Quick Tips
Illinois State 4-H Award Application

- For any submission to state level, the application must be typed. It is up to local Extension offices as to whether they will accept hand-written applications for local judging. We are trying to instill skills that would help our young people succeed in life; handwritten resumes, scholarship applications, or college applications are not acceptable.

- There are five award areas for this application. A member may apply in one or more of the levels with the same application, however the two essays are award-area-specific, so if a member applies in more than one area, they must submit two essays in EACH area in which they apply.

- Sections 1, 2, and 3 are to be completed on the application. **NO ADDITIONAL LINES are to be added** to these sections. (And yes, we do count them!) If a youth needs more space to write what they wish to write, they should move down to the next line – they should not try to “shrink” the font. We check actual lines typed.

- **Sections 1 and 3 should be 4-H-related information ONLY.** Other group activities should be placed in Section 2. If it is not infinitely clear that it is a 4-H event in Sections 1 and 3, it is not counted by the state judges.

- Section 1 can include project information AND program-related information. If a member has been extensively involved in a specific 4-H program, that should be noted here as well. “Programs” could include such things as Teen Teachers, 4-H Federation, State 4-H Youth Leadership Team, Livestock Judging, etc.

- Sections 2 and 3 include what the member learned by participating in the various non-4-H groups or the 4-H activities. This does not need to be a huge narrative – individual words such as “team-building, career options, speaking, organization, cultural sensitivity” can be used.

- Level designations should be used appropriately: L = Local/club; C = County; MC = Multi-county (this includes Extension Unit activities); S = State; N = National; I = International. Specific notes on certain events:
  - Intercultural nights sponsored within the county are not considered an “I” level event. “I” level events would be visiting another country as a 4-H exchange member; serving as a host family for a 4-H international visitor; or in some extreme cases, attending an international 4-H livestock judging event.
  - **NAILE** is NOT considered a 4-H event if the member was exhibiting livestock. However, if the member was there as a 4-H judging team member or quiz bowl team member, that would qualify as a national event. Be specific in noting how they were involved.
  - **National Youth Science Day** participation is not a “national” experience. It may be a county, multi-county or possible a state experience (depending upon how and what the member was doing), but generally it is a “local” experience of a nationally-sponsored activity.
  - **National 4-H Day of Service** participation CAN be a “national” experience, but the club/group MUST HAVE REGISTERED their participation on the national website in order for the members to claim national participation.
  - **Citizenship Washington Focus** is a national 4-H event. Even though the member would be part of an Illinois delegation, it is a nationally-sponsored event in a national location.
• Abbreviations can be used if they are easily understood. (i.e. Wkshp for workshop, Dept. for Department, VArts for Visual Arts, PubPres for Public Presentations, or Ldrshp for Leadership). Acronyms should not be generally used unless it is extremely well-known by a WIDE variety of people. (For example, FLL is known in the Robotics realm, but may not be known by our state judges.) We encourage youth not to use acronyms, especially in their essays.

• Essays are limited in the number of words. They may be single-spaced or double-spaced, but must include no fewer than 250 and no more than 550 words. The two essays should be typed on different sheets of paper.

• Do not use any type of identifiers in your essays – your name should NOT be on the page or included in the essay. Do not include your county name, club name, parent’s names, livestock herd or family farm names, etc. We “blind” judge – Judges only review applications by code numbers; any identifying information is blacked out, which detracts from the appearance of your essay responses. (No, we do not deduct points, but it takes up space/words that applicants could have used more productively.)

• State deadlines are strictly adhered to. Many of our applications are now submitted for state judging/review electronically, so county offices must receive applications with enough time to review, sign, scan, and submit applications and accompanying transmittals in order to meet the state deadline. It is up to a local Extension office whether they will accept applications past their local deadlines.

• Just as past State 4-H Award winners could only be named a winner in one category, youth will only be able to win ONE State 4-H Award in their 4-H “lifetime”. We want to recognize as many youth as possible with the available funds that we have. State 4-H Award winners also can only be named a state winner once; they will not be allowed to apply again with this award application.

• State 4-H Award winners have three award options from which they must select one:
  o Trip to National 4-H Congress in Atlanta, GA (approximately $1,300 award)
  o $1,000 educational scholarship to the college/school of their choice
  o Maximum of $1,000 scholarship to help cover costs to another national 4-H event for which the member is qualified to attend.

• Educational scholarships must be requested and used the first year a member attends post-high school education. If a member wins the State 4-H Award and selects the scholarship option before they are a senior in high school, the Illinois 4-H Foundation will hold the scholarship funds until the member attends college or other advanced educational program. It is the responsibility of the member to contact the Illinois 4-H Foundation with the name and address of the college/school so that the funds may be sent in the student’s name.