

Bond, Clinton, Jefferson, Marion, and Washington Counties



Illinois Extension
UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS URBANA-CHAMPAIGN

PUBLIC PRESENTATIONS CONTEST

March 5, 2026 – 5 p.m.

HB Room 145, Kaskaskia College, Centralia, IL

Information on individual judging times will be emailed to participants after the entry deadline.

Registration Deadline via [Fair Entry](#) Due: February 28

YOUTH DEVELOPMENT STAFF



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UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS NONDISCRIMINATION STATEMENT

The commitment of the University of Illinois to the most fundamental principles of academic freedom, equality of opportunity, and human dignity requires that decisions involving students and employees be based on merit and be free from invidious discrimination in all its forms.

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For additional information or assistance with equal opportunity policies in program and employment of University of Illinois Extension, please contact the Affirmative Action Officer, 111 Mumford Hall, 1301 West Gregory, Urbana, IL 61801, 217-333-5900.

If you need reasonable accommodation to participate in this program, call 618-526-4551. Early requests are strongly encouraged to allow sufficient time to meet your access needs.

All 4-H shows and exhibitions are open to the public.

POLICIES

MEMBERSHIP

- The club year is September 1 through August 31.
- Any youth who is at least 5 years of age but has not yet turned 19 years of age on September 1 of the current 4-H year can be a member.
- Members ages 5-7 are Cloverbuds and should refer to the Cloverbud Show Book.
- Illinois 4-H members may participate in 4-H under a shared membership arrangement with another county; however, approval must be granted by both counties prior to enrollment by completing the 4-H Shared Membership Agreement form. Members may not benefit economically from exhibiting the same project at multiple local, county or state 4-H exhibitions, fairs, or shows, including premiums, auctions, trophies, ribbons, and other awards. Members may apply for 4-H awards or recognition in only one county and not across state lines. 4-H program fees should be paid in the county of residence.

This policy is designed to meet the changing needs of today's families, including youth who live with parents or guardians in dual or multiple legal residences due to divorce or separation. Shared membership is also an option when a project(s) or exhibitions are not offered in the county of residence. It is not an option just because a 4-H Show is deemed better in a neighboring county or the 4-H member has friends or relatives who are enrolled in another county. Shared membership will not be approved to accommodate family vacations or other summer activities that may interfere with the scheduled 4-H Show in their own county.

PREMIUMS

Premium checks may be awarded to exhibitors. The total amount of premiums awarded per county is based on the Agriculture Premium Fund. The amount of the individual premium is determined by an X-factor calculation. Exhibits must remain on display until the posted release time or whenever judging is completed, whichever is later, to be considered for a premium.

Public Presentations Division			
County	Blue Award	Red Award	White Award
Bond	3X	2X	1X
Clinton	3X	2X	1X
Jefferson	5X	3X	0X
Marion	10X	7X	0X
Washington	5X	4X	3X

*NOTE: The Illinois 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 the Illinois State Fair Junior Department Premium Book and the Unit 4-H Show Book.

Tax Implications for Prizes, Gifts or Awards: Program participants (including minors) may be required to provide their social security number or foreign national tax ID number prior to receiving a prize, gift or award, including 4-H Premiums, to ensure proper IRS (Internal Revenue Service) reporting as required by law. This sensitive information is kept confidential and handled through security-protected software (PEAR). Participants will not be able to receive the prize, gift or award if social security or foreign national tax ID information is not provided. Contact the Extension office if you have questions.

ENROLLMENT

- Every enrolled 4-H member must attend a minimum of four 4-H sponsored meetings, activities, or events during the current 4-H year (Sept. 1 - show day) to be eligible for 4-H exhibition, premiums, or other 4-H awards and recognition.

Exhibitors must be currently enrolled as 4-H members. Exhibitors must be enrolled in the project they are exhibiting during the current 4-H year. Please check with your county's Extension staff for specific information.

PROJECT JUDGING AND RECOGNITION

- Conference judging is used for judging most exhibits. This is a one-on-one discussion between the 4-H member and the judge of that project area. The judge will ask the member questions about their project. For example, the judge may ask:
 - Why did you do it this way?
 - What did you like about what you made?
 - What changes would you make to your 4-H project?
- The judge's decisions are final.
- All judging score sheets can be found under their specific project areas on the Illinois 4-H Website: <https://4h.extension.illinois.edu/events/state-events/illinois-state-fair>
- Blue, red, or white ribbons will be awarded for each exhibit.
 - Blue: exhibit meets standards
 - Red: exhibit needs improvement
 - White: exhibit needs much improvement
- **Parents/guardians/friends will not be allowed in the judging area.**
- Champion awards and State Fair awards in any class will be determined at the judge's discretion. If exhibits are not of exceptional quality, the judge is not required to promote exhibits.

GENERAL SHOW EXHIBIT GUIDELINES

- 4-H members should dress appropriately according to the Illinois 4-H Code of Conduct.
- Exhibits illustrating inappropriate subject matter and/or graphics are not acceptable. Extension staff 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 University of Illinois Extension, 4-H, or the Illinois State Fair.
- Some exhibit areas may have size limitations. Keep in mind that members exhibiting might not have easy access for unloading and will need to carry their projects to the show location.
- **No equipment will be provided for any exhibits.** Exhibitors should be aware that electrical outlets and internet availability are not always located near judging locations and should take that into consideration when bringing exhibits.
- All exhibits must be left on display until all judging is complete, winners have been announced in the project area, and exhibits are released by Extension staff. If you are unable to pick up your exhibit(s) after judging, please plan for someone to pick up your exhibit. Extension staff or their assigned agents do not assume liability for loss, theft, or damage to any exhibits.
- A 4-H member must show their own exhibit. If a 4-H member cannot show their exhibit, permission must be granted from Extension staff **PRIOR** to the show for alternate arrangements. Any emergency situations that arise with a request related to this will be examined on a case-by-case basis by Extension Staff.
- Only youth present for conference judging will be eligible for consideration to promote to state fair. Only youth present for conference judging will be eligible for special awards.
- Extension staff reserve the right to make changes, as necessary.

- Members are only allowed one entry per exhibit class, except where noted.
- The 4-H program is based on progressive learning; members should compete at the highest level based on his/her experience and skill.
- **All exhibits must be a product of the current 4-H program year (Sept. 1-show date).**
- Check the schedule at the front of this show handbook for information regarding your county exhibit day at the Illinois State Fair. For specific guidelines for the Illinois State Fair, please visit <https://4h.extension.illinois.edu/events/state-events/illinois-state-fair>.

ENTRIES

- Entries should be completed online at fairent.com. If a member does not enter their exhibit classes in Fair Entry by the posted deadline, they will not be eligible to show.

ILLINOIS 4-H CODE OF CONDUCT

The opportunity to participate in or attend 4-H activities is a privilege and not a right. All 4-H participants – youth, families, volunteers, and Extension staff – who participate in or attend any activity or event sponsored by the University of Illinois Extension 4-H Youth Development Program are expected to uphold the values of the Illinois 4-H program and conduct themselves according to the following standards. These standards also apply to online 4-H activity, including social media and internet presence.

1. **Create a Welcoming Environment for All.** Encourage everyone to fully participate in 4-H. Recognize that all people have skills and talents that can help others and improve the community. Though we will not always agree, we must disagree respectfully. When we disagree, try to understand why. Our first priority is to create a safe, inclusive space for learning, sharing and collaboration that is welcoming to people from diverse backgrounds, cultures, and perspectives. Diversity includes, but is not limited to: race, color, religion, political beliefs, national or ethnic origin, immigration or citizenship status, sex, gender identity and expression, transgender status, sexual orientation, age, marital or family status, educational level, learning style, pregnancy, physical appearance, body size, and individuals with disabilities.
2. **Bring Your Best Self.** Conduct yourself in a manner that reflects honesty, integrity, self-control, and self-direction. Accept the results and outcomes of 4-H contests with grace and empathy for other participants. Accept the final opinions of judges and evaluators. Be open to innovative ideas, suggestions, and opinions of others.
3. **Obey the Law.** Obey the laws of the locality, state and nation and U of I and Extension policies and guidelines. Commit no illegal acts. Do not possess, offer to others, or use alcohol, illegal drugs, or tobacco products which include e-pens, e-pipes, e-hookah, e-cigars, JUULs, vapes, vape pens or other electronic nicotine delivery systems. Do not possess or use weapons or firearms except as expressly permitted as part of supervised 4-H shooting sports programming. Do not attend 4-H activities under the influence of alcohol or illegal substances.
4. **Honor Diversity – Yours and Others.’** Respect and uphold the rights and dignity of all persons who participate in 4-H programs.
5. **Create a Safe Environment.** Do not carelessly or intentionally harm or intimidate anyone in any way (verbally, mentally, physically, or emotionally). Do not engage in romantic displays or sexual activities in either public or private situations. Be kind and compassionate toward others. Do not insult, harass, or bully others or engage in other hostile activities. Be considerate and courteous to all people and their property.
6. **Be a Team Player.** Work cooperatively with all individuals involved in 4-H programs and activities. Be responsive to the reasonable requests of the person in charge. Respect the integrity of the group and the group’s decisions.
7. **Humane Treatment of Animals.** Treat animals humanely and teach 4-H youth to provide appropriate animal care.
8. **Participate Fully.** Participate in and contribute to planned programs, be on time and follow through on

assigned tasks/responsibilities in a manner that fosters the safety, well-being, and quality of the educational experience for self and others. Have fun!

9. **Watch What You Wear.** Use good judgment. Wear clothing suited for the activity in which you will participate. Dress in a manner that is respectful to yourself and others. Clothing that displays or promotes violence, obscenity, illegal activities, discrimination, or intimidation is prohibited. Do not wear revealing clothing, such as short skirts or shorts, midriff-baring tops, or anything showing undergarments.
10. **Be a Positive Role Model.** Act in a mature, responsible manner, recognizing you are role models for others and representing yourself and the University of Illinois Extension 4-H Youth Development Program. Be responsible for your behavior, use positive and affirming language, and uphold exemplary standards of conduct at all 4-H activities.

Extension Staff have the right to take disciplinary action if any member does not abide by the Code of Conduct.

COMMUNICATIONS: PUBLIC SPEAKING

Counties may advance a total of 3 entries from any category to the state contest.

Enrollment in the Public Presentations project is required to participate in this section. No live animals are allowed in speeches. Counties may advance a total of 3 speech entries from any category to the state contest. A 4-H member may advance in one individual category and one team category. Participating youth turning 14 years of age on or before September 1, 2025, must enroll as advanced.

Resources:

Youth looking for resources to help prepare for this contest can reference the following:

- [Finding your Voice: Public Speaking made Easy](#) (Public Speaking)
- Refer to the AI policy at go.illinois.edu/4hai for Public Speaking specific guidance

Formal Speech

Self-written | Notes Allowed | No props | Individual | 4-5 minutes for beginners; 5-6 minutes for advanced

Formal Speech - Original Beginner Ages 8-13 (SF 50501A)

Formal Speech - Original Advanced Ages 14 & Up (SF 50501B)

Formal Speeches share the presenter's own unique view and are intended to motivate, persuade, or inform an audience and may include a call to action. Youth may deliver a speech on any topic they wish.

Illustrated Speech

Self-written | Notes Allowed | Illustrations Required | Individual | 4-5minutes for beginners; 5-6 minutes for advanced

Illustrated Speech - Beginner Ages 8-13 (SF 50503A)

Illustrated Speech - Advanced Ages 14 & Up (SF 50503B)

Illustrated Speeches may be used to inform, persuade, or motivate the audience while using a visual aid. Visual aids may be two-dimensional, three-dimensional, or digital. Youth may include audience participation. Digital visual aids must be stored on a USB flash drive. Illustrated speeches may be:

- How-to demonstrations, which show the audience how to do something.
- Object lessons which use objects as metaphors to share a message.
- Educational models where drawings or diagrams help explain a topic.

Original Works

Self-written | Notes Allowed | Props and Costumes Allowed | Individual or 2-Person Team | Youth must provide manuscripts to judge | 4-6 minutes

Original Works – Individual (SF 50504)

Original Works – Team (SF 50505)

Original works must be written entirely by the presenter. It may be presented as an individual or a two-person team entry. Manuscripts must be brought to the contest. Presentations may be designed for TV, radio, or online media and must be presented live. The types of entries could include:

- Prose and Short Stories
- Poetry/Spoken Word
- Broadcast Media Program
- Theatrical
- Combined Program: Combine any number of the above elements along with other creative presentation forms

Oral Interpretation

Published Work | Props and Costumes Allowed | Individual or 2-Person Team | Youth must provide manuscripts to judge | 4-6 minutes

Oral Interpretation – Individual (SF 50506)

Oral Interpretation – Team (SF 50507)

Presentations in Oral Interpretation must be published works, and manuscripts or transcripts must be brought to the event. They may be presented as an individual or a two-person team entry. The types of entries could include:

- Prose and Short Stories
- Poetry
- Theatrical Interpretation
- Published Speech Recitation: Excerpt from a spoken presentation delivered by a public figure, such as Winston Churchill, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., or Maya Angelou
- Combined Program: Combine any number of the above elements along with other creative presentation forms

State Public Speaking Contest – April 25, 2026

Deadline to advance youth to Public Speaking State Contest: April 6, 2026.

Youth may exhibit in the state public speaking contest AND exhibit a project in the state general project show. Youth must be selected in a local county 4-H contest to advance to the state contest. Enrollment in the Public Presentations project is required to participate in this section. No live animals are allowed in speeches. A 4-H member may advance in one individual category and one team category. *Participating Youth must be 8 years of age on or before September 1, 2025. Participating youth turning 14 years of age on or before September 1, 2025, must enroll as advanced.*

Please remember this is a 4-H audience, and presentations should be appropriate for the setting and the audience, including youth. Any presentations that might be considered controversial or inappropriate for young children are strongly discouraged. The content of any 4-H competitive presentation does not necessarily reflect the beliefs or views of the University of Illinois Extension 4-H program. All presentation topics should be appropriate for a family audience.

For questions, please contact your local Illinois Extension Office or 4-H Staff.

- Bond County: Kayla Powers, kgree6@illinois.edu, 618-664-3665
- Clinton County: Allison Crocker, allisond@illinois.edu, 618-526-4551
- Jefferson County: Kristen Buttrum, buttrum@illinois.edu, 618-242-0780
- Marion County: Courtney Beal, cnbeal03@illinois.edu, 618-548-1446
- Washington County: Amanda Fox-Clark, abfox@illinois.edu, 618-327-8881