Entering 4-H and Youth Common Measures in the Plan of Work Reporting System

Background

The National 4-H Common Measures identify a core of youth outcomes and indicators which represent for the 4-H system a nation-wide effort toward program quality and accountability. One goal for developing 4-H Common Measures was to identify a common core of child/youth outcomes and indicators that will become part of the National Institute of Food and Agriculture's Plan of Work system. Complete information related to 4-H Common Measures can be found at http://www.4-h.org/resource-library/common-measures/. The mechanism NIFA has for collecting this information at the programmatic level is the Plan of Work (POW) reporting system. This system is designed to give 1862 and 1890 Land Grant Universities maximum flexibility in reporting to NIFA how they have chosen to use their allocated research and extension capacity funds under AREERA (Hatch and Smith Lever 3b&c) and Sections 1444 and 1445 of NARETPA (Evans Allen and 1890 Extension funds). Each institution has the ability to enter their own "state defined outcome measures." This document explains how to use the State Defined Outcomes section of the POW reporting system to incorporate the National 4-H Common Measures as part of a Plan of Work and Annual Report.

Timeline – How the POW System Works

When entering outcome measures into the POW system, it's helpful to understand the timeline of when Plans of Work and their associated Annual Reports are submitted into the system. The general timeline is: in any given federal fiscal year, you are always submitting the POW for the proceeding fiscal year and the Annual Report for the prior fiscal year. For example, in FY16, all states have their 2017 five-year Plan of Work and 2015 Annual Report due on April 1, 2016. As you can see in that example, there is a two year gap between the POW and the Annual Report. The POW tells NIFA what you PLAN to do and collect for data, and the Annual Report tells NIFA when you DID and collected for data.

The system works by prepopulating Annual Reports with certain data that you included in the POW of the same fiscal year. When it comes to outcome measures, for example, any measure you entered in the 2015 POW (back in April of 2013) will now be included in the 2015 Annual Report, which is due April 1, 2016. You then have the opportunity to report data against that measure or click a "not reporting on this measure" checkbox. You also have the option of adding a completely new measure that you may not have planned for or realized you'd have data to report against, but nevertheless do and wish to report. See the steps below for entering measures and reporting data for those measures in the POW and Annual Report.

Steps to Enter Common Measures in the Plan of Work

1. Go to http://portal.nifa.usda.gov
2. Log in and enter the POW application (contact Katelyn Sellers at ksellers@nifa.usda.gov if you don't have access but believe you should).
3. Click on the Plan of Work link in blue; go to "Planned Programs" in the menu bar.
4. Click the planned program that you want the common measure(s) to fall under. (Suggested program names are "Youth and 4-H" or "Youth Development.")
5. Go to "State Defined Outcome" under that program.
6. On this page, the outcome measures from the previous year's POW are listed. You may choose to edit or delete the existing measures as you see fit. You may also "Add Outcome Target Measure" as depicted in the screenshot:

7. Whether you are editing an existing measure or adding a completely new measure as one of the 4-H and Youth Common Measures, make sure you use the verbiage that appears on the official list of 4-H and Youth Common Measures, which is listed here: http://www.4-h.org/resource-library/common-measures/. This will help NIFA track all the states that are reporting on these common measures and will allow us to aggregate data.
    - Note: The verbiage you should use should come from the "outcome" column of the 4-H Common Measures (see chart example at the end of this guidance); you should add a quantitative measure phrase, such as "number of youth that" or "percentage of youth that" to the outcome verbiage in order to create an outcome measure. For example, if the text in the outcome column is "make positive choices", then the outcome measure you enter in the POW could be "percentage of youth that make positive choices."

8. By listing the outcome measures in the Plan of Work, all you are doing is saying that these are the measures for which you will collect data over the course of at least the next year (and potentially longer). When it comes time to submit the annual report for that fiscal year (in two years' time), then you will report the actual data against the measures. So, once you are satisfied with the list of measures on the screen, you can click "done" at the bottom of the page.

Steps to Enter Common Measures in the Annual Report of Accomplishments and Results

The Annual Report of Accomplishments and Results is due annually to NIFA. Each year, this report is pre-populated with state defined outcomes measures that were originally included in the Plan of Work for that same fiscal year. For example, the 2015 Annual Report is going to be populated with the outcome measures that you entered in your 2015 POW, which was submitted in April, 2014.

Since the measures are prepopulated, you have a few choices:

1. You can use the current measures as they are and report against them (e.g. insert quantitative numbers and potentially qualitative descriptions if you have them;
2. You can choose "not reporting on this measure" for any measure that no longer applies to your program.
3. You can add a new "state defined outcome measure" and then report against it.

Following are the steps for adding a new state defined outcome measure; this is the process you should use if you need to add one or more of the 4-H and Youth Common Measures; once the measure is added, you can then report data against it.

1. Go to http://portal.nifa.usda.gov
2. Log in and enter the POW application (contact Katelyn Sellers at ksellers@nifa.usda.gov if you don't have access but believe you should).

3. Click on the Annual Report of Accomplishments and Results; go to "Planned Programs" in the menu bar.
4. Click the planned program that you want the common measure(s) to fall under. (Suggested program names are "Youth and 4-H" or "Youth Development.")
5. Go to "State Defined Outcomes" under that program; click the "add" link at the bottom of the page (red circle in screenshot below):

6. When you enter in the common measure, make sure you use the verbiage that appears in the official listing of 4-H and Youth Common measures; you can consult that list here: http://www.4-h.org/resource-library/common-measures/. This will help NIFA track all the states that are reporting on these common measures and will allow us to aggregate data.
   - Note: The verbiage you should use should come from the "outcome" column of the 4-H Common Measures (see chart example at the end of this guidance); you should add a quantitative measure phrase, such as "percentage of youth that" or "number of youth that" to the outcome verbiage in order to create an outcome measure. For example, if the text in the outcome column is "make positive choices", then the outcome measure you enter in the POW could be "percentage of youth that make positive choices."
7. Once you have added the measure (or clicked on one that was already there), you can now enter the **actual** quantitative number you wish to report in the "Actual" box. Also, as part of the quantitative number, **we STRONGLY encourage you** to submit a qualitative description of what the issue was, what you did about it, and what your results were in the boxes provided. This helps NIFA gain better insight and context to support your quantitative achievements. This is what that page looks like:

IV (F): State Defined Outcome Measure ?
Name of the Planned Program.
   Global Food Security and Hunger

1. Outcome Target

Outcome Measures
# of trained professionals

☐ Not Reporting on this Outcome Measure

2. Outcome Type

◯ Change in Knowledge Outcome Measure
◉ Change in Action Outcome Measure
◯ Change in Condition Outcome Measure

Enter by Quantitative and/or Qualitative Method Below as appropriate

Quantitative Outcome

Year	Actual
2015	0

Qualitative Outcome or Impact Statement

Issue (Who cares and Why): (6 to 8 Lines Max)

What has been done: (6 to 8 Lines Max)

Results: (10 To 12 Lines Max)

Tip for entering qualitative descriptions of outcomes: In the three boxes above, think about how the information you enter in them can be "put together" to create a paragraph or two that is easily understandable by a wide variety of audiences. The qualitative description should focus on helping people understand the public value of what your efforts did to address a particular issue or need. Think about if your description was in a local newspaper – could people of varying backgrounds and expertise understand, in lay terms, what you accomplished and why it was important? Consider weaving in the quantitative number you reported above and any other quantitative numbers that support the importance of your work (e.g. dollars saved, increase in dollars earned, percentage increases in knowledge gained or actions adopted, etc.).

Example for 4-H Common Measures in Accomplishment Reports:

Outcome Measure: Percentage (%) of youth who make positive choices *(Selected from the "outcome" column of 4-H Common Measures.)*
Outcome Type: Change in Action
Quantitative: Not Applicable
Issue (Who cares and Why): In order for youth to be prepared for work and life, youth need to demonstrate responsibility, critical thinking and problem solving skills through informed decision making; demonstrate

flexibility and adaptability through decision making; and set goals and determine steps to reach them. *(Selected from the "indicator" column of 4-H Common Measures that corresponds to the outcome selected above. Additionally, insert any state data or statistics related to these indicators. This may include data related to lack of college readiness or indecision of career or life goals.)*

What has been done: (Indicate the number of youth that were surveyed using 4-H Common Measures, the ages of those youth, and how the survey was implemented.)

Results: Youth have demonstrated their ability to make positive choices by indicating that they can: *(Using percentages, select from the "item" column of 4-H Common Measures that correspond with the outcome selected above.)*

- I use information to make decisions
- I am comfortable making my own decisions
- I take responsibility for my actions
- I know how to deal with stress in positive ways
- I set goals for myself
- I have a plan for reaching my goals
- I don't let my friends talk me into doing something I don't want to do (4th-7th only)
- I can explain my decisions to others (4th-7th only)
- I can change my plan when I need to (4th-7th only)
- I can explain why my decision is a good one (8th-12th only)
- I consider the consequences of my choices (8th-12th only)
- I can make alternative plans if something doesn't work (8th-12th only)
- I can resist negative social pressures (8th-12th only)

Example of the 4-H Common Measures Reference Table:

Outcome	Indicator	Items
Make Positive **Choices**	- Youth will demonstrate responsibility, critical thinking and problem solving skills through informed decision making - Youth will demonstrate flexibility and adaptability through decision making - Youth will set goals and determine steps to reach them	**4th-7th Grade** - I use information to make decisions - I am comfortable making my own decisions - I take responsibility for my actions - I know how to deal with stress in positive ways - I set goals for myself - I have a plan for reaching my goals - I don't let my friends talk me into doing something I don't want to do (4th-7th only) - I can explain my decisions to others (4th-7th only) - I can change my plan when I need to (4th-7th only) **8th-12th Grade** - I use information to make decisions - I am comfortable making my own decisions - I take responsibility for my actions - I know how to deal with stress in positive ways - I set goals for myself - I have a plan for reaching my goals - I can explain why my decision is a good one (8th-12th only) - I consider the consequences of my choices (8th-12th only) - I can make alternative plans if something doesn't work (8th and 12th) - I can resist negative social pressures (8th-12th only)