



AI Policy for Illinois 4-H

This policy is designed to guide the use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) tools in Illinois 4-H activities while fostering ethical practices, developing youth skills, and ensuring fairness across all project categories. It provides a foundation for navigating the evolving landscape of AI while fostering youth development and maintaining the integrity of Illinois 4-H programs. Revisions may be made to reflect advancements in AI technology and ensure alignment with 4-H values.

Core Principles

1. **Ethical Use:** AI is recognized as a valuable tool for enhancing creativity, refining ideas, and improving work quality. Participants are encouraged to use AI responsibly and transparently.
2. **Skill-Building:** Youth are expected to demonstrate foundational skills, such as critical thinking, originality, and creative problem-solving. AI should complement, not replace, participant effort.
3. **Transparency:** Participants must disclose how AI was used during project development, ensuring clarity for evaluators and promoting accountability.
4. **Consistency:** AI policies will be revisited annually to align with advancements in technology and emerging needs within 4-H programs.
5. **Be sure to look for specific rules in project areas, exhibit guidelines and other situations that may supersede this policy.**

Acceptable Uses of AI

Participants may use AI tools for:

- Brainstorming ideas and generating inspiration.
- Organizing thoughts and creating outlines (with exceptions for public speaking contests).
- Refining grammar, structure, or word choice in written projects.
- Enhancing design work, such as removing backgrounds or manipulating photos in software (e.g., Photoshop).

Unacceptable Uses of AI

Participants may not:

- Submit AI-generated content, including text, images, or designs, as their own original work.
- Use AI to write entire essays, speeches, or projects
- Use AI-generated art or designs as final submissions without substantial personal modification or input.
- Bypass core learning experiences, such as conducting research or creating drafts independently.

Enforcement

- Participants are required to disclose how AI was used in their projects. This transparency enables judges to fairly assess the originality and authenticity of the work.

- While reverse identification tools for detecting AI use may be employed in some cases, participants will generally be evaluated based on their disclosures and presentations.

Category-Specific Guidelines

Public Speaking Contests (including Horse and Livestock contests):

- Prepared speeches must be entirely original. AI may assist with refining grammar or brainstorming topics but cannot generate content, structure outlines, or draft entire speeches.
- Participants must submit written speech texts and disclose any use of AI. Judges may ask questions to clarify the participant's role in creating the speech.

Visual Arts, Video, and Related Projects:

- AI-generated designs must be clearly labeled and significantly transformed by the participant to demonstrate originality and effort.
- Photo editing using AI features within software (e.g., Photoshop) is permitted for enhancements or modifications. However, final entries must be the participant's original work.
- Judges may evaluate participants' explanations of how they used AI and their creative process.

Creative Writing:

- Participants may use AI tools for brainstorming or refining grammar but cannot rely on AI to generate final drafts or substantive content.

Awards and Leadership Team Applications:

- Participants may use AI tools for brainstorming or refining grammar but cannot rely on AI to generate final answers or substantive content to any questions required.

For Staff: Evaluation and Rubrics

- Rubrics should prioritize participant effort, originality, and creativity.
- Organization, flow, and other skills evaluated in score sheets should reflect the participant's abilities—not AI capabilities.
- Disclosures of AI use will be considered as part of the evaluation, with judges looking for thoughtful, ethical, and limited integration of AI tools.

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