

Title: Effectiveness of 4-H Capital Days on Program Participants

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Description: The purpose of this research was to assess the impact of Pennsylvania 4-H Capital Days program on participants (N=77). PA Capital Days is a two-day educational program designed to increase awareness and understanding of the roles and functions of state-level government. Specifically, 4-H participants' knowledge, awareness, understanding, interest, and attitudes toward civic engagement and the roles and functions of the state government were examined.

Major Findings: A majority (70%) of the participants were: female, white, 60% of the participants were in 10th /11th grades, while 15% were in 12th grade; 91% reported that they are participating in 4-H Capital Days for the first time.

The comparison of pre and post test scores indicated significant improvements relative to the following:

- funding sources for 4-H 64% pre vs. 84% post),
- functioning of state government (66% vs. 80%),
- process of how a bill becomes into law (64% vs. 80%),
- working of various governmental agencies within the state government (56% vs. 81%), and
- influence of private citizens vote on legislature (62% vs. 80%).

An overwhelming majority of participants indicated that it is either “important” or “very important” for them to improve their communities (87%), contribute to their communities (86%), do something worthwhile to society, help their country, protect animals, and preserve earth for future generations (82% each).

A majority of participants indicated that they are more likely to participate in a variety of organizations as a result of their participation in 4-H Capital Days. For example:

- student council/government (35% before vs. 59% after)
- Affiliation to political party (15% vs. 29%)
- Work in school newspaper (22% vs. 32%)
- Environmental organizations (24% vs. 38%)
- Student exchange programs (17% vs. 53%)
- Charities collecting money for social issues (62% vs. 79%).

Almost two-thirds (63%) of the participants indicated that their level of interest in government has increased, 30% said that they are “not sure,” while 7% said they have “little interest” in government. Overall, 93% said that Capital Days program met their expectations.

