



Yakima County

WASHINGTON STATE UNIVERSITY
EXTENSION



Dear 4-H Community,

Like many others in our nation and the world, we've been watching, reflecting upon, and seeking to understand current and historic patterns of racial injustices and the deaths of Black Americans.

We are listening and seeking to understand.

As parents, community members, and educators who have the privilege and responsibility of leading and setting the tone for our local 4-H Youth Development program, it is our moral and professional duty to listen, seek to understand, and respond to youth calling for justice, crying out for positive change, and demanding racial equity for Black Americans.

We are taking action.

We are dedicated to continuing and building upon the equity and inclusion initiatives we already have underway regarding hiring practices, volunteer recruitment, culturally relevant youth programming, removal of participation barriers, and consistent application of practices that nurture safe and welcoming environments for all youth—especially Black, Indigenous, youth of color.

We acknowledge our program's 100+ year history, which includes periods marked by intentional exclusion based on race, ethnicity, and gender. We recognize that youth participation within 4-H community clubs, our flagship program, does not fully match community demographics nor are we close to racial or ethnic parity within our volunteer and staff workforce. Additionally, our program has recently navigated several incidents of racial discrimination and bullying at 4-H state and local events where Black, Indigenous, youth of color experienced blatantly racist comments and actions from their peers. As 4-H exists within a community context it is not immune from the same hurtful and oppressive behaviors that may be presented within the community—but this is our program and these are our kids, so this is our problem. The acknowledgment of these truths serves as a call to action—action that we are determined to seeing through.

We are committed.

We stand in solidarity with the Black community and all communities of color and are committed to listening, learning, understanding, and putting in the work—and we ask that you join us. We have dedicated leaders in our county, state, and national organization who are exploring how 4-H can work to address systemic racism, injustice, and inequity for people of color in our communities and beyond. We will continue to share more information and opportunities as days pass. For now, please explore the resources and opportunities listed below and join us in taking this moment to reaffirm 4-H's promise of belonging for all youth and set our collective compass towards our national vision "A world in which youth and adults learn, grow, and work together as catalysts for positive change."

Pledging our heads to clearer thinking, our hearts to greater loyalty, our hands to larger service, and our health to better living for our clubs, our communities, our country, and our world.

Sincerely,

WSU Yakima County 4-H Youth Development



Join or support a WSU / 4-H lead effort:

- [Facing Racism](#): A project that supports civil dialogue about race relations in a diverse nation--upcoming opportunities for adults and teens to join a discussion and action group. Contact Michael Wallace (mlwallace@wsu.edu), 4-H's project lead, for details.
- [True Leaders in Equity](#): A state and national leadership opportunity for teens ages 15-19 to develop the skills, competences, and connections they need to carry out equity projects in their home county and state.
- [WA State 4-H Teen Equity & Inclusion Task Force](#): A statewide leadership opportunity for teens ages 14-19 to explore, create, and promote change in support of 4-H youth.
- [WA 4-H Equity & Inclusion Committee](#): 4-H volunteers, parents, and teens are invited to join the committee's review and resource team to share ideas and effort in support of positive change. Contact Alison White (alison.white@wsu.edu), committee chair, for details.

Lead or support a 4-H project related to cultural awareness, belonging, or social justice:

- [4-H Diversity & Inclusion projects](#): Project resources include youth-led service-learning, global youth citizenship, exploring diversity, learning about culture through food, ¡Qué Rico! La Cultura, and more.
- [4-H Social Justice Youth Development](#): A guide for 4-H educators, program staff, and volunteers to spark conversations, awareness, and youth-led projects.
- [Be SAFE \(Safe, Affirming & Fair Environments\)](#): A guide designed to help youth ages 11-14 and adults work in partnership to create SAFE environments.
- [4-H Youth-led Community Conversations](#): A program idea from Kansas State 4-H to encourage civil discourse around difficult topics.

Resources for talking about racism and other difficult topics with youth:

- [Talking About Race](#): A resource for parents, caregivers, and educators from Smithsonian and the National Museum of African American History and Culture.
- [Talking Race with Youth Children](#): A 20-minute podcast from Life Kit, a partnership between Sesame Street and NPR.
- [Table Talk: Family Conversations about Current Events](#): Anti-Defamation League
- [Helping Kids Process Violence, Trauma, and Race in a World of Nonstop](#): A discussion for parents facilitated by Common Sense Media.

Books for youth and families:

- [Wee Read Diverse Books](#): Picture books for youth feature youth of color, diverse characters, or storylines about identity and experiences.
- [Coretta Scott King Book Award Winners](#): A Common Sense Media list of books for youth ages 2-13+ that demonstrate an appreciation of African American culture, history, stories, and universal human values.
- [Books featuring Native American Youth](#): A Common Sense Media list of books for youth ages 2-13+ that demonstrate an appreciation of Native American culture, history, and stories.



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- [Books featuring Latino Youth](#): A Common Sense Media list of books for youth ages 2-13+ that reflect the Latino experience in various national and cultural contexts.
- [“These Books Can Help You Explain Racism and Protest to Your Kids”](#): New York Times

Other related resources:

- [National 4-H Council Equity Toolkit](#): Resources on topics related to diversity, inclusion, and equity to support learning, celebrate belonging, and create access.
- [eXtension's Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion site](#): A professional development offering of the eXtension Foundation Impact Collaborative; a resource primarily designed for 4-H staff but full of resources and lesson plans which are available to all.
- [EmbraceRace](#): A non-profit dedicated to helping parents, educators, and other adults in the lives of children to raise children who are thoughtful, informed, and brave about race--to raise children to become the adults that a thriving, multiracial democracy needs.
- [WA State 4-H Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Resources](#): A list of resources regarding equity and inclusion, immigrants and new Americans, LGBTQ+ youth, race and ethnicity, religion, special needs, and socioeconomics.
- [National 4-H Strategic Plan](#): An outline of the guiding principles and committed to access, equity, and belonging as the base of all 4-H strategies.

Related statements from our parent institution and organization:

- [The Voices We Need to Hear Right Now](#): Jennifer Sirangelo, President and CEO of National 4-H Council
- [Recent Tragedies a Call for Self-Examination](#): Kirk Schultz, President of WSU
- [Reaffirming Support and Justice for Our Peers of Color](#): André-Denis Wright, Dean of the WSU College of Agricultural, Human, and Natural Resource Sciences



National 4-H Vision

A world in which youth and adults learn, grow, and work together as catalysts for positive change.

4-H Grows: A Promise to America's Kids

In 2025, 4-H will reflect the population demographics, vulnerable populations, diverse needs, and social conditions of the country. This vision has the elements of inclusion, caring adults, serving at minimum 1 in 5 youth, and the volunteers and staff reflect the diversity of the population.

National 4-H Mission

4-H empowers youth to reach their full potential working and learning in partnership with caring adults. The mission of 4-H is to provide meaningful opportunities for all youth and adults to work together to create sustainable community change. This is accomplished within three primary content areas, or mission areas—civic engagement and leadership, healthy living, and science.