

General Events Policy



The purpose of 4-H is to assist youth in realizing their potential and to help them develop a positive self image. Through learning by doing, 4-H builds confidence and a feeling of accomplishment.

Club Membership and County Guidelines

Regardless of where Alabama youth resides, they are welcome to establish their primary 4-H club membership in their county of residence or an adjoining county of Alabama. Membership is established annually when an enrollment form is completed and submitted to the leader of the primary 4-H club. Members enjoy the 4-H activities offered in their county of primary membership and represent this county when participating in county, regional/district, and state events.

If 4-H members have a special interest and a club of that special interest exists within the same county as their club of primary membership, they must complete another membership form and submit it to the special interest 4-H club leader. They are then members of two clubs within the same county. If the special interest is not available within the county of primary membership, the member is welcome to join a special interest club in an adjoining county. This will require completing another membership form and submitting it to the special interest 4-H club leader. The youth is now a member of two clubs in two different counties. The youth will have an enrollment record in each county's database. All 4-H, except for the area of special interest, should be conducted through the county where primary membership is established. Although dual membership between counties is allowed, dual membership between states is not allowed. A 4-H member can participate in a given project area in only one club/county.

Club Charters: The above policy for club membership and county lines will result in some chartered 4-H clubs having members from more than one county. This is especially true for community 4-H clubs. Even so, the club will be chartered in only one county—the county where the 4-H club leader has been screened and trained.

Age Eligibility

The Alabama 4-H club year will begin on August 1 and will end on July 31.

4-H events are open to all 4-H members.

Age eligibility is determined by how old the youth is before January 1 of the Alabama 4-H club year. To be eligible for 4-H, the youth must be 9 years old before January 1 and no older than 18 on December 31 of the Alabama 4-H club year.

Checking the Alabama 4-H Age and Eligibility Chart for 2017-2018 4-H club year will help families, volunteers, and staff determine the divisions of 4-H membership.

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If exceptions to these guidelines are needed, youth may submit a request in writing to the associate director of 4-H and Youth Development. Examples of exceptions might include an out-of-state resident desiring membership in Alabama 4-H, a special circumstance needed to accommodate custodial and noncustodial parents, or a situation where a non-adjointing county is in close proximity.

The Role of Recognition

Recognition is a strategy to help youth become more capable and competent. Its only purpose is to inspire and encourage learning. Recognition supports learning by saluting each person's effort and positively reinforcing continued participation in learning.

National 4-H Recognition Model includes five types of recognition. It is important to provide appropriate recognition to all participants.

- Recognition for participation in educational experiences builds a positive self-concept.
- Recognition of progress toward personal goals helps teach goal-setting and self-assessment.
- Recognition of achievement recognizes standards of excellence and provides a set target for learning experience.
- Recognition through peer competition is a strong motivation for some but not all young people. It is not appropriate for youth under age 9.
- Recognition for cooperation teaches teamwork and prepares youth for our global society.

A comprehensive recognition program can lead to more youth being recognized and can provide a way to say to every youth: "You are a valued and important member of the 4-H program."

Ribbon System

Alabama 4-H draws from many approaches in awarding ribbons. Local, county, regional and area events will establish awarding of ribbons for events and activities.

Review the information for Animal Science, Natural Resources, and Science and Technology for awards and recognition. The web addresses are found on page one of the Alabama 4-H Events General Policy.

For Alabama 4-H Competitive Events (state level), ribbons will be presented in the following manner:

- Ribbons will be awarded to 50 percent of the participants in a contest using ordinal rankings up to a tenth place ranking.
- All other participants will receive a green ribbon.

Example One: If there are ten participants, first place will receive the Alabama State Trophy and a first-place ribbon; placing ribbons will be awarded for placing second through fifth. The other five participants will receive honorable mention ribbons.

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Example Two: If there are five participants, three will receive rankings with others receiving honorable mention.

Example Three: If there are only three participants, they will be ranked first, second, and third.

NOTE: Teams will receive one trophy. Additional trophies may be purchased.

Judging

The purpose of judging is to provide young people with an evaluation of their work and suggestions for improvement. The primary purpose is to determine what is best not who is best.

Interview Judging or Score Sheets

It is important that all participants get some feedback. This may come through the use of a score sheet or interaction with the judges. Interview judging, in which the participant and the judges discuss the work, is the most desired method of helping youth evaluate their experiences and growth.

Key Points

- Judges' decisions are final.
- Score sheets will be distributed in accordance with event planning committee.
- Only the participating youth may raise questions or concerns about his or her placement or scoring.
- Judges may wish to speak with the gathered participants in general terms about the distinguishing characteristics of the top entries.
- All events will seek to have two or three judges who have been appropriately trained.

Repeat Winners

First place winners in Alabama 4-H Competitive Events at the state level cannot participate in the same contest in the same age level. A first place winner in Senior Level I may compete in Senior Level II when eligible.

The exception will be in Freestyle Demonstration and Freestyle Showcase; however, the subject of the presentation must be different. For example, the presentation can be natural resources one year and consumer science another year.

Eligibility for participation in Junior Level contests is set by local, county, regional, and area planning committees.

Review the information for Animal Science, Natural Resources, and Science and Technology for specific rules. The web addresses are found on page one of the Alabama 4-H Events General Policy.

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Team and Individual Entries

Review the information for Animal Science, Natural Resources, and Science and Technology for individual and team entries. The web addresses are found on page one of the Alabama 4-H Events General Policy.

For Alabama 4-H Competitive Events at the state level, individual entries will continue in Poultry Que, Lawn Tractor, Photography, and Public Speaking.

All other contests allow both team and individual entries. Teams and individuals are judged concurrently, using the same criteria with no advantage or disadvantage on scoring. With this option, youth may choose whether to work alone or with others, developing different skills and abilities. Because of their interests and personalities, some young people may choose the individual approach while others may wish to be on a team.

The team approach allows young people to develop a different set of communications, planning, and leadership skills that reflect the teamwork emphasis generally found in the organizational setting. The opportunity to be on a team encourages many young people who would not otherwise be interested in participating.

Teams must be in the same age levels for entry and participation.

Eligibility for participation in Junior/Intermediate Level contests is set by local, county, regional, and area planning committees.

Identification of Participants

Review the information for Animal Science, Natural Resources, and Science and Technology for identification of participants. The web addresses are found on page one of the Alabama 4-H Events General Policy.

In Alabama 4-H Competitive Events, all participants in all contests will identify the entry with name, county, and level of participation. This may be done using the 4-H exhibit signs for exhibits or at the beginning of demonstrations and speeches when being interviewed or scored in skill events.

Risk Management, Art Release, Community Service, and Other Forms

Review the information for Animal Science, Natural Resources, and Science and Technology for required registration and other forms. The web addresses are found on page 1 of the Alabama 4-H Events General Policy.

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In Alabama 4-H Competitive Events, participants entering projects must submit forms with registration to the designated person. A copy of the form must be with the participant the day of the contest. All forms are available online with the contest rules.

Disqualifications and Deductions

Review the information for Animal Science, Natural Resources, and Science and Technology for disqualification and deduction information. The web addresses are found on page one of the Alabama 4-H Events General Policy.

In Alabama 4-H Competitive Events, rules are developed for all contests so that entries can be as equal as possible for each participant at the beginning of the contest.

Disqualifications are in the rules for each contest. The facilitators are responsible for administering the rules at the lowest level of participation (local/county level) or when the disqualification is discovered.

Deductions are noted on score sheets for time infractions or other infractions. These are not considered disqualifications.

Parents and Volunteers Guide

All 4-H projects are for young people. In the spirit of fair and honorable competition, it is expected that the young person takes full ownership for every aspect of the project. The role of the adult helper is to support and encourage youth in his or her efforts, to ask and answer questions about the project, and to help youth learn specific techniques that he or she might use in the project.

Event Selection and State Competition

Review the information for Animal Science, Natural Resources, and Science and Technology. The web addresses are found on page one of the Alabama 4-H Events General Policy.

When entering Alabama 4-H Competitive Events, a young person may only compete in one event at regional/area and state competition because of contest scheduling. Each county may register one Senior Level I and one Senior Level II individual in each state event that is offered. Guidelines for state level competition must be followed. Some events may have round-robin eliminations before the final winners are announced.

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Other Information About 4-H

For information about the Alabama 4-H program, check the web site www.Alabama4H.com. Updates for all events will be continually posted during the year. Corrections are made as they are found within the system. These will be posted in a color font to be easily recognized.



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