

# EXTENSION COUNCIL YOUTH LEADERSHIP (ECYL) PROGRAM

County Extension Council Survey &  
Youth Survey Results  
Fall 2010

# PURPOSE OF SURVEY

- In Fall 2010, all Missouri County Extension Councils had the opportunity to complete a statewide survey on youth and young adult participation on extension councils (County Program Directors or County Council Chairs).
- The statewide survey of councils was originally conducted in 2006, and led to the introduction of the Extension Council Youth Leadership Program (ECYL). ECYL encourages councils to take a youth-adult partnership approach to diversifying their membership.
- The purpose of the 2010 survey was to revisit the status of councils with regard to youth/young adult participation five years later.



# PURPOSE OF SURVEY

- A survey of youth non-voting representatives serving on County Extension Councils since 2006 was also conducted to gather youth perspectives on ECYL.
- The youth survey is a new element added to the study since the start of ECYL.
- The results of both surveys are summarized in the following slides.



# SURVEY DEFINITIONS

- Youth = young people ages 15-17 who are not eligible for voting on county extension councils, by definition of Missouri State Statute
- Young adults = young people ages 18-25 who are eligible for election and voting on county extension councils



# KEY FINDINGS

- The percentage of councils reporting youth involvement (ages 15-17) in 2011 more than doubled (from 8% to 17%) since the ECYL program was introduced in 2006.
- 9 out of 10 youth respondents said they would recommend the ECYL experience to other youth. 7 out of 10 said they serve on a council committee in addition to attending council meetings.
- The percentage of councils reporting young adult involvement (ages 18-25) grew from 13% to 22% over the past five years.
- The percentage of respondents listing young adults having “medium impact” or “large impact” on council decision making jumped 36 percentage points between 2006 and 2011.



# KEY FINDINGS

- One-third of respondents say that working on youth and young adult participation is a top or high priority for their council compared to other priorities.
- 93% of respondents say council members would be willing to commit some or a little time to youth and young adult participation.
- Respondents say youth members are new resources that have helped re-energize their councils. Youth-adult partnerships are expanding the capabilities of councils to make good decisions and to represent all of Extension. In some cases, youth have catalyzed councils to take action.
- Concerns identified by respondents include youth time commitments, transportation issues, parental support, and separating youth non-voting opinions from adult voting results.





**SURVEY OF  
ECYL YOUTH  
REPRESENTATIVES**

# YOUTH SURVEY RESULTS

## (N=10 YOUTH)

- 100% of youth respondents said the County Extension Council worked actively to engage them in meetings.
- At least 70% of youth respondents said they had received an orientation or other form of training on how to participate on the County Extension Council.
- 100% said someone provided them with more information about MU Extension and the role of County Extension Council.
- 90% said someone explained how County Extension Council meetings were run.
- 100% said someone explained that youth of any age can fully participate in meetings, but cannot vote on items until reaching age 18, as defined in Missouri State Statues.





# YOUTH SURVEY RESULTS

## (N=10 YOUTH)

- Nearly 80% of youth respondents said the experience of being a non-voting member benefited them personally.
- At least 50% or more of youth respondents said they placed medium or high priority on their involvement with County Extension Council compared to other school and community activities.
- 40% said that youth had a small impact on decisions the County Extension Council makes about Extension programs and 40% said youth had a medium impact.
- At least 60% of youth respondents would prefer local recognition from their council for serving a term on the County Extension Council. 60% preferred a scholarship or gift toward college; 30% would like a certificate or plaque; 20% would like to be recognized at the Council-to-Campus event at MU each year in June; and 10% preferred recognition at the Youth Civic Leaders Summit in March.



# YOUTH SURVEY RESULTS

## (N=10 YOUTH)

- 90% would recommend the ECYL experience to other youth.
- Youth respondents reported the average number of times County Extension Council met in the last 12 months is 10. The average meetings attended by youth respondents in the last 12 months was 7 (70%).
- At least 40% of youth respondents said they have a regular role to play in County Extension Council meetings.
- 70% said they serve on a County Extension Council committee with adults and 40% said they also give a youth report at each meeting.
- 40% of youth respondents said they were recruited to be a non-voting representative on a County Extension Council by County 4-H staff and 30% were recruited by an Extension Council member.



# SURVEY SECTIONS

- Council practices
- Council rules & procedures
- Council outreach
- Council interest (in ECYL)
- Council opportunities & concerns



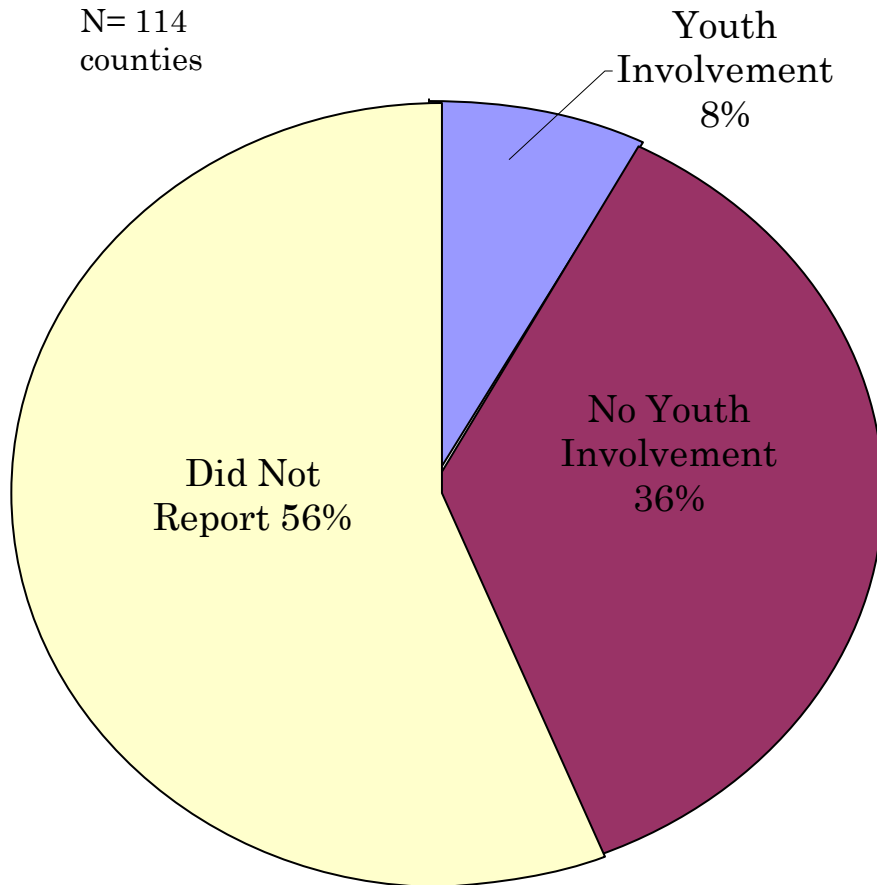


# **COUNCIL PRACTICES: YOUTH**

# YOUTH INVOLVEMENT ON EXTENSION COUNCILS

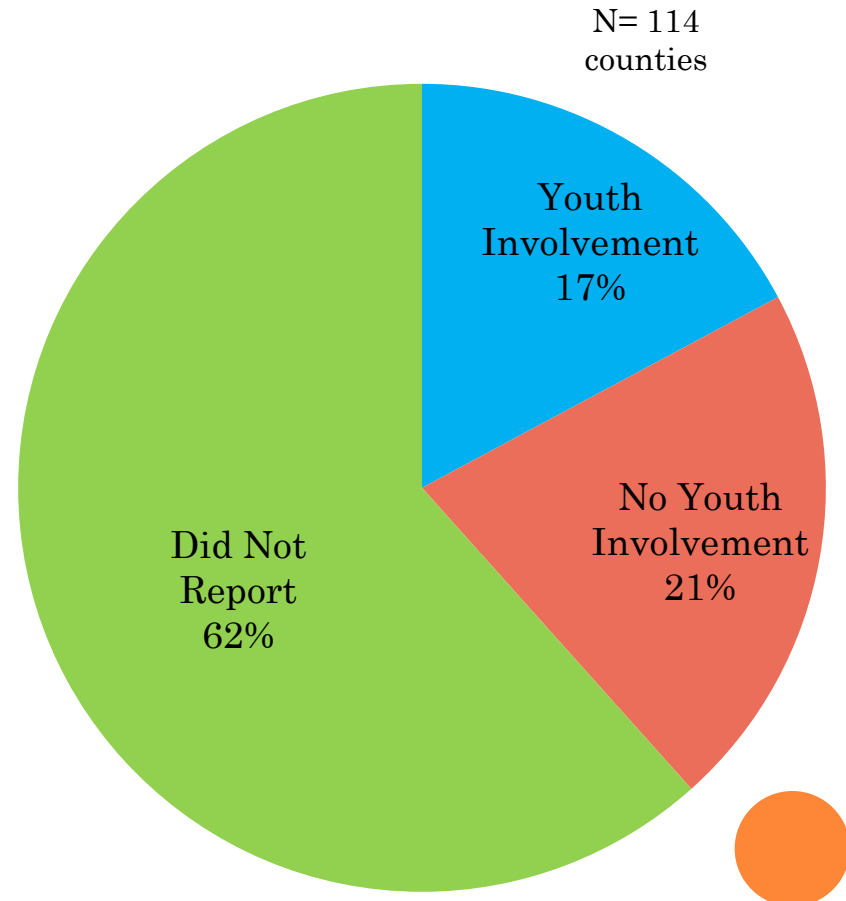
**2006**

N= 114  
counties



**2011**

N= 114  
counties



# WHAT ROLES DO YOUTH PLAY?

(N=46 COUNTIES)

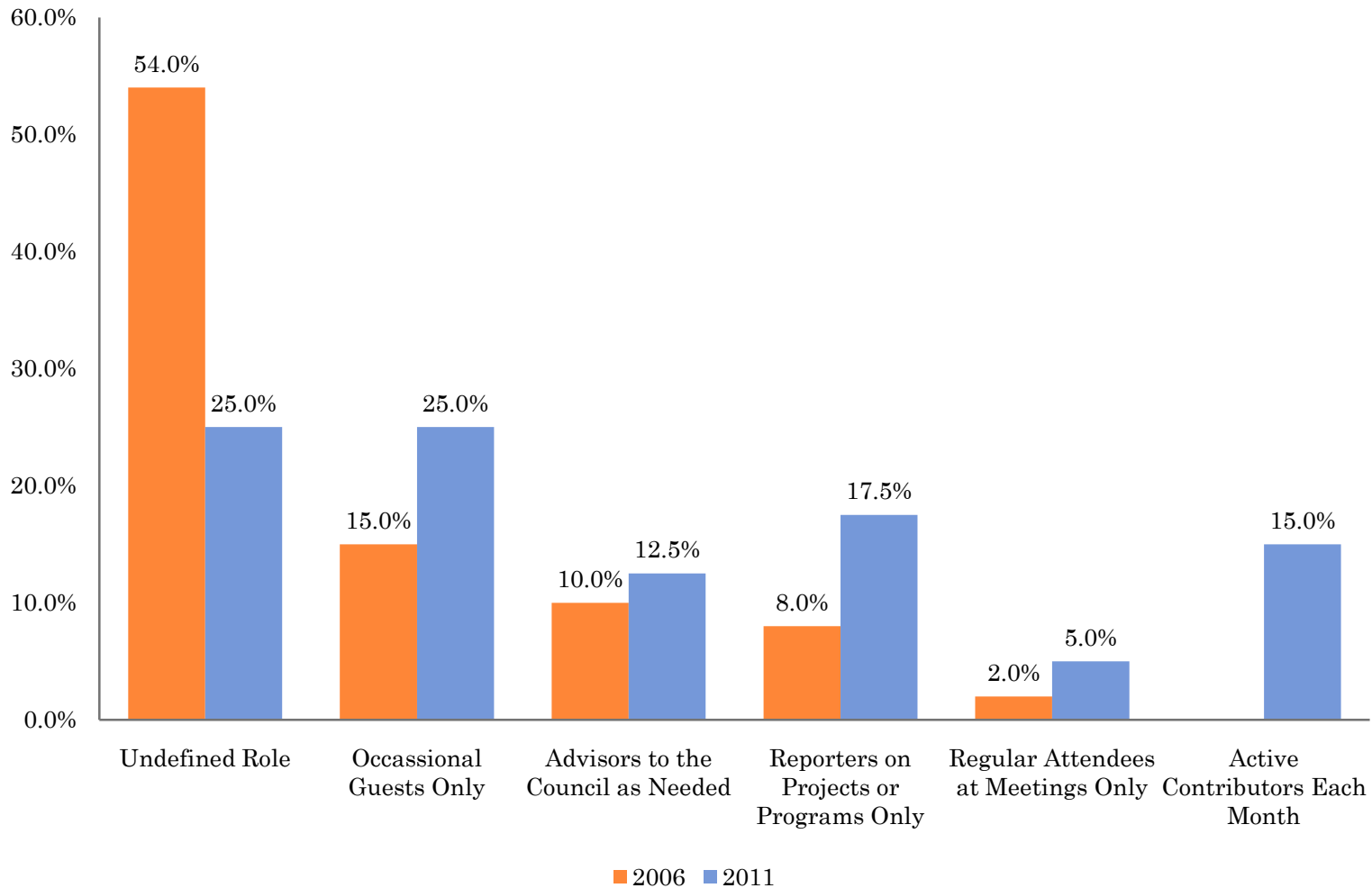
## 2011 Results:

- Youth have an undefined role- 25.0%
- Youth are occasional guests only- 25.0%
- Youth are reporters on projects or programs only- 17.5%
- Youth are active contributors each month- 15.0%
- Youth are advisors to the council as needed- 12.5%
- Youth are regular attendees at meetings only- 5.0%



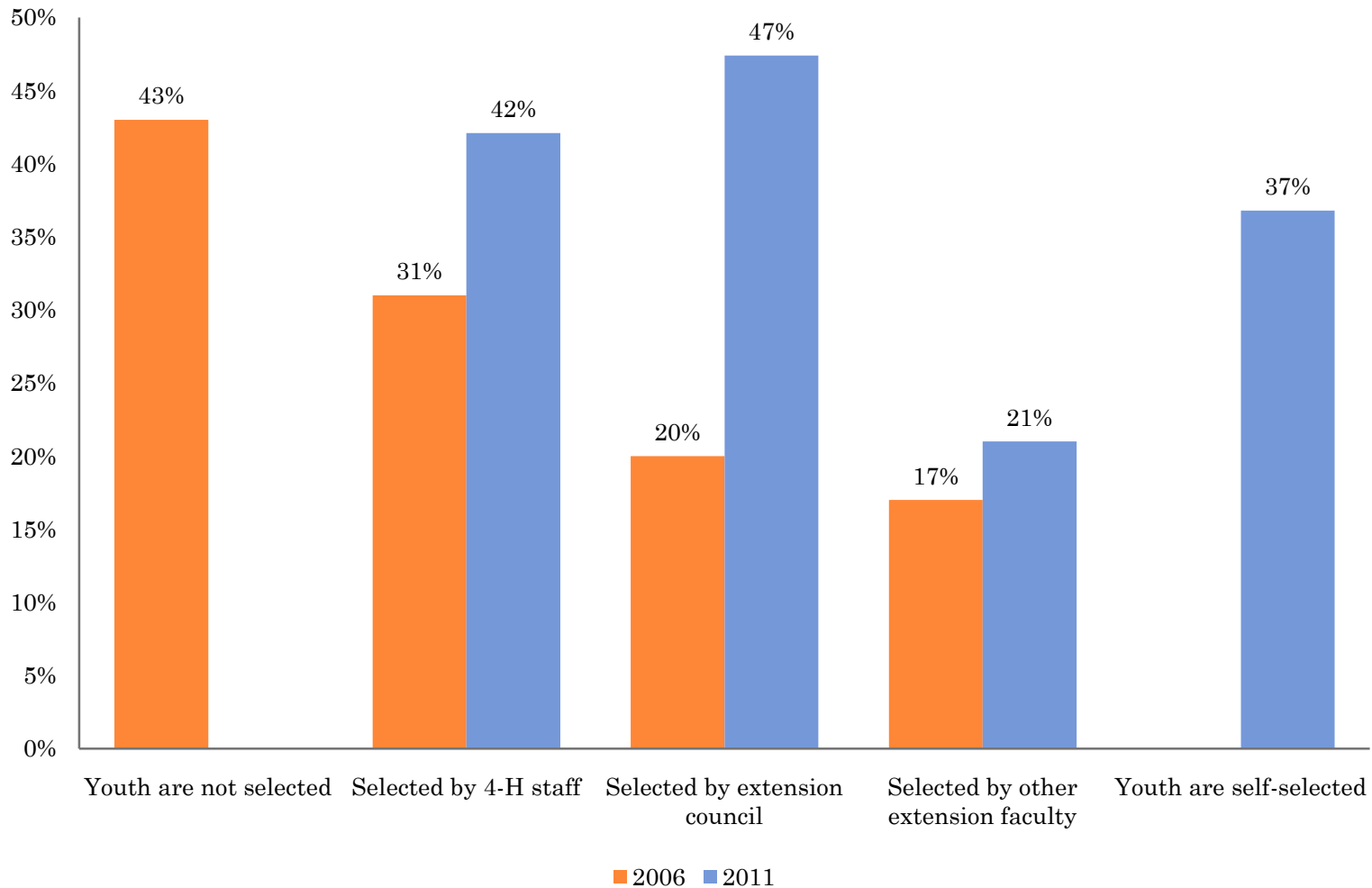
# WHAT ROLES DO YOUTH PLAY?

(N=46 COUNTIES)



# HOW ARE YOUTH SELECTED?

(check all that apply)





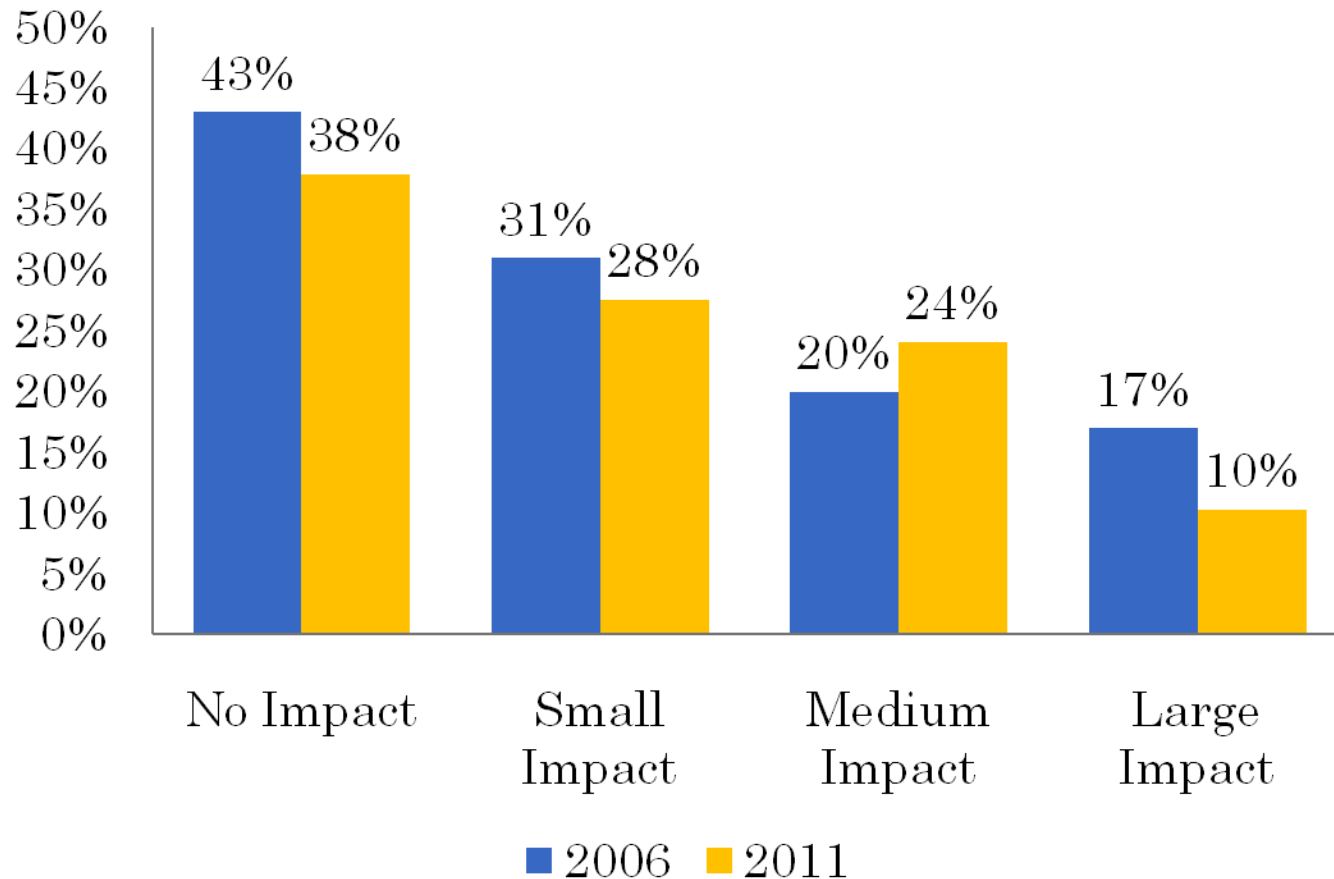
# WHAT CRITERIA ARE USED TO SELECT YOUTH?

(N=44 COUNTIES)

- County resident; geographic
- Active in their communities; good citizen; civic minded
- Active in their schools; good student
- Interested in leadership roles; leadership potential
- Able to communicate well in a group of adults
- Level of interest in extension; involvement in extension activities
- 4-H member in county; generally active in 4-H and possibly FFA



# WHAT LEVEL OF IMPACT DO YOUTH HAVE ON COUNCIL DECISIONS?



# ATTENDANCE RATE OF YOUTH NON-VOTING MEMBERS COMPARED TO OTHER COUNCIL MEMBERS

- Better – youth members attend more meetings than adult members- 4%
- Same – youth members attend approx. the same number of meetings as adults- 46%
- Worse – youth members attend fewer meetings than adult members- 50%

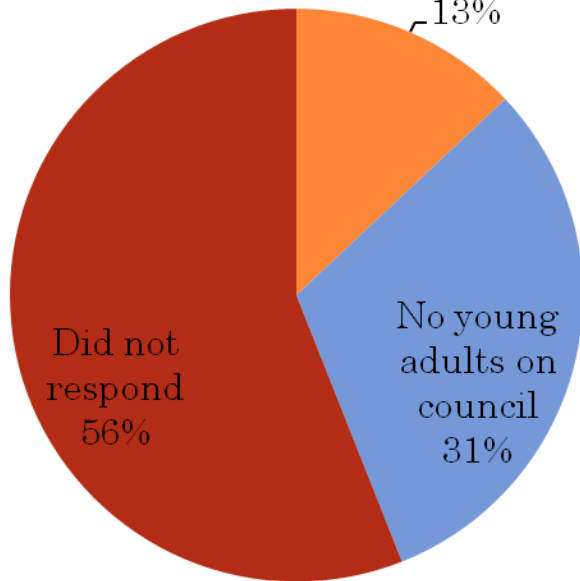




# **COUNCIL PRACTICES: YOUNG ADULTS**

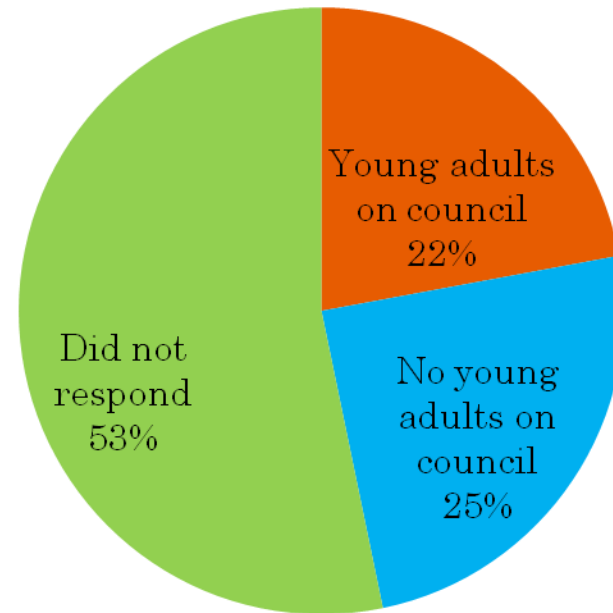
# YOUNG ADULT INVOLVEMENT ON EXTENSION COUNCILS

**2006** Young adults on council 13%



N=114 counties

**2011**



N= 114 counties



# HOW WERE THESE YOUNG ADULTS RECRUITED AS COUNCIL MEMBERS?

- Asked to run through personal contact by other Council members
- Referral by a younger staff member
- Previously served as youth representative

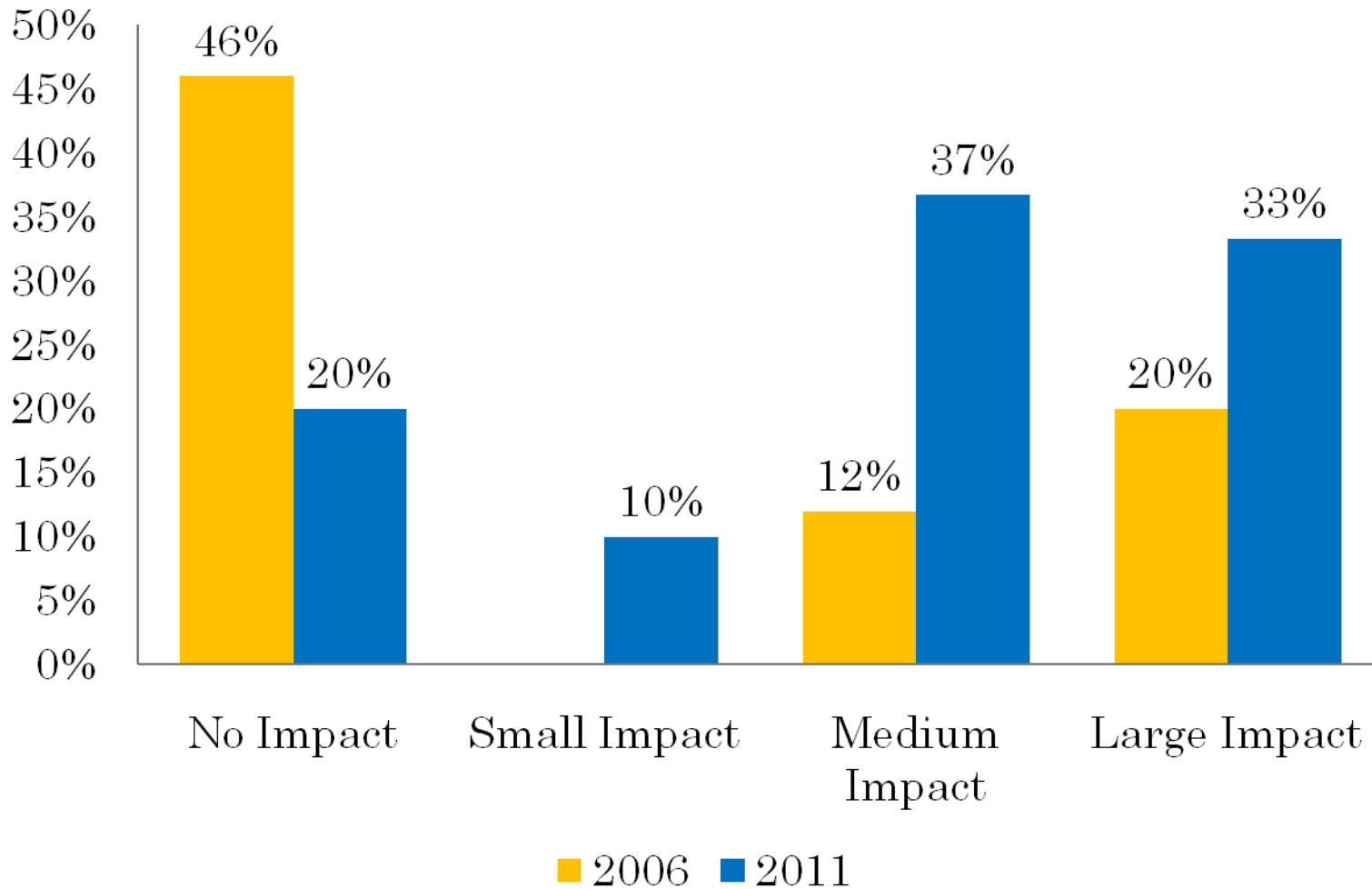


# ATTENDANCE RATE OF YOUNG ADULTS COMPARED TO OTHER COUNCIL MEMBERS

- Better – young adult members attend more meetings than other adult members- 4.0%
- Same – young adults attend approx. the same number of meetings as other adults-84.0%
- Worse – young adult members attend fewer meetings than other adult members- 12.0%



# WHAT LEVEL OF IMPACT DO YOUNG ADULTS HAVE ON COUNCIL DECISIONS?







# **COUNCIL INTEREST (IN ECYL)**

# DOES THE EXTENSION COUNCIL HAVE WRITTEN BYLAWS?

N=33

- Yes- 58%
- No- 42%



# HAVE BYLAWS BEEN AMENDED FOR YOUTH TO SERVE IN NON-VOTING CAPACITIES?

N=34

- Yes- 18%
- No- 82%



## WHICH OF THE FOLLOWING BEST DESCRIBES WHAT THE EXTENSION COUNCIL HAS DONE TO ENCOURAGE YOUTH PARTICIPATION IN MEETINGS?

- Council uses meeting methods that encourage discussion from all members, including youth- 83%
- Council members ask youth for input before voting on issues- 44%
- Council meeting agendas include a time for youth to introduce issues and speak out- 35%
- Council has youth serving on committees with adults- 26%
- Council minutes record youth opinions along with vote results- 17%
- Council involves youth in special roles, such as activity leader, photographer, or media liaison- 13%



**WOULD YOU RECOMMEND OTHER  
EXTENSION COUNCILS CREATE  
NON-VOTING ROLES FOR YOUTH (YES/NO)?**

N=25

- Yes- 84%
- No- 4%
- Other- 12% (No opinion, maybe, up to the county)





# **EXTENSION COUNCILS AND ECYL**

WHICH OF THE FOLLOWING BEST DESCRIBES THE COUNCIL'S  
CURRENT STATUS IN ADOPTING AND IMPLEMENTING ECYL  
(DIVERSIFYING MEMBERSHIP AND INCREASING YOUTH  
PARTICIPATION)?

N=39

- Partly aware of the program- 46%
- Fully aware and supportive (pre-planning)- 20%
- Not aware of the program- 20%
- Planning for youth/young adults is complete for 2011 (pre-implementation)- 8%
- Fully aware, but not fully supportive- 3%
- Implementation for start of 2011 is complete- 3%
- Planning is underway to add youth/young adults in 2011- 0%
- Planning for youth/young adults is complete and being implemented for 2011- 0%



# WHICH OF THE ECYL MODULE TOPICS HAS THE COUNCIL COMPLETED TO DATE FROM THE COUNCIL LEADERSHIP TRAINING WEBSITE?

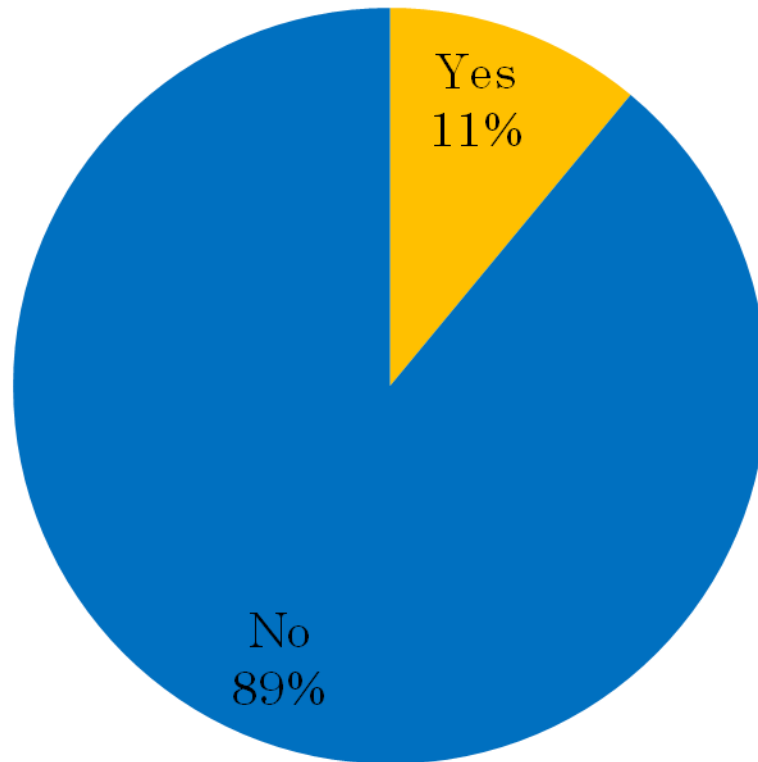
- None- 80.0%
- 1 – County Extension Councils are Youth-Adult Partnerships- 15.0%
- 2 – Understanding and Working with Multiple Generations- 5.0%
- 3 – Creating Youth Non-Voting Representative Roles- 7.5%
- 4 – Recruiting & Selecting Youth Representatives- 10.0%
- 5 – Engaging Young Adults in Voting Positions- 7.5%
- 6 – Mentoring & Retaining Youth & Young Adults- 10.0%
- 7 – Planning for Councils as YAPs (Putting It All Together)- 2.5%



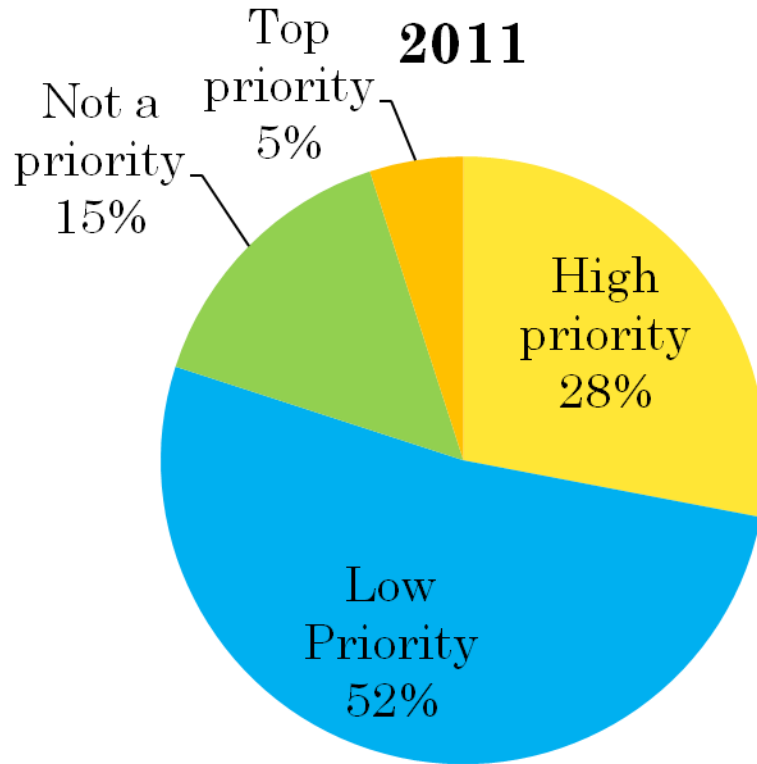


**HAS THE EXTENSION COUNCIL UTILIZED ANY RESOURCES FROM THE ECYL RESOURCE KITS (COBALT BLUE TOTE) AVAILABLE FROM YOUR REGIONAL DIRECTOR'S OFFICE?**

**2011**



# WHAT PRIORITY DOES THE EXTENSION COUNCIL PLACE ON YOUTH AND YOUNG ADULT PARTICIPATION RELATIVE TO OTHER PRIORITIES?



**HOW MUCH TIME WOULD THE EXTENSION COUNCIL  
BE WILLING TO SPEND RECRUITING AND  
SUPPORTING YOUTH AND YOUNG ADULTS TO  
INCREASE THEIR PARTICIPATION?**

- A lot- 3%
- Some- 44%
- A little- 49%
- None- 5%





**COUNCIL  
OPPORTUNITIES AND  
CONCERNS**

# OPPORTUNITIES (QUOTES)

- *“Youth provide a unique perspective that aids in council decision-making.”*
- *“Our youth have been outstanding and not reticent in speaking up. In a couple of situations they influenced the council to actually act.”*
- *“It gives youth experience in leadership roles and experience working with and relating to adults.”*
- *“They have valuable ideas and opinions.”*
- *“It is helpful for council members to hear the youth perspective.”*
- *“We have had superior quality youth representatives. Our youngest had to resign when he turned 19. He is off to college--otherwise he would run for a council seat.”*
- *“One from our first group of ECYL is back on council as a voting member.”*
- *“The extension council looks at the Youth on the board as a way of connecting to 4-H”*



# OPPORTUNITIES (QUOTES)

- *“In reality, I think the greatest benefit has been the opportunity for leadership development for the youth more than the youth perspective being brought to the table.”*
- *“It is important for the young people to understand at an early age that their opinion does count.”*
- *“It is a good opportunity for youth to be involved in the extension and see what they do for the county. Hopefully this will encourage them to participate on the extension council when they are older.”*
- *“We invited them to attend a NE Regional Extension Council meeting as well as Full Council meetings and activities.”*



# CONCERNS (QUOTES)

- *“We have been fortunate that it has not been a difficult task to select young people to serve and those that have participated I believe have gained. However, it's not uncommon for one of the two to drop out and not participate on a regular basis. There are other issues that come into play. Youth at this age (15-17) have many other draws on their time....FFA, 4-H, sports, social, homework, school special projects, feeding livestock, etc. I think a difficult issue we face often is the homework load that most youth have each night. Another issue is transportation at this age (15-16) for a late evening meeting. The one council youth member that has been active this last year has been provided a ride by others in his community.”*
- *“We want youth participation, but it has been a struggle to find willing parents.”*



# CONCERNS (QUOTES)

- *“Some concerns related to transportation (and convenience) of getting youth reps. to meetings if they don't have a vehicle/drivers license. Also some concern regarding competing activities - sports, homework, other school & club activities, etc. Clearly articulating the ‘what's in it for me’ to potential youth reps. and keeping them engaged in meetings.”*
- *“Youth are very busy with school activities, sports, homework, etc. I would like to see youth representation though. Young adults, especially young moms are very busy with children.”*
- *“My observation is that the council does not differentiate youth from other council members. Routinely the secretary records the youth vote as a regular council vote. I have not brought this to the attention of the council because none of the votes would have been affected. More difficult is the issue of an underage youth moving or seconding a motion. That is routinely done.”*
- *“Some counties are having the youth vote and they are not elected or appointed members. Sometimes the council deals with difficult and confidential issues.”*





# CONCERNS (QUOTES)

- *“The only concern is finding someone who isn't already busy every night of the week.”*
- *“Youth might get bored, be reluctant to speak up.”*
- *“Youth are busy with other activities in the summer and during the winter they are busy with school and are not willing to commit time to the Extension Council.”*
- *“Concern about finding volunteers who have time to pursue this along with all their other responsibilities.”*
- *“Difficulty in staff and council time to communicate the ECYL aspect to youth.”*

