

# 2015 Citizenship Washington Focus (CWF)

## Evaluation Summary

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### Overview

In June 2015, thirty four 4-H teens from across Missouri traveled to our nation's capital as part of an annual program called Citizenship Washington Focus (CWF). The youth experienced government in the living classroom of the nation's capital. The program was held at the National 4-H Youth Conference Center in Chevy Chase, Maryland.

Youth actively engaged in learning activities during five full days of workshops, visits with legislators, committee meetings and field trips to historic landmarks including Fort McHenry, presidential and war memorials and the Smithsonian Institute. A brief, but powerful, side trip to New York City allowed youth to visit the National 9-11 Memorial and view the Statue of Liberty on Staten Island.



### Citizenship Washington Focus (CWF) goals



Tyler Dodd, Phelps County delegate, visits with Senator Roy Blunt.

#### CWF participants will:

- Enhance their understanding of our government's civic process
- Increase leadership skills
- Improve communication skills

### Use of nationally-recognized citizenship survey

At the end of the 2015 CWF experience, MU Extension 4-H faculty invited youth participants to respond to a voluntary, online survey regarding their CWF experience. The survey, developed by the National 4-H Council and 4-H Headquarters is one of several valid and reliable instruments currently being used by 4-H youth development faculty at 48 of our nation's land grant universities. The survey includes multiple choice, yes/no and Likert scale items. (Source: <http://www.4-h.org/resource-library/common-measures/>)

The Citizenship Survey collects data on:

- Demographic Information
- Life Skills (e.g., Communication)
- Interest and Engagement
- Attitude and Aspirations
- Knowledge, Skills and Abilities related to Citizenship

## Short-term learner outcomes

**100%** of youth report: “As a result of the CWF program, I have strengthened my **citizenship** skills.”

**100%** also report: “As a result of the CWF program, I have strengthened my **communication** skills.”

All 22 (100%) of the youth respondents stated they believe that civic responsibilities develop better citizens and better leaders.

All respondents also reported, “As a result of the 2015 CWF experience:

- *I understand my role as a U.S. citizen.*
- *I can communicate effectively with my federal legislators*

## History lesson: 4-H’ers build strong communities

Eighty-two percent of the delegates report the CWF experience changed their view of history. If history is a predictor of the future, it is noteworthy that prominent CWF alum cites his CWF experience as key to his current public service career. Congressman Sam Graves says, “*I took the same (CWF) trip when I was in high school. That trip is what encouraged me to run for office later in my life.*”



Congressman Sam Graves and Missouri 4-H delegates

An integral part of the annual CWF program involves youth identifying a community need and then creating a detailed action plan to address that need (e.g., hosting a senior citizen’s prom, coordinating a veteran’s program ).

When asked, “How likely are you to pursue a role in public service?” 82% of respondents said they are “likely” to “much more likely” to pursue a public service role. Those roles might include:

- running for an elected office
- volunteering on a board or commission
- public service career

Missouri 4-H programs such as Citizenship Washington Focus are integral to the development of engaged citizens and strong leaders.

## Public value of Citizenship Washington Focus

CWF participants are leaders *today*. Youth research also points to creation of public value. *The 4-H Study of Positive Youth Development*, an eight year study involving 7,000 teens from diverse backgrounds across 42 states, revealed that compared to their peers, 4-Hers have positive outcomes that directly benefit communities:

- 4-H members in 7-12 grade: *four times* more likely to make *contributions to their communities*.
- 4-H members in 8-12 grade: *two times* more likely to be *civically active*.

\*Source: <http://www.4-h.org/about/youth-development-research/positive-youth-development-study/>).



<http://4h.missouri.edu>

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