



# 2025 ILLINOIS STATE FAIR

## 4-H GENERAL PROJECT EXHIBIT GUIDELINES

Exhibiting in the 4-H Exhibit Division at the Illinois State Fair is a privilege. It is the responsibility of the exhibitor to follow the general rules of this division and the exhibit requirements for the specific class entered. The Illinois State Fair, State 4-H Office, and local University of Illinois Extension personnel or their assigned agents do not assume liability for loss, theft, or damage to any exhibit.

### GENERAL RULES

#### EXHIBITORS:

1. Exhibitors must have been pre-selected by their county 4-H Extension program as an Illinois State Fair exhibitor.
2. Exhibitors must be currently enrolled as a 4-H member and have been at least 8 years old as of September 1, 2024. Parents and leaders should make provisions for the adequate care and supervision of exhibitors.
3. Exhibitors must be enrolled in the project or have participated in the activity in which they are exhibiting during the current year. Due to the nature of the conference judging process, exhibitors must be present with the exhibit on their assigned county exhibition day. Scheduling adjustments for religious reasons may be requested by contacting the local Extension office. County Staff will submit the request to the Illinois 4-H Office via the Teams Approval App by August 1, 2025.
4. Exhibitors must be present for judging. No Skype or Face Time style sessions will be allowed. If a 4-H member needs a reasonable accommodation to participate in the General Project Show, please contact the local Extension office. County Staff will submit the request to the Illinois State 4-H Office via the Teams Approval App by August 1, 2025.
5. A 4-H member may enter only one individual exhibit and one group exhibit in the 4-H General Project Show.


#### ENTRY PROCEDURE:

6. Local Extension offices will make all entries for their 4-H members via Fair Entry by August 1, 2025. Counties needing permission for late entries after August 1 (due to late local shows) should contact the Illinois State 4-H Office at [illinois4H@illinois.edu](mailto:illinois4H@illinois.edu) by July 1, 2025.
7. Each county may make the number of entries allowed in each project area as stated. Counties with more than 500 members are allowed 12 additional exhibits/exhibitors for state fair. These additional exhibits may be entered in any class/classes of the county's choosing. Current enrollment figures should be used to determine entry numbers. Multi-county Extension units have the option of combining enrollments from all counties within the unit to determine a total number of entries, using the quota systems. This procedure, if used, must be used for ALL State Fair class entries from that multi-county unit.

#### GENERAL EXHIBIT GUIDELINES:

8. All exhibits must be products of the current 4-H year (September 1, 2024 - August 15, 2025). The same product that is selected at the county level must be the one exhibited at the State Fair (except for Food & Nutrition (must be the same recipe), Crops, Floriculture, and Vegetable Gardening exhibits (must be the same specie/type (i.e. slicing tomatoes, snap beans, onions, etc.)). Modifications can be made to the original county

exhibit to meet State Fair class requirements or to incorporate suggested improvements made by the local judge. Determination of exhibit eligibility rests solely with the University of Illinois Extension Assistant Dean and Director, 4-H and designated persons.

9. Exhibits illustrating inappropriate subject matter and/or graphics are not acceptable. The Superintendents reserve the right to remove exhibits deemed inappropriate or dangerous for youth audiences. The content of any 4-H competitive presentation does not necessarily reflect the beliefs or views of the Illinois State Fair or the University of Illinois Extension 4-H program.
10. Many exhibit areas may have size limitations. Read the descriptions carefully. Please choose a display size which is most appropriate for the exhibit you are bringing. Larger does not always mean better; use good judgment in creating your exhibit. Exhibitors will need to carry their project from the distant parking lots on the fairgrounds. Tables are provided, do not bring your own.
11. **INNOVATION CLASSES** are open to all 4-H members in the project areas listed. Members choosing to exhibit in the Innovation class may be enrolled in any level of the project they are studying. Members choosing to exhibit in the Innovation class decide the best way to show off their project mastery and knowledge for the year in that project category. Some suggestions are provided for each category, but members may choose any method they want for demonstrating project learning as long as it does not fit in any other class in that category. Only selected projects categories have an Innovation option.
12. **GROUP PROJECT OPPORTUNITIES HAVE EXPANDED.** They include Civic Engagement, Diversity and Cultural Awareness, Leadership, Passport to the World, Service Learning, and Video.
13. **PROJECT MANUALS:** Some projects require a project manual, book, workbook or guide. Please read the project exhibit guidelines and follow all project manual requirements. These are indicated with a book icon  in the exhibit guidelines.

#### **EXHIBIT JUDGING PROCEDURE & SCHEDULE:**

14. The County Extension office will provide official exhibit tags for all exhibitors prior to the Illinois State Fair. This entry tag should be filled out and securely attached to the exhibit. County exhibit tags and ribbons should be removed.
15. All exhibitors from a county will exhibit the same day (see schedule below). A 4-H member may also show in the junior livestock show, but they must be present at the required time for their General Project judging. If possible, attempts will be made to accommodate livestock exhibitors within the judging time span, but no premium will be awarded if the exhibitor misses their judging time.
16. The General Project Exhibit will be held in the Orr Building of the state fairgrounds. Members must drop off their projects any time from 8:00 a.m. - 9:00 a.m. All projects should be in place by 9:00 a.m. Judging is scheduled throughout the day. The judging schedule will be posted in each project area. Members should check the judging schedule and return to the judging area about 15 minutes before their scheduled judging time. Projects may be released during the day 30 minutes after the final project in the class has been judged. You can find updates in the State Fair app. All projects must be removed no later than 4:30 p.m. daily. If you cannot pick up your project, you may make arrangements with another person from your county to pick up your project on your behalf.

#### **RECOGNITION:**

17. All exhibitors will receive a ribbon for participating. Additional awards may be given at the judges' discretion and will be listed on the 4-H State Fair website. Judges consider the display and information provided during the interview in determining awards. **Exhibitors who do not follow the exhibit class guidelines and requirements are ineligible to receive champion or reserve champion.** The judge's decision that is posted on

the official judge's class list is final unless it has been determined that an exhibitor has not followed the guidelines or rules for that exhibit class.

- **Ribbons and Awards:** The top score in each class receives a champion medal and receives 2X value premium money. The second highest score in each class receives a reserve champion medal and receives 1X value premium money. Exhibitors who present inspirational, innovative, or unique exhibits may receive an Inspire Award.
- Champion and reserve champion exhibits are not eligible for Inspire Awards.

18. Premium checks may be awarded to exhibitors. The amount of the individual premium is determined by total number of awards given. Exhibits must remain on display until the posted release time *or* when the superintendent releases the project area, to be considered for a premium. Premiums offered by the Illinois State Fair in the 4-H division total \$15,000. *NOTE: The Department of Agriculture shall use its best efforts to secure sufficient appropriations to fund premiums. In any year for which the General Assembly of the State of Illinois fails to make an appropriation sufficient to pay such premiums, premium amounts may not be accurately reflected in this document.* These premiums will be paid by the Illinois State Fair, not via the Illinois 4-H Office.

## COUNTY ASSIGNMENTS

- **Friday, August 8:** Adams, Bond, Brown, Calhoun, Cass, Clinton, Edwards, Gallatin, Greene, Grundy, Hamilton, Hancock, Henderson, Jefferson, Kankakee, Knox, Lake, Lawrence, Madison, Marion, McDonough, McHenry, Monroe, Morgan, Pike, Pope-Hardin, Richland, Saline, Schuyler, Scott, St. Clair, Wabash, Warren, Washington, Wayne, White, Will
- **Saturday, August 9:** Bureau, Carroll, Champaign, Coles, Cumberland, DeWitt, Ford, Fulton, Henry, Iroquois, Jo Daviess, LaSalle, Lee, Macon, Marshall-Putnam, Mason, Mercer, Moultrie-Douglas, Peoria, Piatt, Rock Island, Shelby, Stark, Stephenson, Tazewell, Vermilion, Whiteside, Winnebago
- **Sunday, August 10:** Boone, Christian, Clark, Clay, Cook, Crawford, DeKalb, DuPage, Edgar, Effingham, Fayette, Franklin, Jackson, Jasper, Jersey, Johnson, Kane, Kendall, Livingston, Logan, Macoupin, Massac, McLean, Menard, Montgomery, Ogle, Perry, Pulaski-Alexander, Randolph, Sangamon, Union, Williamson, Woodford