effective educational products, and our experiential learning model. In consultation with Youth Program Specialists, county staff will meet the Iowa 4-H vetting criteria listed above when implementing county-based programs. Regional and/or statewide programs will be subject to the vetting process by the product development team.

The intent of the product development process is to provide a structure to improve communication and coordination among stakeholders involved in product development.

Implementation of this process should:

- Use a systematic approach to identify program priorities
- Focus efforts and resources according to identified needs
- Avoid creation of products that do not meet a stated need
- Provide a sense of confidence that needs are being met through intentional programming
- Ensure quality programs are being provided for Iowa’s youth
- Improve the inclusivity and relevance of our products
- Help us be more effective as an organization
Our Product Development Process:

1. Opportunities and needs for product are identified by our State 4-H Program Teams: Field Teams-Youth Program Specialists, Product Development Team, Stakeholder and Partnership Development Team, and Organizational Learning and Accountability Team.

2. The State 4-H Program Teams then submit opportunities and needs for product to the Product Development Team.

3. The Product Development Team along with the Program Priority Teams (STEM, Healthy Living, Communication and the Arts, Citizenship and Leadership):
   a. Identify a research-based product from another state or organization for adoption, adaptation, OR
   b. Work with field teams and counties to create, test, and deploy a new product

   In both cases, the Product Development Team and Program Priority Teams work with county stakeholders to ensure that the product is relevant at the local level.

4. Product will be piloted and undergo a formative evaluation in select areas; results will be delivered to appropriate audiences with recommendations for action.

5. Begin curriculum review process if appropriate.

   a. Product Development Team Leads and Program Priority Teams will review the product to determine if it is:
      • filling a documented need in the 4-H program (county, regional, statewide, national)
      • research-based
      • aligned with 4-H vision, mission, and program priorities
      • consistent with Positive Youth Development principles and practices
      • developed in a way that volunteers can implement the product
      • culturally competent and accessible to all potential audiences
      • aligned with elements of the Iowa Core Standards
      • sustainable based on capacity for development and implementation (e.g., funding, time, partnerships, resources)

   If the product does not meet one or more of the criteria above, it is considered a pilot product and returns to step #4 in the vetting process until all criteria are met.

6. If product does meet the criteria above, the product is approved for use and will be listed in the Iowa State University Extension and Outreach course catalog and recognized throughout the Iowa 4-H Youth Development Program as meeting the vetting requirements.

7. Product will then be scaled for statewide implementation, including training for staff and volunteers.

8. Evaluate product on ongoing basis. Revise if necessary.

9. High volume and high visibility product that has been approved will then undergo ISU Extension and Outreach’s curriculum review process.