



Appropriated Amount (biennial):
\$500,000

EXPANDING WORKFORCE HORIZONS FOR TEXAS YOUTH

Benefit to Texans

AgriLife Extension already provides youth development programs, annually involving some 600,000 youth in experiential activities that promote leadership and life skills. With funding for this exceptional item, the agency will extend its outreach and focus to ensure that targeted youth and families better understand how to plan for and pursue fields of study through higher education or other workforce training. Programs addressing these issues are documented to reduce dropout rates, improve post-secondary graduation rates, and promote higher aspirations among students whose parents are less schooled.

Description and Justification

At a time when the future of Texas depends on having a skilled and educated workforce, too many Texas youth lack direction as they plan for life after high school. The Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service seeks funding for resource development and 17 FTEs to support the following initiatives:

- Implement camps for youth in middle school through early high school to provide insights and real or simulated experience in high-demand and emerging jobs. Collaborate with the Texas A&M Engineering Experiment Station to emphasize science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) subject matter, including health, medical, food technology, and agricultural sciences topics. Each camp will also be coordinated with an institution of higher education to provide interaction with instructors.
- Conduct further outreach to engage targeted students through community events and field trips, working with higher education and technical school collaborators and public, private, and home school organizations. Include guidance about the college enrollment and financial aid process, especially to youth who lack prior college experience in their family.

OBJECTIVE

Implement a career and college discovery program for underserved students and their families to expand their vision and knowledge about job choices and college planning.

- Pilot an educational initiative for parents, grandparents, and guardians to teach the skills needed to chart the best course for youth in their care.

Eighty percent of college-bound students have yet to choose a major. But they are still expected to pick schools and apply to and start degree programs without knowing their job choices. Fifty percent of those who do declare a major change majors, often two and three times.

Students whose parents did not attend college are more likely than their counterparts to be

- less academically prepared for college
- less knowledgeable about how to apply for college and financial assistance
- less able to acclimate to college once they enroll
- less likely to complete a degree because more often they delay enrollment after high school, enroll only part-time, and work full-time while enrolled

Reaching out to first-generation students, both before and during college, can help mitigate the differences between first-generation and other students and help colleges reach their goal of recruiting and retaining all students. Potential collaborators are all Texas universities, colleges, and technical schools, as well as professional and occupational associations and other youth-serving organizations.



For more information, contact:
Dr. Douglas Steele, Director
600 John Kimbrough Blvd., Suite 509
7101 TAMU
College Station TX 77843-7101
P: (979) 845-7800 E: dstele@tamu.edu
W: AgriLifeExtension.tamu.edu



About Texas A&M AgriLife

What is AgriLife? It's a simple word for a diverse organization. With teaching, research, extension education, laboratory, and forestry facilities throughout Texas, we serve people of all ages and backgrounds. Led by Vice Chancellor Dr. Mark A. Hussey, Texas A&M AgriLife includes the Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service, Texas A&M AgriLife Research, Texas A&M Forest Service, and the Texas A&M Veterinary Medical Diagnostic Laboratory.