A Guide to the Illinois 4-H Recognition Program

FOR INDIVIDUALS

Recognition and awards are an important part of 4-H. Wise use of recognition helps motivate youth. Recognition encourages young people and increases their interest in the opportunities that are available to them.

All 4-H members 8 to 18 years of age are eligible to apply for Engage & Experience Level Awards in the fall of the year following their membership, including youth who completed their final year of 4-H. Youth must be at least 15 years of age to apply for Excel awards. Any 19-year-old selected as a State 4-H Award winner is ineligible for National 4-H Congress and will receive the $1,000 scholarship prize option.

The Illinois 4-H Recognition program focuses on three areas of recognition

ENGAGE, EXPERIENCE, EXCEL

ENGAGE

ENGAGE highlights the recognition and inclusion of all members into the 4-H community.

APPLICATION PROCESS: No application is required to receive this recognition.

RECOGNITION: Local Extension offices will create its own plan for welcoming new members and honoring all members who become engaged in the 4-H program. This may include:

- Newsletters
- Social Media Highlights
- News Stories
- Membership Cards
- T-shirts
- Special Membership Items

EXPERIENCE

The Illinois 4-H program offers many EXPERIENCES for its members. This area offers recognition for members who are involved in diverse 4-H experiences in club, county, multi-county, state, national, and international levels.

APPLICATION PROCESS: Submit the My Illinois 4-H Experience Application listing experiences during one year in these 4 areas:

- Participation
- Community Service
- Leadership
- Project Learning

RECOGNITION: Based on the number of your experiences, achieve one of 5 levels:

- Bronze
- Silver
- Gold
- Diamond
- Emerald

EXCEL

4-H Members who EXCEL in their work can compete for county and state honors in specific award areas. There are several different EXCEL Awards. Below is the process for the Illinois 4-H State Award. Check the website for additional EXCEL opportunities.

APPLICATION PROCESS: Complete the Illinois 4-H Award Application in one (or more) of these 5 areas:

- Communications
- Community Service
- Leadership
- Personal Growth
- Project Mastery

RECOGNITION:

- $1,000 College Scholarship, or
- National Congress Trip, or
- Other National Travel Opportunity

OPEN TO: Members must be at least 15 years old (4-H age) to apply. Youth who are 19 and have aged out of 4-H are eligible to apply.