



YOUTH RETENTION STUDY

FOUR YEAR QUANTITATIVE SUMMARY

OVERVIEW

This report summarizes the quantitative survey data from the Youth Retention Study. The survey was distributed near the end of the program year in 2015, 2016, 2017, 2018, and 2019. Data from 2014-15 is from California and Idaho only and considered “pilot data”; it is not reported here. The purpose of this document is to provide a brief overview or summary of the quantitative results to date. Note that this summary does not include the qualitative data.

All results shown are based on “valid” percent (that is, of those that answered the question). Missing data analyses are not included in this summary.

Sample sizes and results may vary from published papers. This is because published papers may focus on a subgroup such as a particular state, year, or set of questions that was not asked at all years.

For any questions, please reach out to Jolynn Miller: jlmiller@ucanr.edu. Data analyzed by Kendra Lewis: Kendra.Lewis@unh.edu

Youth Retention Study:

https://ucanr.edu/sites/4-H_YouthRetentionStudy/

Survey Development:

<https://archives.joe.org/joe/2018june/tt3.php>

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OVERVIEW OF DATA COLLECTED

YOUTH

	2015-2016	2016-2017	2017-18	2018-19
Why Did You Join 4-H?	X	X	X	X
How Did You Hear About 4-H?	X	--	--	--
Family History in 4-H	X	--	--	--
Experience Scale	X	X	X	X
Why Youth Might Leave	--	X	X	X
Intent to re-enroll	X	X	X	X
Approximate hours per week	X	X	X	X
Awareness and use of the handbook (CA and ID only)	--	--	X	X
Demographics	X	X	X	X

Note: "--" indicates not assessed.

ADULT

	2015-2016	2016-2017	2017-18	2018-19
Why Did Your Child Join 4-H?	X	X	X	X
How Did You Hear About 4-H?	X	X	X	X
Family History in 4-H	X	X	X	X
Experience Scale	X	--	--	--
Intent to re-enroll	X	X	X	X
Approximate hours per week	--	X	X	X
Awareness and use of the handbook (CA and ID only)	--	--	X	X
Demographics	X	X	X	X

Note: "--" indicates not assessed.

NUMBER OF RESPONSES BY STATE

YOUTH

	2015-2016 N (%)	2016-2017 N (%)	2017-2018 N (%)	2018-2019 N (%)	Cumulative N (%)
California (CA)	590 (58.47%)	418 (55.66%)	207 (17.60%)	207 (14.43%)	1,422 (32.53%)
Idaho (ID)	125 (12.39%)	92 (12.25%)	109 (9.27%)	196 (13.66%)	522 (11.94%)
Montana (MT)	125 (12.39%)	--	--	--	125 (2.86%)
New Jersey (NJ)	169 (16.75%)	127 (16.91%)	82 (6.97%)	90 (6.27%)	468 (10.71%)
Wyoming (WY)	--	114 (15.18%)	99 (8.42%)	98 (6.83%)	311 (7.12%)
Florida (FL)	--	--	85 (7.23%)	201 (14.01%)	286 (6.54%)
Louisiana (LA)	--	--	594 (50.51%)	240 (16.72%)	834 (19.08%)
Washington (WA)	--	--	--	115 (8.01%)	115 (2.63%)
Missouri (MI)	--	--	--	288 (20.07%)	288 (6.59%)
Total	1,009	751	1,176	1,435	4,371

Note: "--" indicates that the state did not participate in that year.

ADULT

	2015-2016 N (%)	2016-2017 N (%)	2017-2018 N (%)	2018-2019 N (%)	Cumulative N (%)
California (CA)	498 (58.9%)	534 (57.4%)	317(26.1%)	318 (17.4%)	1,667 (34.6%)
Idaho (ID)	117 (13.8%)	111 (12.9%)	136 (11.2%)	229 (12.5%)	593 (12.3%)
Montana (MT)	98 (11.6%)	--	--	--	98 (2.0%)
New Jersey (NJ)	133 (15.7%)	121 (13.0%)	56 (4.6%)	159 (8.7%)	469 (9.7%)
Wyoming (WY)	--	165 (17.7%)	155 (12.8%)	160 (8.7%)	480 (10%)
Florida (FL)	--	--	293 (24.1%)	146 (8.0%)	439 (9.1%)
Louisiana (LA)	--	--	258 (21.2%)	342 (18.7%)	600 (12.4%)
Washington (WA)				112 (6.1%)	112 (2.3%)
Missouri (MI)				365 (19.9%)	365 (7.6%)
Total	846	931	1,215	1,831	4,823

Note: "--" indicates that the state did not participate in that year.

WHY DID YOU JOIN 4-H?

The number below represents the percent that chose this option. Participants were allowed to select more than one option, percentages may add up to over 100%.

YOUTH

	2015-2016	2016-2017	2017-2018	2018-2019	Cumulative
Had a friend in 4-H	26.9%	26.8%	19.8%	22.2%	23.4%
To try new things	53.7%	57.7%	59.3%	54.4%	56.1%
To make friends	27.3%	32.2%	27.4%	27.0%	28.1%
To show at fair	21.7%	28.6%	16.8%	24.1%	22.4%
To serve community	24.1%	26.1%	26.7%	20.2%	23.9%
To have fun	42.5%	48.2%	45.8%	43.8%	44.8%
Personal Growth	30.8%	31.7%	32.8%	30.0%	31.1%
Skill Building	36.2%	36.8%	29.4%	29.3%	32.2%
Family or Personal Influences	24.6%	28.0%	27.0%	28.6%	27.1%
Other	3.8%	5.6%	5.5%	5.0%	5.0%

ADULT

	2015-2016	2016-2017	2017-2018	2018-2019	Cumulative
Had a friend in 4-H	25.9%	27.1%	23.1%	23.5%	24.5%
To try new things	59.5%	64.0%	66.3%	59.4%	62.1%
To make friends	30.1%	31.8%	30.1%	27.9%	29.6%
To show at fair	24.6%	27.6%	25.2%	25.5%	25.6%
To serve community	25.1%	25.5%	28.1%	23.5%	25.3%
To have fun	45.5%	50.3%	50.3%	46.1%	47.9%
Personal Growth	41.4	42.4%	42.3%	40.0%	41.3%
Skill Building	39.5	42.4%	37.0%	32.8%	36.9%
Family or Personal Influences	24.3	28.4%	27.2%	31.6%	28.6%
Other	4.3%	3.8%	3.9%	4.4%	4.1%

HOW DID YOU HEAR ABOUT 4-H?

We asked adults how they heard about 4-H. Initially we asked youth this question as well, but decided to drop it in order to make the survey shorter for youth. In addition, given that first-year youth are likely still joining activities based on their parents' influence, we decided to focus on adult responses to this question.

Below is the percent of adults that said they heard about 4-H through this format. Participants were asked to select only one option.

	2015-2016	2016-2017	2017-2018	2018-2019	Cumulative
From a friend of my child	29.4%	28.3%	20.9%	22.5%	24.4%
At school	6.2%	6.0%	21.4%	16.1%	13.8%
On a flyer (Public Communication)	3.9%	4.1%	3.3%	3.0%	3.4%
From another parent/guardian (or adult, work)	2.9%	3.9%	3.7%	4.0%	3.7%
Research (internet, phone, self-directed)	9.0%	7.6%	6.8%	6.5%	7.2%
Family History	22.4%	28.5%	26.4%	30.5%	27.7%
Public Events	4.6%	4.2%	3.4%	3.2%	3.7%
Vague Knowledge	16.6%	12.9%	10.5%	10.5%	12.0%
Other	4.9%	4.5%	3.6%	3.8%	4.1%

FAMILY HISTORY

We asked adults to tell us about their history with the 4-H program to help us in assess if experiences for youth (or from the adult’s perspective) differ depending on whether the adult had prior experience and/or knowledge of the program.

Percentage indicates the percent that responded “yes” to each item.

	2015-2016	2016-2017	2017-2018	2018-2019	Cumulative
Were you in 4-H as a child?	28.7%	31.1%	35.4%	39.0%	34.8%
Do you have other children in 4-H?	39.8%	40.3%	33.4%	36.0%	36.8%
Do you have other children that will join 4-H when they are old enough?	--	--	45.1%	42.7%	42.8%
Do you have other children that were previously in 4-H but left for reasons other than aging out?	--	--	7.0%	6.9%	6.8%

EXPECTATIONS

We wanted to know if the family had expectations about 4-H upon joining. Youth were not asked these questions.

The table below presents the percent that responded “yes” to each question.

	2015-2016	2016-2017	2017-2018	2018-2019	Cumulative
Did you or your child have expectations of the program when you joined 4-H?	57.0%	54.8%	49.5%	54.350%	53.6%
If you or your child had expectations were those expectations met?*	53.6%	56.8%	53.6%	57.5%	55.7%

*Note: this percentage is based on those who first answered “yes” to “Did you or your child have expectations of the program when you joined 4-H?” That is, if adults responded “no” to “Did you or your child have expectations of the program when you joined 4-H?”, their responses were **not** included in the analysis of “If you or your child had expectations were those expectations met?”

INTENT TO RE-ENROLL

We asked if youth planned to join 4-H the following year.

Below is the percentage for each response.

YOUTH

	2015-2016	2016-2017	2017-2018	2018-2019	Cumulative
Yes	75.87%	77.76%	77.50%	81.22%	78.40%
No	6.52%	7.87%	7.10%	7.44%	7.22%
I Don't Know	17.61%	14.36%	15.41%	11.34%	14.38%

ADULT

	2015-2016	2016-2017	2017-2018	2018-2019	Cumulative
Yes	86.1%	86.0%	85.4%	86.4%	86.0%
No	13.9%	14.0%	14.6%	13.6%	14.0%

INVOLVEMENT & COMMITMENT

Beginning in 2017-18, we asked youth and adults about their or their child's involvement in 4-H to better understand their time commitment to the program.

Below is the percentage for each response.

YOUTH

How many hours a week are you/your child putting into all of your 4-H projects?

	2017-2018	2018-2019	Cumulative
0-5 hours	69.2%	66.5%	67.7%
6-10 hours	19.6%	19.3%	19.4%
11-15 hours	5.0%	6.5%	5.8%
16-20 hours	3.2%	3.9%	3.6%
20 or more hours	2.9%	3.8%	3.4%

How many projects are you/your child in?

	2017-2018	2018-2019	Cumulative
1	49.8%	49.2%	49.4%
2	24.3%	24.1%	24.2%
3	14.4%	15.4%	15.0%
4	4.3%	5.3%	4.9%
5 or more	7.2%	6.1%	6.6%

How many club and project meetings a month do you/your child attend?

	2017-2018	2018-2019	Cumulative
0	9.2%	8.7%	8.9%
1-2	62.0%	59.9%	60.8%
3-4	17.1%	16.7%	16.9%
5 or more	11.7%	14.7%	13.4%

ADULT

How many hours a week are you/your child putting into all of your 4-H projects?

	2017-2018	2018-2019	Cumulative
0-5 hours	69.6%	68.3%	68.8%
6-10 hours	18.8%	21.2%	20.3%
11-15 hours	6.2%	5.0%	5.5%
16-20 hours	2.7%	2.5%	2.6%
20 or more hours	2.7%	2.9%	2.8%

How many projects are you/your child in?

	2017-2018	2018-2019	Cumulative
1	50.3%	48.3%	49.1%
2	27.7%	23.4%	25.1%
3	12.7%	16.2%	14.8%
4	3.9%	5.7%	5.0%
5 or more	5.4%	6.4%	6.0%

How many club and project meetings a month do you/your child attend?

	2017-2018	2018-2019	Cumulative
0	11.7%	10.2%	10.8%
1-2	62.9%	63.0%	63.0%
3-4	15.8%	14.8%	15.2%
5 or more	9.6%	12.0%	11.1%

EXPERIENCE SCALE

We asked youth 10 items about their experience in 4-H, which we created into an “experience scale” (Lewis et al, 2018). The table below presents the means and standard deviations for each item as well as the overall scale. Response scale: 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 5 (Strongly Agree).

Frequencies of each item by year are available upon request.

	2015-2016	2016-2017	2017-2018	2018-2019	Cumulative
1. The adults who worked with me were caring	4.42 (0.93)	4.58 (0.87)	4.54 (0.84)	4.60 (0.77)	4.54 (0.85)
2. Club leaders helped me figure out what was going on in my club	3.91 (1.27)	4.08 (1.26)	4.06 (1.32)	4.14 (1.20)	4.05 (1.26)
3. My club made me feel important	3.85 (1.25)	4.00 (1.24)	4.00 (1.22)	4.10 (1.12)	4.00 (1.21)
4. My project leaders were helpful	4.18 (1.16)	4.20 (1.21)	4.14 (1.21)	4.23 (1.12)	4.19 (1.17)
5. I made new friends	3.94 (1.20)	3.99 (1.27)	3.95 (1.23)	4.05 (1.13)	3.99 (1.20)
6. I learned new things in their 4-H project(s)	4.40 (0.97)	4.43 (1.01)	4.20 (1.19)	4.37 (1.01)	4.34 (1.06)
7. I found my project meetings interesting	4.37 (0.93)	4.37 (1.02)	4.18 (1.15)	4.36 (0.98)	4.32 (1.02)
8. I enjoyed club meetings	3.78 (1.25)	3.93 (1.30)	4.01 (1.23)	3.94 (1.20)	3.92 (1.24)
9. Other members listened to what I had to say*	4.04 (1.12)	4.13 (1.10)	4.04 (1.09)	4.08 (1.01)	4.07 (1.04)
10. Adults listened to what I had to say	--	--	4.13 (1.10)	4.16 (1.02)	4.15 (1.06)
11. I had the opportunity to serve our community	4.08 (1.16)	4.16 (1.12)	3.97 (1.27)	4.11 (1.13)	4.08 (1.17)
<i>Overall Scale Mean</i>	<i>4.10 (0.88)</i>	<i>4.20 (0.90)</i>	<i>4.13 (0.95)</i>	<i>4.19 (0.85)</i>	<i>4.16 (0.89)</i>
<i>Cronbach's Alpha for Overall Scale</i>	<i>0.93</i>	<i>0.93</i>	<i>0.95</i>	<i>0.94</i>	<i>0.94</i>

*In 2015-16 and 2016-17, this question was phrased “Adults and other members listened to what I had to say”. Because it was double-barreled, we split it into two questions in 2017-18.

WHY YOUTH LEAVE

Beginning in 2016-17, youth were asked 9 questions about why they might leave the program. These reasons for leaving were generated from conversations with teens in California and New Jersey from their personal experiences or the experiences of youth they knew/know in 4-H.

These questions were on a scale from 1 (Not at all true) to 5 (Completely true). We present the percent of youth that responded “A little true (4) or “Completely true” (5). Means and standard deviations are available upon request.

Item	2016-2017	2017-2018	2018-2019	Cumulative
1. I was bullied by other youth in my club or project	3.1%	2.6%	2.1%	2.5%
2. I was bullied by adults in my club or project	2.8%	1.5%	3.5%	3.0%
3. I didn't feel connected to other youth in the club	19.0%	19.8%	20.6%	19.9%
4. I didn't feel welcomed in my club	9.1%	8.2%	9.8%	9.1%
5. 4-H isn't for kids like me	2.0%	4.2%	3.5%	3.3%
6. Parents in 4-H don't get along	4.9%	5.7%	4.7%	5.1%
7. I don't have time for 4-H because of my other activities (like sports, church, Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts, FFA)	15.2%	16.7%	21.1%	18.2%
8. 4-H is too expensive	6.7%	5.3%	7.0%	6.4%
9. I didn't know when my club or project met	11.9%	15.6%	12.2%	13.3%

DEMOGRAPHICS

AS REPORTED BY THE YOUTH

	2015-2016	2016-2017	2017-2018	2018-2019	Cumulative
Age Mean (SD)	10.09 (2.62)	10.06 (2.58)	10.40 (2.38)	10.36 (2.47)	10.25 (2.51)
Female	66.84%	62.54%	59.30%	61.62%	62.39%
Race & Ethnicity (% that said Yes)					
African American	2.18%	1.19%	11.82%	5.69%	5.68%
Asian	0.95%	2.72%	1.54%	1.87%	1.73%
Native American/Alaskan Native	1.36%	1.36%	0.47%	0.56%	0.86%
Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander	0%	0.17%	0%	0.19%	0.09%
White	81.06%	81.49%	75.65%	82.84%	80.31%
Other	6.95%	5.26%	4.85%	3.82%	5.06%
Multiple	7.49	7.81%	5.67%	5.04%	6.26%
Hispanic	18.15%	17.56%	10.26%	9.21%	12.94%
Residence					
Farm	15.67%	18.91%	13.72%	23.23%	18.25%
Rural (Non-farm residence/town under 10,000)	30.96%	28.37%	37.87%	35.46%	33.75%
Town or City (10,000-50,000)	29.43%	30.77%	30.16%	25.89%	28.69%
Suburb of a City over 50,000	10.70%	9.78%	8.84%	7.27%	8.92%
City over 50,000	13.25%	12.18%	9.41%	8.16%	10.38%

AS REPORTED BY THE ADULT

	2015-2016	2016-2017	2017-2018	2018-2019	Cumulative
Age Mean (SD)	9.95 (2.55)	9.83 (2.45)	9.02 (3.95)	9.04 (4.43)	9.35 (3.72)
Female	64.1%	60.3%	59.6	60.0%	60.7%
Race & Ethnicity (% that said Yes)					
African American	1.1%	1.2%	5.7%	4.7%	3.7%
Asian	1.8%	2.2%	1.8%	0.9%	1.6%
Native American/Alaskan Native	1.0%	0.9%	0.8%	0.8%	0.8%
Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander	0.3%	0.1%	0.3%	0.1%	0.2%
White	82.3%	80.4%	80.8%	84.7%	82.5%
Other	6.0%	7.6%	3.7%	3.3%	4.7%
Multiple	7.5%	7.6	7.0%	5.3%	6.6%
Hispanic	15.8%	16.9%	12.6%	9.2%	12.6%
Residence					
Farm	14.8%	18.8%	15.9%	22.8%	18.9%
Rural (Non-farm residence/town under 10,000)	32.7%	28.0%	35.5%	34.3%	33.1%
Town or City (10,000-50,000)	29.0%	28.4%	27.3%	27.2%	27.8%
Suburb of a City over 50,000	10.5%	12.0%	9.9%	8.1%	9.7%
City over 50,000	13.0%	12.8%	11.4%	7.6%	10.5%