



Writing a 4-H Impact Report

This writing guide will provide you with a framework for preparing an impact report. Writing an effective impact report today is less like writing an administrative report and more like writing the headlines for the evening paper. “If it bleeds, it leads” is the standard for most media outlets of today. Like it or not, most people make their decision regarding whether or not to read something within a few seconds. This guide will support identification of key elements for inclusion in an impact report that people will read.

Title:

The title should not only introduce your impact report but should answer the legislator or taxpayer’s question, “So what?”

Rather than simply using the name of a program or project, consider using the most powerful statement you can make related to the problem or an impact that occurred as a result of the project... i.e. “Saving the Family Farm: Youth Leadership Program;” “ExCEL takes Arkansas Kids to new Heights;” “Extension Helps Producers Save 17 Million Gallons of Water.”

The title should communicate the project’s value—not just identify the project name. This approach increases the likelihood that people may actually read the impact report!

Success Story:

Provide a brief description of a SINGLE “success story” related to the topic/project. For example: how the life skill was being presented; a specific participant who stood out from the group; an event that happened after the activity/project as a result of the activity/project. This establishes and contributes a higher level of “believability” and relevance to your impact report. The story should quickly identify a specific problem, a specific outcome and the role of CES in helping facilitate a solution. You might focus on the initiative/goal area in AIMS or you might look at how Arkansas ranks statistically based on why you are conducting this project/program. Please include age group, school grade, etc., and the location of the featured “user” of Extension in this story whenever possible. Please also obtain some direct quotes from the user(s).

General Program Information:

In this section, please provide a BRIEF synopsis of the big picture issues or why this activity/project was important to your county. Provide no more than a couple of sentences on key information about the state-wide program structure, goals, challenges, awards, issues, successes and/or plans.

of towns/counties involved: Please provide a list of all towns/counties in which the program/service was delivered. Identify how many individuals or groups were served at the location(s). More is not necessarily better. Innovative initiatives will often be limited to one or two sites.

What Overall Differences Now Exist as a Result of the Program? Impact Numbers:

This is the bottom line. Words should be few, and numbers should be included. Examples could include:

Outcomes from these programming efforts include:

- One county had 55 high school youth and 80 seventh grade youth learn how to use recreational grade GPS.
- Five Perry youth who attended 4-H camp, “Mission Earth-It’s All Up to You,” returned home and began a county-wide campaign for recycling. In a county of 10,000, the recycling center went from less than one percent of the population recycling to more than five percent of the county population recycling.
- Nineteen youth, ages 12–19, increased their knowledge of technology during a Techno Teen Camp. Some results were knowledge in robotics increased from 1.6 to 4.1 and knowledge in computer programming increased from 1.8 to 3.8. Overall technology knowledge after the camp increased from 1.9 to 4.2.

CES Section Contact Person: Provide your name, title and contact information.

A Picture is Worth a Thousand Words: Pictures should always be used with impact reports. The quality of a picture is critical to communicating value and providing a tangible representation of your work.