

IMPACT

University of Idaho
Extension

Canyon County

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Build Your Future: connecting underserved youth to career planning

AT A GLANCE

Build Your Future participants are able to see their potential future career pathway, understand the value of postsecondary education and identify ways to pay for higher education.

The Situation

The state of Idaho's "Go On" rate is among the lowest in the nation with 46 percent of 2015 high school graduates going on to college directly from high school in 2016 (State Board of Education, 2016). Many reasons contribute to the low percentage of youth going onto college: family obligations, financial concerns, culture, perception of higher education and where a youth lives in relation to an institute of higher education.

Our Response

The goal of the Idaho 4-H Build Your Future program is to develop relationships with Idaho youth that would otherwise not look to higher education as part of their future and provide those youth with the opportunity to explore career opportunities, visit the University of Idaho campus and visualize themselves as capable, competent adults with a quality education that serves them and their families.

The National 4-H Council curriculum "Build Your Future: Choices... Connections... Careers..." introduces teens in eighth-12th grades to career options and participants begin planning for possible career paths. University of Idaho Extension 4-H Youth Development educators recruited facilitators to work at five rural sites located throughout the state. Youth participants worked through the first five activities of the curriculum:



Participants from the 2017 Idaho 4-H State Teen Association Conference tour the UI campus. Photo credit: Carrie Johnson.

- Skills... Choices... Careers. Connecting experiences, personal interests, skills, values and personality to career options and college majors.
- Making Career Connections. Increasing knowledge of careers by researching and exploring careers through interviews, internships and volunteering.
- Build Your Future Through Portfolios. Learning about career and employment portfolios and following the steps to create their own portfolio.
- Education Pay\$. Exploring how education and training affect employment opportunities, earning potential and lifetime earnings.
- Career FUNds. Understanding the various types of postsecondary education and training, plus ways to fund it.

Youth who completed four of these five activities were then eligible to attend the 2017 Idaho 4-H State

Teen Association Conference (STAC) on the University of Idaho campus in June. This campus visit allowed youth to tour campus, learn more about careers they may be interested in, and meet faculty and college students.

Program Outcomes

The Build Your Future program was delivered to 91 youth, eighth-12th grade, across the five identified sites in Idaho. The goal of reaching underserved youth in rural areas was met. The group of youth served were 50 percent male and 50 percent female; 47 percent Hispanic, 39 percent white, 1 percent black, 2 percent Asian and 10 percent American Indian. They also came from rural backgrounds; 34 percent town (10,000-50,000), 64 percent rural (under 10,000) and 2 percent farm.

Youth participants completed a pre-post retrospective survey after each of the five sessions they attended to measure understanding of careers choices, the correlation of their career path and level of postsecondary education, education choices and funding opportunities for postsecondary education. Not all sites were able to complete all five of the activities resulting in a different number of participants in each survey. After participating in the program, 100 percent of the youth agreed or strongly agreed that they can identify potential careers in their field of interest and 97.44 percent agreed or strongly agreed that they are aware of the steps needed to pursue a specific career pathway. In addition, 100 percent agreed or strongly agreed that they are able to research and calculate the potential increase in salary and benefits that would result from additional education or training. The survey also found that 92 percent agreed or strongly agreed that they can identify options available for funding their postsecondary education.

These results indicate that youth participants have tools necessary to help them see their potential future career pathway, understand the value of postsecondary education to reach their goals and can identify funding options for a postsecondary education.

The Future

The Idaho 4-H Build Your Future program was proposed and selected as a 2018 Vandal Ideas Project, a university wide competitive grant program. This funding will allow for a second year of programming and expansion of the program to ten sites. Additional personal finance education and funding for postsecondary education sessions will be added for the 2018 Build Your Future program.

Cooperators and Co-Sponsors

Black Canyon Alternative School, Emmett; Caldwell High School, Caldwell; Cassia Alternative High School, Burley;

Lakeside High School, Plummer; Parma High School, Parma; University of Idaho Office of the President; University of Idaho Office of Strategic Enrollment Management.

References: The Office of State Board of Education, 2016, Idaho High School Feedback Reports. Retrieved online at https://public.tableau.com/profile/idaho.slds#!/vizhome/IdahoHighSchoolFeedbackReport_0/IdahoHSFeedback.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

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