



PROGRAMS OF DISTINCTION SUBMISSION GUIDELINES

This document provides an overview of the Programs of Distinction submission and review process. It also provides specific guidelines for completing the Programs of Distinction submission form.

OVERVIEW

What is Programs of Distinction?

Programs of Distinction is a collection of program descriptions that reflect the high quality of Cooperative Extension youth development programs occurring in communities across the United States. The collection is housed in a searchable web-based database. These programs:

- Exhibit strong program development characteristics and contribute to the youth development body of knowledge
- Convey new ideas, materials, or innovative methods related to positive youth development
- Demonstrate evidence of effectiveness, such as demonstrated changes in knowledge, behaviors, attitudes or aspirations of youth and adults

Why Programs of Distinction?

Programs of Distinction are designed to help 4-H and other Extension youth development professionals to:

- Communicate the high quality of Cooperative Extension-supported youth development programs that are occurring in communities across the United States
- Assist others in improving their practices in positive youth development
- Better understand and promote the nature of scholarship in their work
- Submit program outcomes through a peer-evaluated format

How are Programs of Distinction accessible?

Programs of Distinction are available on the 4-H National Headquarters website through a searchable database. The on-going submission process allows for continuously new content. Top "Program of Distinction" entries will be selected for invited presentations at the annual NAE4-HA conference. Programs of Distinction manuscripts will remain in the Programs of Distinction database for 5 years from the date of acceptance. Submitters will be notified when this 5-year anniversary approaches and will be invited to update their manuscript.

CRITERIA FOR EVALUATION

In order to be considered for inclusion in the Programs of Distinction database, a youth development program must meet the following definition: **"An organized, purposeful set of activities designed to achieve positive youth development outcomes."**

Programs of Distinction submissions are reviewed independently by three trained peer reviewers for program content and readability. A total of 100 points are possible. Comments will be provided by reviewers as appropriate.

FORMATTING AND LENGTH

The maximum length for the Program Content section (Questions 6-17) is 8 pages, not including tables, graphics or references. These can go in the appendices. Please limit appendices to up to 8 pages. Text should use 11point Veranda font (14 point for headings), and have one-inch margins on all sides. Please include the program title as a header on each page. All appendices (tables, graphics, etc.) should be clearly labeled in the text (e.g., See Table 1). Similarly, all figures, tables, and graphs should have titles (e.g., Figure 1. Youth Participation in the After-School Program).

SUBMITTING THE COMPLETED MANUSCRIPT

Please return your completed application to pod@nifa.usda.gov as an e-mail attachment with "POD Submission" in the subject line. Please send this as a Word file and not as a .pdf file. It is preferable to have the manuscript and appendices saved as one WORD file.

QUESTION-BY-QUESTION GUIDELINES

Specific instructions for completing the Programs of Distinction Submission form questions are provided below in italic text.

Abstract

Provide a 200-word abstract summarizing your program for publication in the POD database. The abstract should answer the following questions: Why is this topic important? What is the scope of the program? What was the outcome(s) of the program? What is the implication of those results to the broader field of youth development?

Keywords

List 4-6 keywords to be entered into an online keyword search field.

Title of the Program

Please provide the name of the program that you would like to be considered for "Programs of Distinction" recognition.

Submitter's Contact Information

You may include multiple submitters. If the manuscript is accepted, this information will be posted online as part of the manuscript. Please include the following:

- *Name*
- *Title*
- *Affiliation*
- *Mailing Address*
- *Email Address*
- *Telephone Number*

- **Contact Information for Others Who Should Receive Copies of Correspondence about the Status of this Submission**

Please include the names of others such as your state's program leader, colleagues, funders, etc. who should be notified about the status of this submission. These individuals will receive reviewer feedback. If the manuscript is accepted, this information will be removed prior to the manuscript being posted online.

- **Program of Distinction Category**

The categories listed below are used to organize the Programs of Distinction database. Please select up to six categories that best reflect your program.

Leadership, Citizenship and Life Skills Categories

- Leadership Development
- Caring Relationships, Community Spirit
- Diversity & Inclusive Environments
- Workforce Preparation
- Financial Education

Science, Engineering and Technology Literacy Categories

- Natural Resources Education
- Animal Science & Food and Fiber Systems
- Foods & Nutrition
- Agriculture & Environmental Biotechnology
- Horticulture & Plant Sciences
- Science Engineering & Technology

Healthy Living Categories

- Youth Obesity
- Nutrition Education
- Health & Fitness
- Safety
- Healthy Relationships, Good Decisions

Youth in Governance Categories

- Youth & Adult Partnerships
- Youth Decision-Making
- Youth Action
- Youth in Organizational Governance
- Community Engagement

Organizational Strategies Categories

- Strategic Communication & Marketing
- Partnership & Grants
- Risk Management Strategies
- Volunteer Development
- Developing & Retaining 4-H Professionals
- Leadership & Governance of Boards

- **Sources of funding that support this program**

Please include any sources of funding, both public and private, that support this program. Please include any funding that you receive from the Cooperative State Research, Education, and Extension Service (NIFA), such as CYFAR, EFNEP, etc.

NOTE: The 8 page limit does NOT include the above items. The 8 page limit begins with Knowledge & Research and goes through Rationale & Importance.

□ Knowledge and Research Base

Describe the knowledge and research base that was used to inform and develop the program's design and content. Include any relevant citations using American Psychological Association (APA) style guidelines. This should be a synthesis or overview of the research base, not a reference list. This section is similar to a literature review for a program or research article. In addition, the description of the program's design and content should reflect this knowledge and research base.

*Please include a complete listing of references in APA style at the end of your manuscript. For more information about APA style, please refer to the following manual: American Psychological Association (2001). *Publication manual of the American Psychological Association, Fifth Edition*. Washington, DC: Author. Information about APA style can also be found on the following websites:*

- *The Writing Center, University of Wisconsin, Madison APA Documentation:*
<http://www.wisc.edu/writing/Handbook/DocAPA.html>
- *The OWL at Purdue: APA Formatting and Style Guide:*
<http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/560/01/>
- *APAStyle.org:*
<http://www.apastyle.org/learn/faqs/index.aspx>

□ Needs Assessment

Please describe any needs assessment that was conducted in order to develop and/or plan the program. Specifically, what relevant data were collected and/or used as part of this needs assessment? From whom were the data collected? What did these data reveal about the needs in your community or among your target audience(s)? Please describe how the planned educational efforts in your program were based on this needs assessment.

□ Program Goals and Objectives

Please describe the goal(s) for your program. Goals are typically broader than objectives. Please describe your program's objectives. Objectives are often described using the acronym "SMART"—Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic, and Time limited. The program goals and objectives should be clearly stated and relevant to your program and/or the knowledge base and the needs assessment previously described.

□ Target Audience

Please describe the specific target audience for your program. In your description, please include the geographical setting in which the program takes place:

- *Rural—Towns under 10,000 people*
- *Small town with population between 10,000 and up to 50,000*
- *Suburb of a city over 50,000*
- *Central city over 50,000*

It is also possible to have more than one target audience, such as youth participating in a 4-H Club and community members who are involved in a youth-led community service project. Please describe all relevant target audiences for the program in your description. The target audience should be appropriate in relation to the knowledge base, needs assessment, and the programs goals and objectives.

Type of Program

Please indicate, from the list below, which category best describes your program:

- *Organized 4-H Club—led by an adult with a planned program that is carried out throughout all or most of the year.*
- *Special interest/Short-term program/Day Camp—Groups of youth meeting for a specific learning experience*
- *4-H Overnight Camping Program—An Extension planned educational experience of group living in the out-of-doors that includes being away from home at least one night.*
- *4-H School Enrichment Program—Groups of youth receiving a sequence of learning experiences in cooperation with school officials during school hours*
- *School-Aged Child Care Education Program—Educational program offered to youth outside of school hours, incorporating 4-H curricula.*
- *Other: _____ (Please Describe)*

Delivery Methods

Please describe the methods used to deliver the program. In your response, please address how these methods are appropriate for the target audience and context in which the program operates, and how the delivery methods help the program achieve its goal(s).

Curricula and/or Educational Materials

Please describe any curricula and/or educational materials that have been developed specifically for this program, or any curricula and/or educational materials that are being used in this program. How are these curricula and/or educational materials being used in the program? Explain how the curricula and/or educational materials support the goals and objectives of the program. If you have not used or developed any curricula or educational materials, please indicate the reason why.

Teamwork and Collaboration

Please describe any partnerships or collaborations that have been formed to support this program, especially any cross-disciplinary collaboration. How do these teams or partnerships support the program?

Program Evaluation

a. Methods

For this section, please include an overall description of how the evaluation was conducted (e.g., what was the evaluation's design, what kinds of data were collected, from whom, by what methods, etc.). It is also helpful for this section to indicate the extent to which your program's goals and objectives were met. Consider including logic models, tables, charts and/or graphics when appropriate. These can go in the Appendices.

b. Process Evaluation

Please describe any process evaluation of the program that has been conducted and results from this evaluation that support that program activities were implemented as planned. A process evaluation assesses the extent to which a program is operating as intended and identifies opportunities for improving implementation. It does not tell you whether the program itself was effective.

This could include, for example, a description of any available participation data (number of participants, intensity of participation, duration of participation, etc.), focus group results in which participants were asked for feedback about the program, etc.

c. Outcome Evaluation

Please describe any outcome evaluation of the program that has been conducted, and results from this evaluation that indicate there were real, measurable short-term, mid-term, and/or long-term changes in knowledge, attitudes, skills, practices, or conditions. These results should indicate the effectiveness of the program. Consider presenting your data in a tabular or graphic format to enhance the readability of your manuscript.

Communication to stakeholders

How has evidence of the effectiveness and/or impact of this program been communicated to key stakeholders, such as program participants, staff, family members, community members, funders, etc.? For example, did you write reports? Post your program and evaluation results of the Internet? Develop a brochure? Please be specific in describing the methods and mediums used in your communications.

Evidence of Sustainability

Please describe how this program is being sustained over time, or plans that have been developed to sustain this program over time. Sustainability factors might include continuing sources of participants, instructors, materials, funding, and other forms of support.

Replicability

How has this program been replicated in other settings (includes delivery styles, demographics, geography, and other variations of setting)? If it has not been replicated, please describe possibilities for replication in other settings. Include any components that are needed for successful replication, regardless of whether the program has actually been replicated.

Rationale and Importance of Program

Please describe how this program represents something that 4-H educators, Cooperative Extension administrators and faculty, colleagues, parents, youth, funders, and other youth development professionals should know about. Explain the implications of this program to the overall field of positive youth development.

NOTE: This ends the 8 page limit for the program description.

References

References must be listed in this section and noted in the program description according to APA guidelines.

Appendices

This section is limited to 8 pages. It may include graphs, charts, tables, communication examples, media examples, evaluation questions, or other relevant materials. References made to these items in the program description must follow APA guidelines.