NEW Illinois 4-H Award Application
Frequently Asked Questions
Revised 9/2016

1) Can a member win more than one award in a given year?
   No, 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”. The number of awards has not increased; in fact, it
   has decreased over the past few years. We want to recognize as many youth as possible with the available
   funds that we have.

2) Can past winners enter again for new categories/opportunities?
   No, for the same reason as #1. We wish to recognize as many youth as possible with the available funds that
   we have for this part of the Recognition program. Past winners have already received their recognition.

3) Will Blue Awards continue?
   State 4-H Blue Award recognition will no longer be available. Instead, members are encouraged to transition
   to the new recognition opportunities that will focus on growth and excellence of the individual member in the
   Experience area.

4) Will selection of a scholarship to another national 4-H event guarantee a spot to that event?
   No, a member must still qualify for a national event in order to use the scholarship to that event.

5) Can National 4-H Congress be offered as a separate trip that is not linked directly to records/awards?
   No, at this time Illinois will continue to only allow registration to this event for members who have excelled
   in our new award areas.

6) With the focus of the new Illinois 4-H Award Application only on the past three years of membership,
   are there still opportunities for long-tenured members to be recognized?
   Of course – the new 4-H award applications will also permit long-tenured members opportunities for the
   recognition available. Also within the new Recognition program, we will now offer members opportunities to
   be recognized in a non-competitive matter via the “Experience” cell. Youth who complete the necessary
   requirements for the Diamond and Emerald levels of the Experience are will be recognized, along with the
   State 4-H Award winners at a statewide recognition event.

   We also still offering the Legacy of Leadership Scholarship, which requires a minimum of 5 years
   membership. Other statewide 4-H awards are still open to all of our members – the 4-H LCP Award
   (sponsored by the Illinois Farm Bureau and Affiliates) and the State 4-H Key Award.

7) Can Scholarships be held for future use?
   Yes, if a winning member selects the $1000 educational scholarship option and is not yet graduating from
   high school, the scholarship can be held until the year they graduate. It must be used for the freshman year of
   college.

8) Can a member enrolled in a county level project submit an application in Project Mastery?
   Yes, county level projects are eligible for Project Mastery consideration.

9) How can a member show Personal Growth with the way the application is written?
   Personal Growth can be demonstrated in any number of ways in the forms. In Sections 1, 2 & 3, Personal
   Growth can be illustrated by growth in whatever projects, programs, activities, leadership, the member can
   post. However, this will most likely be more obvious via the essay questions. Members can write about how
   their life has changed since they’ve joined/participated in 4-H. How have they personally grown and
   developed? Youth may focus on improving their ability to work with others, becoming less shy, improving
   their public presentations skills, how being a part of group has impacted their lives (think BIG-M).
10) Why is Communications its own category? It looks very similar to leadership or more promoting, advocating or advising.
Youth achieve in different ways. Youth may wish to communicate and have grown in that area, but aren’t necessarily focused on the leadership realm. In the same manner, youth may be able to lead a planning process for an event (leadership), but not desire to be the individual who can promote that same event or stand up in front to welcome everyone.

11) Are hand-written applications acceptable?
No, we are trying to instill skills that would help our young people succeed in life and youth would not submit handwritten resumes or college applications. We are also exploring the option to eventually have this as offered on-line submission only. We encourage Extension staff to assist members in working on the applications electronically, including offering possible times for youth to come to the Extension office to use a computer. No hand-written applications will be accepted on the state level.

12) Can anyone apply or must they be selected on the county level?
County nomination is recommended, but not required. ANYONE who fits the age criteria (15-18 years of age by September 1 of the 4-H year the member wishes to submit to the state level) may apply. HOWEVER, ALL applications must still be submitted VIA THE LOCAL EXTENSION OFFICE. We will not accept applications submitted from individual members.

We encourage counties to not only work with those are nominated, but to encourage other youth to apply as well – especially those that may be less-tenured members, but who have shown great strides in their 4-H work.

13) If a member wishes to apply in two or more award areas, should a different application be submitted for each area?
NO, no matter how many award areas a member wants to apply in, they only submit ONE application that includes the front cover page with their information and Sections 1, 2 and 3. Those sections will be scored once by one team of judges and that total score will be added to the individual essay scores. Different essays will need to be submitted for each area. For example, if the member applies in Personal Growth and Communications areas, s/he would submit one cover page and one Section 1, 2, & 3. They would submit a total of FOUR essays – a Mastery essay and an Impact essay for Personal Growth and a second Mastery essay and Impact essay for Communications.

14) How can we encourage and teach younger members to start/learn the skill of record-keeping?
The current 4-H Project Plans are still available for members to use in learning to set goals and keep records of what they have done. While these forms are no longer be a part of the Illinois 4-H Recognition program, they are valuable tools that can be used. The State 4-H Staff will be examining ways to encourage volunteers to teach and youth to learn about setting goals and record-keeping and will share with field staff and volunteers accordingly.