



**University of California**  
Agriculture and Natural Resources

4-H Youth Development Program

# Youth Service Learning Project Planning Guidebook



*4-H Service learning is a movement for positive change in every community in America. 4-H youth are a living, breathing, culture-changing force for doing the right thing, breaking through obstacles, and pushing our country forward by making a measurable difference right where they live.*

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## Forming Your Team

**Service Learning** projects are designed to be accomplished by a team of 4-H members partnering with at least one adult coach. Your project may require many 4-H members to help. At this point select a core group of 3 to 8 4-H members to help plan and organize your project.

- ✓ Find at least one 4-H volunteer or staff member to serve as your project coach.
- ✓ Recruit other 4-H members to form your team.
- ✓ Organize a meeting to review the requirements of a **Service Learning** project.

My adult coach (es):

Name	Phone Number	E-mail

My team members:

Name	Phone Number	E-mail

Our first meeting date to review the **Service Learning** project requirements

Date	
Time	
Location	

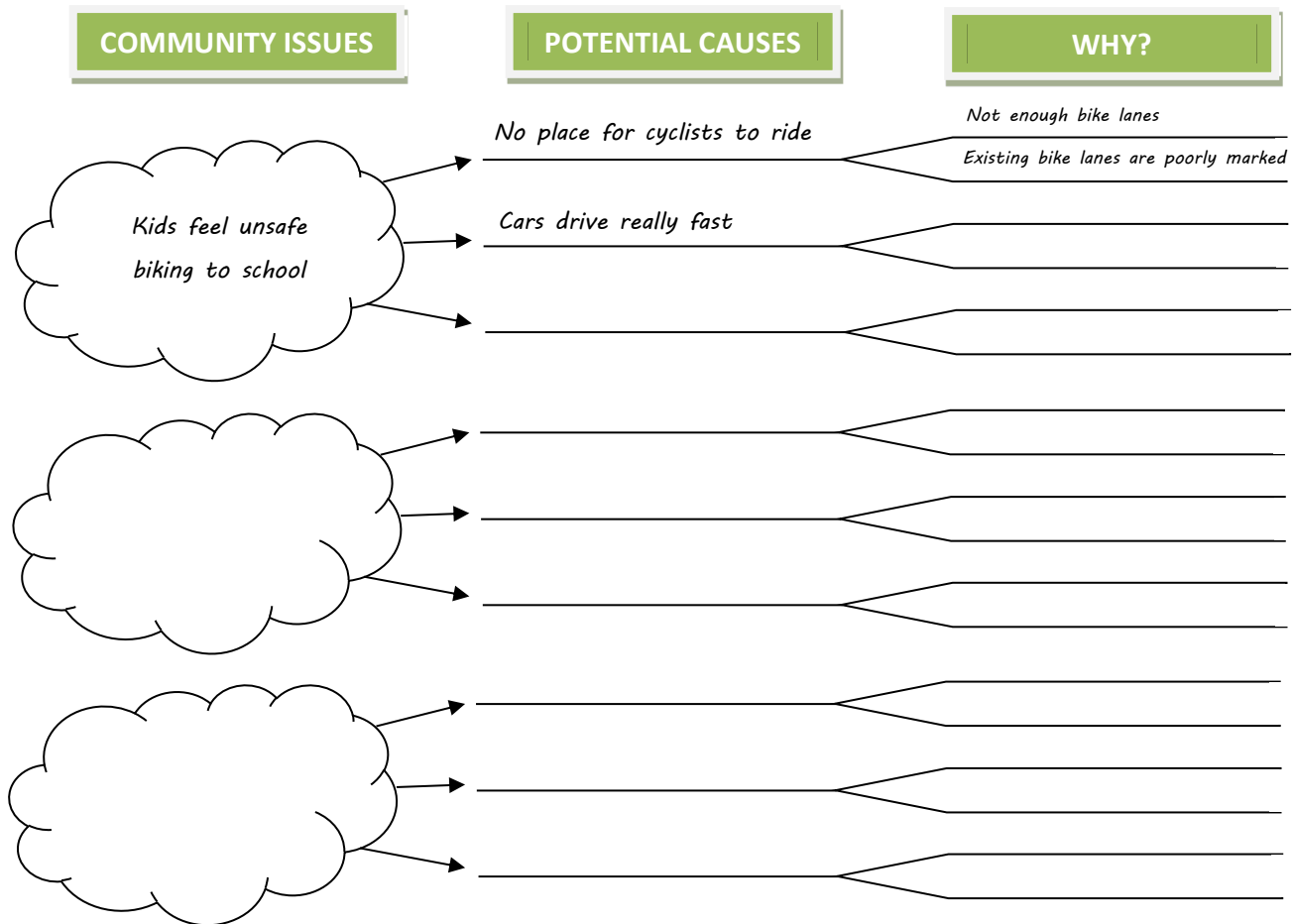
**Congratulations! You have successfully formed a Service Learning Project team!**  
The next step is brainstorming community issues.

## Brainstorming Community Issues

Before you address a community issue, you need to know exactly what the problem is. Sometimes it is challenging to identify the cause, or source, of the problem.

For example, while riding her bike to school Ava feels unsafe. She surveys her classmates and learns that they feel unsafe too! Her classmates identify the following potential causes: 1) no place for cyclists to ride; 2) cars driving really fast; and 3) not knowing how to cycle safely. After considering all these potential causes, Ava identifies the fast moving vehicles as the reason most of her classmates feel unsafe. Next, Ava looks for the source of the problem. So, why are cars driving so fast? It could be due to poor police enforcement, the timing of stop lights, or maybe drivers aren't aware children are present—or it could be all three!

- ✓ Use the brainstorming tool below to identify different issues in your community that you personally care about. Use additional paper if needed.
- ✓ Analyze each issue identified to determine the potential causes. Remember, there may be many causes contributing to the community issue.
- ✓ As a team, select one piece of the problem you all feel passionate about for further research.
- ✓ Write an issue statement that will help you focus on the problem.



As a team, select one piece of the problem you all feel passionate about for further research. Ask yourself a few questions as you look at the problems you could tackle:

1. Which problem really matters to me?
2. Which one matters to others in my community too?
3. Which problem can I address and realistically help solve?

Write a community issue statement that will help you focus on the problem.

My Community Issue Statement
<p>The issue I see in my community is . . .</p>          <p>I know this is a problem because . . .</p>

Note: Your team might not be able to think of many community issues. That’s okay. Between now and your next team meeting, talk to people in your community (government agencies, newspaper editors, local officials, school administrators, parents, service clubs, etc.) to get a better idea of what problems exist and what problems are meaningful to you.

**Congratulations! You have identified one real problem in your community! The next step is gathering information to determine how a Revolution of Responsibility project can help solve this problem.**

## Gathering Information

Before planning and carrying out a Service Learning project, it is important to gather information about what is already happening in your community and whom you can collaborate with to carry out your project.

You may be tempted to skip over this step if you already have a great idea in mind. This is what happened with a team who wanted to get rid of graffiti in their city. Imagine the team's surprise when they found out that the student council in their own school was already working on the graffiti problem and their city has a program to supply free clean-up supplies. They were able to partner with their school and city, and their project was a success!

Gathering information will also help you determine if the problem you identified affects the whole community.

- ✓ Create a list of information necessary to creating a strategy to solve the community issue. Think about WHAT you need to know in order to plan your project.
- ✓ Brainstorm a list of people who would be knowledgeable about the topic. Think of community organizations, such as government agencies, school administrators, non-profit organizations related to your community issue, hospitals, fire and police, and others.
- ✓ Go out into the community to gather information.

What I Need to Know	Who Can Tell Me

What I Need to Know	Who Can Tell Me

Once you’ve finished brainstorming, you can start gathering information. Gathering information includes writing surveys and interviewing people in order to really understand what action is needed or wanted by the community. As you call, interview and/or survey people, be sure to ask them who else you should talk with about the issue.

**Congratulations! You now have the information you need to decide the best strategy to address the community problem you have chosen. The next step is using this information to create a strategic solution.**

## Selecting a Strategy

You have a good idea about what causes the problem you want to solve and you've written a community issue statement. You have learned more about the issue by gathering information from others in the community. Now you are ready to find a strategic solution!

The first step to selecting a strategy is to identify the goal of your project. A goal is a measurable way to know if you have helped address the community problem. Next, use your goal to develop a strategy. How will you reach your goal? There are likely many ways to reach any given goal, your team will need to select the BEST strategy.

- ✓ Identify at least one goal for addressing your community problem.
- ✓ Brainstorm at least 20 ideas for addressing your community problem and pursuing your goals. Be sure to involve everyone in your group and consider their ideas too.
- ✓ Select one strategy. This strategy will be your **Service Learning** project.

### Our goal is to....

*Example: Provide meals for 100 families in the cold weather shelter.*

Possible Strategies for Pursuing Our Goal	
1.	11.
2.	12.
3.	13.
4.	14.
5.	15.
6.	16.
7.	17.
8.	18.
9.	19.
10.	20.



When selecting a strategy, consider the following questions:

1. Will it directly impact the cause of the problem? (See page 3)
2. Which idea might benefit the most people?
3. Is the idea creative? Will it inspire others to help?
4. Which idea do you like best? Why?

As a team, narrow your list down to one strategy. First, Eliminate ideas that won't directly impact the cause of your community problem. Next, discuss the ideas that might be the best strategy. Finally, decide as a group which strategy you will pursue.

### We will pursue our goal by...

*Example: Collecting food donations from local businesses and working with our 4-H club to pack nutritious cold lunches that can be distributed throughout the week.*

**Congratulations! The idea you selected above will be your Service Learning Project. The next step is developing a plan that will turn your idea into reality!**

## Creating a Timeline

After you have selected a strategy for solving a community issue, you will need to develop a detailed project work plan, or timeline. The timeline will outline all the tasks that need to be done, who will do them, and when they will be accomplished.

- ✓ Identify specific tasks to be accomplished in order to address your community problem.
- ✓ Decide when, and in what order, each task needs to be done. Make sure that you give enough time for each task.
- ✓ Decide who will be the team leader for each task. Volunteer for specific duties and stick to your commitments.

<b>Start Date</b>	
<b>Expected End Date</b>	

When	What	Who

**Congratulations! You now have a detailed plan to solve the community problem. The next step is to identify resources needed to carry out your plan!**

## Finding What You Need

After you have created a detailed plan for solving the community issue, you will need to identify the resources necessary to carry out the plan. Service Learning projects are a great way to strengthen partnerships in your community. For example, imagine that your team wants to educate young people about domestic violence, but lacks the expertise to do it on their own. They would benefit from partnering with a local domestic violence prevention council to design and facilitate the presentation. The local council would also benefit from reaching a new audience with an important message!

- ✓ Brainstorm the resources you need to accomplish your project. Resources may include supplies, money, expertise, or volunteers.
- ✓ Identify which community partner might be able to contribute the resource(s) you need.
- ✓ Contact your potential partners to see if they are interested in working together to address your community problem. Be very clear about the benefits they will receive from the partnership.

Supplies	Money
<p>What supplies do you need and why do you need them? What ideas do you have for getting them?</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Potential community partner:</p>	<p>How much money do you need and what will you use it for? What are the possible sources for income?</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Potential community partner:</p>
Expertise	Volunteers
<p>What do you need to know? Who might be able to help by sharing their expertise?</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Potential community partner:</p>	<p>How many volunteers do you need and what will they do? Who can you invite to be part of this project?</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Potential community partner:</p>

**Congratulations! You have identified the resources needed to carry out your plan! The next step is developing a budget that clearly outlines the financial resources you'll need for your project.**

## Developing a Budget

When you identified the resources that you need to carry out your plan, you may have discovered that you need financial resources to help you be successful. First, you need to create a budget that will help you address your community problem while managing your resources wisely.

- ✓ List sources of income for your project. Include any form of funding, but also consider other partnerships or fundraising activities.
- ✓ Outline and categorize expenses.
- ✓ Check your balances. Your total income should match your total expenses.

SAMPLE BUDGET – BICYCLE RECYCLING PROJECT	
<b>Income</b>	
<i>Fundraiser</i>	<i>\$1,000</i>
<i>Business sponsorship (Ken's Bike Shop)</i>	<i>\$200</i>
<b>Total Income:</b>	<b><i>\$1,200</i></b>
<b>Expenses</b>	
<i>Bike helmets (20 @ \$15/each)</i>	<i>\$300</i>
<i>Tubes (20 @ \$10/each)</i>	<i>\$200</i>
<i>Locks (20 @ \$12/each)</i>	<i>\$240</i>
<i>Patch kits (20 @ \$12)</i>	<i>\$240</i>
<i>Supplies and healthy refreshments for community bike give-away event</i>	<i>\$220</i>
<b>Total Expenses:</b>	<b><i>\$1,200</i></b>



## Shifting Gears to Overcome Challenges

Often when we set goals, things don't go exactly as we imagined. Shifting gears is what happens when we face an obstacle and make the adjustments necessary to still be successful. As you work through your **Service Learning** project plan, monitor your progress and make adjustments as needed.

For instance, imagine your group is trying to solve a problem at your school—the consumption of sugary beverages. You decide to address the problem by installing hydration stations on campus, providing free and clean water for students. Unfortunately, after installing the hydration stations, you realize most students don't own refillable water bottles! Is your plan doomed? No! Think about alternative strategies, ask questions, and don't give up.

- ✓ Establish regular check-in dates throughout the duration of your project.
- ✓ At each check-in, discuss the challenges your group is facing. These challenges might relate to available funding, materials, marketing, documenting your project, group dynamics, and more.
- ✓ Brainstorm solutions and alternative strategies for overcoming the challenges.
- ✓ Look for others in the community that might be able to help you overcome the challenges.

### Check-in Date #1: \_\_\_\_\_

The Challenge	Alternative Strategies	Who Can Help

### Check-in Date #2: \_\_\_\_\_

The Challenge	Alternative Strategies	Who Can Help

**Check-in Date #3:** \_\_\_\_\_

The Challenge	Alternative Strategies	Who Can Help

**Check-in Date #4:** \_\_\_\_\_

The Challenge	Alternative Strategies	Who Can Help

Note: Use additional pages as necessary.

**Congratulations! You have a plan to monitor your progress and make adjustments that will help you be successful! The final step is planning the evaluation for your project.**

## Evaluating Your Project

Every project needs to be evaluated. Evaluation means knowing what you are trying to accomplish and then reflecting on your work to see if you accomplished your goal(s). Evaluation is easiest when you plan ahead so you can collect information as you go.

- ✓ Summarize the goals, audience and collaborators for the project. This information is essential to the evaluation of your project.
- ✓ Brainstorm a list of ways you can evaluate your project. How will you know if your project made a difference?
- ✓ Think about which questions could be easily answered and will help you know if you've reached your goal.

What is the goal of the project?	
Who is the project serving?	
Who is collaborating on the project?	
What is the project budget?	

How will you know if your project made a difference? List ideas for evaluation and how the information might be obtained:

<b>1.</b>	<i>Example: How many trees were planted? (keep record @ planting event) Did the people who attended the tree planting learn about the benefits of trees? (participant survey)</i>
<b>2.</b>	
<b>3.</b>	
<b>4.</b>	

**Congratulations! You have successfully planned a service learning project!**



## Gathering Information: Interview Planner

This form will help you prepare for an in-person interview. Here are some helpful tips:

- ✓ Never conduct an interview alone. Take another team member or your adult coach with you.
- ✓ Introduce yourself and tell them about 4-H. For help creating your message, check out [www.ca4h.org/Support/RofR/Toolkit/Marketing\\_and\\_Communication/#2](http://www.ca4h.org/Support/RofR/Toolkit/Marketing_and_Communication/#2).
- ✓ Before you leave, remember to thank the person for their time and expertise.

Name of person interviewed:	
Title:	
Company/organization name:	
Address:	
Phone number:	
Date and time of interview:	

Question	Answer
1.	
2.	
3.	
4.	
5. <i>Who else would you recommend I interview about this topic?</i>	

Use additional pages if necessary.

## Gathering Information: Survey Form

This form will help you create a survey. Surveys can be used to ask a large number of people how they feel about a community issue. Survey participants will respond to each statement with strongly agree, agree, disagree, strongly disagree or undecided. Here are some helpful tips:

- ✓ Never conduct a survey alone. Take another team member or your adult coach with you.
- ✓ Survey those directly impacted by the community issue. For example, if the community issue impacts schools, survey students, teachers and school personnel. If the community issue impacts a neighborhood, go door to door in that neighborhood.
- ✓ Introduce yourself and tell them about 4-H.
- ✓ Remember to thank each person for their time.

Statements About the Community Issue
<i>Example: There are many safe places in our community to walk and bike.</i>
1.
2.
3.
4.
5.

As each person responds to the questions above, place a tally mark ( ~~||||~~ ) in the appropriate boxes in the response chart on the next page.

Responses					
	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Undecided
1.					
2.					
3.					
4.					
5.					
<b>Additional survey comments:</b>					

Be sure to share your survey results at your next team meeting. Some questions to ask the group include:

1. Is this issue important to people?
2. How do the majority of people in our community feel about this issue?
3. In what ways, if any, are people divided over this issue?
4. How will these findings impact how we approach the community issue?