



CIVIC ENGAGEMENT PROJECT AREA



Make a difference. Discover the needs of your local community and beyond! Help others! Get into action! Civic engagement is the opportunity, right, and responsibility to contribute to shaping the world around you and provide service to others.

Ideas for Project Area Learning

- Get to know the other people in your club and what they like to do for fun.
- Construct a family tree of relatives identifying places lived and locations.
- Interview a neighbor and identify the similarities and differences between you.
- Create and carry out a plan to help someone outside your family.
- Discover the history of your school or community.
- Tour your city or state courthouse or capitol.
- Help pick up trash at a park.
- Find out the names of your local or state representatives and the committees they serve on.
- Collect samples of club bylaws and constitutions. Compare and contrast them.
- Observe a community board meeting.
- Create and carry out a plan to help someone in your community.
- Volunteer to be a tutor or a mentor in your school.
- Investigate the departments in your county governments and find out what they do.
- Interview someone from your local chamber of commerce or economic development agency to learn about the goals for your community.
- Identify a cause important to you and determine how to make a difference.
- Map out area resources available to youth and families.
- Explore your relationships with others.
- Get involved! Be an active, responsible citizen.
- Show social responsibility, respect, and response to the needs rights and responsibilities of others.

APPLY WHAT YOU'VE LEARNED

Communication

- Give a presentation about the history of your school or town.
- Make an appointment with your state legislator and share your thoughts on an issue.
- Read newspapers or news magazines regularly.
- Research a community issue and share your ideas with the appropriate board or governing body.

Leadership

- Ask your local nursing home residents how they would like to celebrate the next holiday and involve others to carry-out that plan.
- Get approval and then create and conduct a survey for students on a school issue. Share the results with the administration.
- Serve as a youth delegate to a state political party convention.

Entrepreneurship

- Write an online magazine or blog on great ideas for service projects.
- Create a decoration or party favor for fundraising event coordinators.
- Start a walking/biking class for people in your community to bond over.



Goal Setting and Record Keeping

Goal setting is an ongoing process that guides your project area learning. Having goals is like having a road map to show you how to get you to where you want to go. Record keeping is also an ongoing process and another important life skill. In 4-H, you are encouraged to select from a variety of record keeping formats to meet your own personal needs and your preferred learning style. Keeping records of your learning experiences helps you determine how well you met your goals. Goal setting and record keeping improve your skills in organization, communication, planning, and evaluating.

Iowa 4-H Event Opportunities

- Participate in **county and state fair** exhibit classes.
- Check with your local county 4-H youth development staff to see if there are special events or **workshops in your county** that you want to attend to learn more about your project areas.
- Iowa 4-H members in grades 9–12 can apply for **State Project Area Awards** at State Recognition Day. Applications are open December through January.
- Meet young people from around the state who have completed grades 8–12, and share your interests at the **Iowa 4-H Youth Conference** held at Iowa State University in late June.
- Travel to Washington D.C. to learn about being a leader in your community and the world through **Citizenship Washington Focus**.
- Apply to be an Iowa Delegate to the **National 4-H Conference** through State Recognition Day. Delegates research important topics and present solutions to national agencies.

Share Your Learning With an Exhibit

- Create a “welcome to our school” kit to be given to new families.
- Map the resources for youth and families in your community.
- Report your exploration of an issue and define how each branch of government plays a role in its creation, interpretation, and carry-out.
- Research candidates for the next gubernatorial election and put a notebook together, sharing their stance on different issues.

CAREER CONNECTIONS

- **State legislators** frame policy and pass laws for the people they represent.
- **School counselors** work as advocates for students well-being and are valuable resources for educational advancement.
- A **nonprofit manager’s** job is to analyze the impact of the organization and ensure it is meeting its legal and fiscal responsibilities.
- **City Administrators** oversee staffing and finances for a city.

EDUCATION CONNECTIONS

- Learn **citizenship and civic engagement** if you’re interested in policy research, conflict management, and community collaboration.
- Students who get their **leadership certificate** learn more about leadership roles, emotional intelligence, and how to lead change.
- If you enjoy the nature of politics, public values, and institutions and their process, you may enjoy **political science**.
- **Public administration** students learn more about campaign relations, legislative analysis, communication, and policy development.

Written Iowa 4-H Youth Development 2013. Revised in 2019 by Bonnie Dalager, 4-H Product Development Specialist, and Payton Sash, 4-H Student Office Assistant, Iowa State University Extension and Outreach.