

INTRODUCTION TO THE TOOLKIT

WASHINGTON STATE UNIVERSITY



The Fair has traditionally played an important part in the lives of 4-H youth across Washington. Our current pandemic has created uncertainty and the cancelation of some county fairs has created a sense of loss for some members of the 4-H community. During these uncertain times, the opportunity for 4-H youth to share what they have learned remains important. The challenging times we face now gives 4-H professionals, youth, and volunteers an opportunity to change and adapt as we remain flexible to meet the needs of our communities.

Public, county and state fairs are often the venue for youth to have a unique 4-H learning experience as they showcase what they have learned throughout the year. In the absence of the in-person Fair, the 4-H community can work together to provide opportunities for youth to demonstrate what they have learned and have those exhibits evaluated. Fairs will have varying abilities to partner with WSU Extension 4-H in this program due to their own unique individual situations in relation to funding, resources, facilities, and policies. It is critical to be mindful of the unique reality of each Fair and communicate to determine what the virtual showcase partnership may look like.

4-H Member Exhibits at Fairs Serve Several Purposes:

- An opportunity for the member to share or demonstrate what was learned
- To measure individual progress and skills learned against goals and standards
- To receive feedback on the learning from a caring adult
- To provide recognition of 4-H member accomplishment
- An opportunity for the public to see 4-H in action

In an effort to support this valuable experience for our youth, we have created this toolkit for 4-H professionals, volunteers, and members to utilize in the event the in-person Fair is canceled, and a virtual showcase is organized by the 4-H community. The virtual showcase may look like a “fun show” where all youth participate in a non-competitive, unjudged setting or it could be a judged event with awards and places.

The Virtual Showcase committee recommends, if possible, that the evaluation and feedback experience continue to include some form of member/judge interaction. Continuing some form of personal feedback helps 4-H members continue their skill development and gain personal satisfaction.

In the following documents, the Virtual Showcase committee offers recommendations for how county and state virtual showcases can continue to serve 4-H members,

families, and communities while remaining responsive to the current conditions and keeping our communities safe. We offer best practices for completely virtual/online showcases if needed, and considerations for adapting the judging experience for all exhibit areas. These recommendations should serve as a starting point for discussions with county and state fair boards, county extension leaders councils, and other local decision makers.

It is expected that all events and activities will be conducted in a way that protects the health and safety of staff, volunteers, participants, and communities. Consideration must be given to guidance provided by the Washington Department of Public Health (<https://www.doh.wa.gov/Emergencies/Coronavirus>). Washington 4-H events must also follow guidance and directives from Washington State University Extension. Consult with appropriate local government and agency officials as you make decisions on how best to provide quality educational experiences for our youth.

Through the leadership with Extension staff, volunteers, fair boards, and community partners, we are confident we will continue to provide educational experiences for Washington 4-H youth.

Members of Washington 4-H Virtual Showcase 2020 Committee:

Missy McElprang Cummins, 4-H Regional Specialist, Co-Chair

Pam Watson, 4-H Faculty, Lewis County, Co-Chair

Kristi Axtell, Extension Coordinator, State 4-H Office

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Brittany Briggs, 4-H Program Manager, Kittitas County

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Kirk Gresham, 4-H State Fair Board President

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Jennifer Leach, Washington 4-H Equine Specialist & 4-H Faculty, Cowlitz County

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