



# UNIFYING THE 4-H BRAND

AN INVESTMENT PARTNERSHIP BETWEEN COOPERATIVE EXTENSION  
AND NATIONAL 4-H COUNCIL

## FOR DISCUSSION:

- 1) What excites you most about this opportunity?
- 2) What benefits do you see providing the greatest value to your state?  
Your region?
- 3) Are there any areas of this opportunity that require additional clarity before you (or your region) could consider them more seriously?
- 4) Of the investment models outlined, which do you see as the preferred approach? Why?

## THE OPPORTUNITY: GROWING 4-H'S REACH AND RELEVANCE TO TRANSFORM YOUNG LIVES

The ECOP 4-H National Leadership Committee, USDA/NIFA and the National 4-H Council Board of Trustees have all made engaging more youth in 4-H a clear priority. **With nearly 6 million youth involved nationally, 4-H is the largest youth development program in the United States—but could impact millions more.**

- Of the 53 million youth ages 5-17 in the U.S. today, 4-H and its peer organizations only serve 18 million—leaving 35 million youth without the life skills they need to thrive in today's world.
- Racial and ethnic diversity is rapidly increasing: all youth population growth from 2000 to 2011 was either Latino or Asian.
- 70% of urban, low-income and minority young adults leave high school without a path toward either a post-secondary degree or a livable wage.
- Rural youth are experience the highest poverty, unemployment, high school dropout, obesity and teen pregnancy rates in America.

The imperative to reach more youth, especially in the face of these figures, represents not just a challenge, but an opportunity for 4-H as the youth development program of the Cooperative Extension System.

## WORKING TOGETHER TO BUILD THE EXTENSION AND 4-H BRANDS

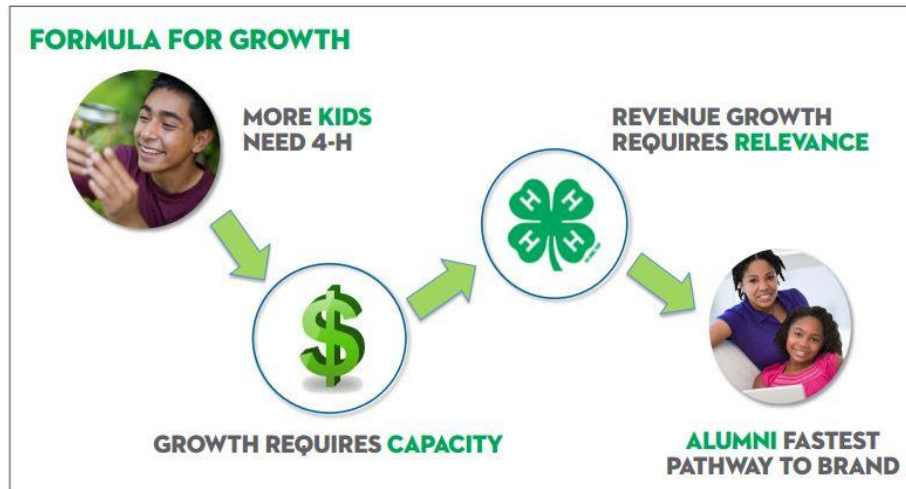
**While Cooperative Extension is one of the most innovative, influential and compelling youth service delivery infrastructures in our country, awareness of Extension and 4-H does not match their significant impact.**

Research shows that 4-H's 25 million alumni are a valuable—and untapped—resource for changing this situation. They are ready to give, advocate and volunteer, but have never been mobilized nationally in significant and meaningful ways.

- *Two thirds of 4-H alumni live in suburbs and cities*
- *They are the truest believers in 4-H—over 96% have strong, positive memories of their time in the program*
- *4-H is out of sight and out of mind—the majority (62%) do not feel informed about or connected to today's 4-H.*

## Alumni: The Fastest Pathway to Brand Relevance

Extension leadership has realized that achieving significant program growth—in both rural and urban markets—will require new levels of capacity across the 4-H system. Building the relevancy required for alumni and investors to step forward, engage and give is the critical first phase of the ten year, transformational brand building effort envisioned by National 4-H Council.



**The Result:** New funding and investment opportunities for Extension thanks to a national network of trained 4-H champions, empowered to tell a consistent and compelling story—positively positioning Extension leadership and 4-H programs in corporate and foundation board rooms, on the legislative floor and in the hearts and minds of individual donors and consumers.

**The ECOP 4-H Leadership Committee has prioritized a unified national marketing plan as the most urgent national priority to set us on a path to achieve this vision.** This national marketing plan must be complemented by a robust field marketing program—putting the right tools and resources in the hands of Extension advocates at every level.

## THE BENEFITS TO COOPERATIVE EXTENSION

### 1. MOBILIZE 1 MILLION 4-H ALUMNI TO CREATE NEW RESOURCES

*Goal: Acquire 1,000,000 new alumni contacts over the next 10 years*

- 70/30 revenue split with states for any nationally driven alumni cause promotions and crowd funding (as determined by the 10 states in the National 4-H Alumni Pilot)
- Access to all alumni contact info from your state (with the permission of the alumni who indicate an interest in receiving news and info from a specific state 4-H programs)
- **Goal: In ten years, states receive a minimum financial return (e.g. average amount \$126,000 annually) and an increase in alumni data (on average 20% annually) based on established state 4-H goals and commitment towards cultivation.**

This base of engaged and loyal alumni will be able to support Extension and 4-H in a number of ways:

- **Give: \$9 MILLION** annually in donations to 4-H. A conservative estimate, assuming that 10% of the 1 million alumni base gives an average of \$90 (average online gift size, not including additional revenue through giving at retail point of sale. Source: Blackbaud)
- **Advocate:** Imagine a rapid response team of 4-H alumni in every state ready to stand up for 4-H when we need them, let alone those 4-H alums who are already making a difference as elected officials
- **Volunteer: \$55.4 MILLION** worth of volunteer service to 4-H. A conservative estimate assuming 10% of the 1 million alumni base volunteers an average of two hours per month over the course of a year at the \$23.07/hr. current estimated value of volunteer time (Source: Independent Sector)
- **Engage:** Promotion of national and state cause marketing by activating alumni to shop and give at the register, generating revenue and awareness for local 4-H programs

## 2. SHARED-COST MARKETING, TOOLS, RESOURCES, TRAINING AND RECOGNITION

- Brand assets such as logos, icons and story-telling resources
- PSA Campaign materials including customizable posters, banners, billboards, print ads, videos, fliers, radio ads and social media content
- A comprehensive photo/video library featuring real 4-H'ers, organized by theme (healthy living, science, agriculture, etc.)
- Customizable templates for public relations, digital communications, print communications and presentations
- Leveraged buying discounts through a suite of qualified vendors (ex: videography, custom printing, fundraising collateral)
- National recognition and incentives for best in class state/local marketing efforts

## 3. DEDICATED STATE/REGIONAL 4-H MARKETING CAPACITY

- Experienced talent dedicated to supporting state/local marketing strategy and implementation means potential cost savings as states do not have to hire new in-house marketing staff. ***Full regional staff support is offered at maximum investment level in each investment formula option.***
- Targeted, customized training and technical assistance (ex: marketing audits/assessments; Extension/LGU/4-H marketing advice and support; how to build a local PR plan; leveraging your millennial alumni as advocates, donors and volunteers)
- Data analytics to inform local efforts and strategy (research and analytics customized to the 4-H market at less cost than states would pay individually for the same product)

## 4. NATIONAL "HALO" MARKETING IMPACT IN LOCAL MARKETS

- Estimated **\$50 million in collective media value** (e.g. monetary value of press coverage and donated advertising, as well as goods and services received)
- Strategic media coverage and advertising driven by Council in participating states/regions with local LGU and Cooperative Extension partnership and co-branding opportunities
- Thought leadership: strategic positioning of Extension staff as experts in the youth development space via state/national media outlets

- State Extension logos positioned on targeted PSA campaign materials to create a halo effect for the university and Extension.
- Alignment and strategic management of celebrity and notable alumni to engage deeply in state and local efforts (e.g. attendance at events/dinners, use in media coverage, experiences for youth, fundraising premiums, video and materials inclusion)
- Implementation of national corporate and media partner relationships locally (e.g. matching local C-suite executives with local 4-H programs, increased connection to store managers through retail relationships)

## MARKETING INVESTMENT FORMULA OPTIONS

Three investment formula options are provided for consideration. To ensure successful outcomes of a unified marketing plan, Council applied the following principles to each:

- The total investment amount of \$1.5M is conservative (comparable national non-profits with member or affiliate based marketing programs spend \$2-3 million on average).
- Annual investment is requested over a three-year span to ensure sustainability and facilitate planning.
- Council will match or exceed Extension’s total investment with private-sector resources.
- The plan (and each option) is “opt-in” and will require a threshold of participation to ensure the program can be scaled at a level to provide the greatest value for those participating.
- Key metrics and indicators demonstrating ROI and positive program growth will guide each year’s efforts. Note: mature field/affiliate marketing programs (three to five years) typically yield 2-3 times the investment.
- Campaign deliverables are outlined in the value proposition section. Additional creative services such as graphic design, web design, video production, printing, etc. would require additional fees.

## INVESTMENT OPTIONS:

### 1. REGIONAL INVESTMENT

Each Extension Region would invest equally to fund the national marketing cooperative program at \$375,000 per region. Regions would decide formula and opt-in approach for each state's investment based on needs and resources within the region. Investment per region could also be negotiated among Extension if some regions were able to allocate more and others less. **Minimum required investment is two regions at \$375,000 each.**

#### PROS:

- Provides flexibility to consider state funding mix within region
- Greatest efficiency in implementation given entire region adopts as one.
- Allows each state flexibility to work within process of the region to make decisions on participation
- Consistency of services due to regional endorsement and infrastructure
- Guaranteed nationwide marketing (and increased value) with all regions on board
- Creates sustainability as makeup of regional investment can be altered annually

#### CONSIDERATIONS:

- Strong regional leadership required
- More investment burden may shift to states with larger budgets

## 2. STATE OPT-IN (ONE TIER) INVESTMENT

States opt-in to invest in national marketing cooperative program at pre-determined amount based on the existing Smith-Lever formula. **Option requires 50% of states invested and minimum of \$750,000.**

### PROS:

- Investment based on established formula
- Allows each state to invest on their own

### CONSIDERATIONS:

- Significantly challenging to create a national marketing plan given varying state opt-ins
- Service structure has potential to be scattered and ultimately less efficient and effective
- Alumni data acquisition would be limited
- Could possibly only benefit states with larger budgets
- No flexibility in opt-in investment
- All states may not fully engage in cooperative model investing time and expertise due to fee

## 3. STATE OPT-IN (MULTIPLE TIER) INVESTMENT

State chooses to opt-in to national marketing cooperative program. Each state invests at a minimum level of \$25,000 for basic access to resources and shared training, or invests \$50,000 for more in-depth services. **Program is contingent upon on enough states opting in to meet a \$750,000 threshold.**

### PROS:

- Provides states option to opt in or not
- Provides two different tiers for participation

### CONSIDERATIONS:

- Any national marketing outcomes would be hard to plan for outside of funding years
- Highest quality of services could potentially never be met due to uncertainty of states opting in
- Could cause inequities and sense of division between “haves and have nots”
- 4-H brand would look wildly inconsistent across states and programs causing donor confusion
- Alumni data capture would be mediocre at best given support would be at varying degrees
- Additional partners, dollars and resources would shift more to states with greater support
- Efficiency of resources and services could not be maximized or purchased at scale for impact

### LEARN MORE:

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4-H is the youth development program of our nation's  
Cooperative Extension System and USDA.