

Shelby County 4-H January Newsletter



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Project Manuals

Do you have unused project manuals from years past? Well, clean out your closets, 4-H binders, etc. and return those to the Shelby County Extension Office to be recycled to another 4-H member. We appreciate your help!

4-H members must email Yolanda or call the Shelby County Extension Office to order project manuals. Please note: ZSuite is not set up to order project books.

Some projects require the manual to be completed as part of the 4-H exhibit, so be sure to check your project requirements when the 2026 fair book is released in March.

Project book requests should be sent to Yolanda Friday, February 13. Books will be ordered on February 16. Let Yolanda know if you have any questions. Email: nation2@illinois.edu or call: 217-774-9546



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Building Bricks County Federation Challenge

Shelby County 4-H Federation wants to see your most creative brick build inspired by “Rooted in 4-H, Growing our Future”, the 2026 Shelby County 4-H Week theme. Prizes will be awarded in each age division.

Eligibility:

- All enrolled 4-H members are encouraged to participate.
- The contest will run from February 1 – February 28.
- Photo builds should be uploaded to a link which will be provided on February 1.
- Age divisions (4-H age, 9/1/25): Cloverbuds, 8-13, 14-18

Rules:

- Theme: “Rooted in 4-H, Growing our Future”
- Youth can only submit one build.
- Builds must be entirely from plastic building brick elements.
- All builds must be original (from the imagination of the youth who submits) and not built from a kit or inspired by the builds of others (including ones they see on the internet).
- Size: Build should fit on a standard 32x32 stud LEGO (or similar) baseplate (i.e. no larger than 10” wide and long). Build should also be 15” tall or shorter.

Doggy themed Canvas Workshop

Kaitlin Jacobs of Creation Station will guide youth step-by-step as they design and paint their very own dog-themed canvas masterpiece! Finished pieces can be exhibited at the fair in Visual Arts – Chalk, Carbon, Pigment. The workshop is open to all youth ages 8-18. Enrollment is not required.

When: January 31

Time: 9–11 a.m.

Where: 4-H Center

Cost: \$20 (pay day of workshop)

RSVP by Jan. 27: <https://go.illinois.edu/CanvasWorkshop>

Upcycling Workshop

Want to learn more about interior design but not sure where to start? This workshop is for you! We will explore multiple options for upcycling your décor projects. This can include painting on wood and upholstery, reupholstering furniture, modifying pieces for new uses,

and any other creative ideas that you might have! Be prepared for hands-on learning, while learning new techniques!

Bring your own project ideas - we'll have hands-on activities so you can try out new concepts and see your creations come to life! Additional workdays will be scheduled at the first workshop.

Don't miss this opportunity to learn, create, and connect with others who share your passion for design! The instructor will be Kim Denton, retired 4-H Youth Educator.

Kick-off meeting: March 7

Where: 4-H Center, Shelbyville

Time: 1-3 p.m.

Cost: \$10 paid at the time of the workshop

Register online at: <https://go.illinois.edu/UpcyclingWorkshop>

Poultry Workshop

Feathered Fun is Coming to Effingham County 4-H! (open to surrounding counties) Get ready to flap, cluck, and learn, because a brand-new 4-H Poultry Workshop is coming to Effingham County on Saturday, February 21, from 10:00 a.m. to noon and it's going to be egg-cellent!

Open to all youth in Effingham and surrounding counties. This hands-on workshop will be held at The Equity in the old Mid-America building, located at 2900 N. 3rd Street, Effingham, IL (If your GPS gives you trouble, you can also use 454 Big Block Drive, Effingham, IL — that usually drops the pin in the right place.)

Whether you're already raising chickens or just curious about the world of poultry, this workshop will give 4-H members a fun opportunity to learn more about caring for birds, understanding their needs, and building skills that help them succeed in poultry projects. Plans are still being finalized! More information about what to bring, and what to expect will be shared soon, so be sure to keep watching for updates from Effingham County 4-H.

Mark your calendars, tell your chicken-loving friends, and get ready for a morning full of learning, laughs, and feathered fun! Click here <https://go.illinois.edu/PoultryWS> to register for the Poultry Workshop!

Market Animal Weigh-in

If you are exhibiting a dairy or beef steer, or a market heifer at the 2026 Shelby County 4-H & Junior Fair, you will need to attend the Market Animal Weigh-in. The Weigh-in will be held on Saturday, February 14, 2026, from 8-10 a.m. at the United Producers Sale Barn in Shelbyville.

4-H'ers must be enrolled in ZSuite and have paid their program fee to weigh steers or market heifers. Don't wait until the last minute! If you have a steer at your house, sign-up now at nation2@illinois.edu with the # of head you are bringing. The deadline to contact Yolanda is **Monday, February 9** with the number of head coming so appropriate paperwork can be prepared.

Shelby County 4-H Fair Book Cover Contest

Due February 23

Shelby County 4-H is looking for fair book cover entries! Shelby County 4-H Federation will award cash prizes to the top four covers. Entries must be submitted to the Shelby County Extension Office by 4:30 p.m. on February 23, 2026.

The following rules need to be followed:

- Drawings should be in dark ink or markers.
- Drawings should be on an 8 1/2" x 11" sheet of white paper.
- Include the fair dates of July 18-22, 2026.
- Include the words Shelby County 4-H & Jr. Fair in the design.

This contest is open to all enrolled Shelby County 4-H Cloverbuds and 4-H members. Electronic copies will be accepted, but must be sent as a PDF, not a screen shot. Hard copies are preferred and work better when copying designs. Contact Yolanda with questions.

Shelby County 4-H Week – March 14-21

The theme for Shelby County 4-H Week is "Rooted in 4-H, Growing our Future".

- March 14 – 4-H Fire-Up 9-11 a.m., 4-H Center
 - This workshop will be for first- and second-year members. Online registration details coming in February.
- March 14 – Skating Party 6:15-9 p.m. at Silver Stars Skating Rink in Mattoon.
 - The 4-H Skating party is planned for Saturday, March 16 from 6:15 - 9:00 p.m. The rink rental is being paid by Shelby County 4-H Federation. There will be a \$1 charge for those needing skates. Families may bring in their own food and drink as there is no longer a concession stand.
 - Bring your friends and family!
- March 15 – Public Speaking Contest, 6:30 p.m. 4-H Center
 - Contest rules and registration will be sent to 4-H'ers enrolled in public speaking in early February.
- March 16 – International Night 6 p.m. Nazarene Church Gym

- Clubs should plan to prepare 2-3 food dishes to give samples to approximately 200. Clubs should consider decorating their table, creating poster displays, and wearing clothing from their country, etc.
- Clubs need to read to serve at 6 p.m.
- March 16 – Window Display judging
 - Leaders should contact Yolanda with their window location.
 - Clubs should have their display up by March 14.
 - Information to include in your display: club name, members and leaders' names, club meeting dates and times, and how to join 4-H.
 - Federation will offer cash prizes.
- March 17 – 4-H Member Showcase shared on Facebook
 - Let's showcase our 4-H members! 4-H'ers need to send Yolanda a photo of the 4-H member with their favorite 4-H project along with a few sentences about their project, a favorite 4-H event, etc. Information needs to be sent by March 11. Email photo and write-up to nation2@illinois.edu.
- March 18 – Community Service Day with your club
 - Clubs must complete their community service project between March 14 – March 31 and submit a photo to Yolanda to receive \$25 from Shelby County 4-H Federation.
- March 19 – Wear your 4-H shirt to school day and submit a photo
 - A link will be sent to families in March to upload photos.
- March 21 – Spring Craft Day – 2 sessions, one for 4-H'ers and one for Cloverbuds.
 - Session 1 – 9-10:30 a.m. 4-H members ages 8-18 as of 9/1/25
 - Session 2 – 10:45-12:15 p.m. Cloverbud members ages 8-18 as of 9/1/25.
 - Cost and online registration details coming in February.

2026 Fair Changes – Shelby County 4-H & Junior Fair

- Poultry Show – Each exhibitor may exhibit up to 24 chickens plus other poultry.
- Goat Show – Each exhibitor may exhibit up to 12 goats.

Youth for the Quality Care of Animals (YQCA)

All 4-H members enrolled in beef, dairy cattle, goats, swine and sheep are required to take the YQCA training. This training is required to be taken each year. In-person training is \$3 and On-line training is \$12.

Shelby County 4-H is offering 4 in-person training sessions. The training is set up to be completed in approximately one hour. All training sessions will be held at the 4-H Center in Shelbyville. Don't wait to get signed up, class size is limited!

Families will need to register at the YQCA website, sign up for which training they would like

to attend and pay the registration fee. *Youth will need to complete the Pre-Test before attending the training.* Youth will need to complete the Post-Test before printing the certificate.

Families must register online at YQCA at Link: yqcaprogram.org

- Monday, February 16 6:00-7:00 p.m.
- Tuesday, March 24 6:30-7:30 p.m.
- Thursday, April 23 6:30-7:30 p.m..
- Thursday, May 21 7-8:00 p.m.

The deadline to complete the training to be able to exhibit at the Shelby County 4-H & Junior Fair is Monday, June 1! No exceptions to this rule. *If completing the training online, email Yolanda a copy of the certificate.* If you need assistance or a copy of the instructions, please contact Yolanda for help.

Quality Assurance & Ethics Certification

First time animal exhibitors enrolled in alpacas, llamas, cats, dogs, horses, rabbits and poultry need to complete QAEC. This rule applies to 4-H members who exhibit live animals AND poster exhibits. Quality Assurance and Ethics Certification is a one-time training for youth exhibiting projects in the following: alpacas, llamas, cats, dogs, horses, poultry, and rabbits. Anyone who has previously taken the certification does not need to retake the test. Members who don't complete the certification by June 1 will be removed from the project and not be allowed to show.

The QAEC training can be accessed in the Clover Academy section of the ZSuite Enrollment System. ZSuite can be accessed at <https://4h.zsuite.org/>. Families can access directions for completing the course at <https://go.illinois.edu/TakeQAEC>.

Shelby County 4-H General and Trophy/Banner sponsors needed

Has your 4-H member received a trophy or banner at a previous fair? The smiles and excitement are always remembered. We hope that you will share with your family/business/friends, etc. as we look for sponsorships either through a general donation or as a Trophy/Banner sponsors.

To sponsor a trophy/plaque/award for a particular project, the cost is \$25. Please include which project area you would like to sponsor, for example: beef, clothing, woodworking, etc. A general donation to Extension means the amount donated will be partially matched by the State of Illinois. If interested in making a sponsorship, complete the information below and return with your check. All money benefits Shelby County 4-H programs.

Please consider supporting the youth in Shelby County 4-H.

General Program Donation \$25 _____ \$50 _____ Other _____

Trophy/Banner Award: We wish to sponsor a trophy/banner and have enclosed \$25. We would like to sponsor a trophy/banner/award in: (Sponsorships will be given on a first come/first serve basis). _____

Name of sponsor: _____

Make checks payable to: U of I Extension Money is due by March 2 for recognition in the fair book. Payment should be sent to: Shelby County Extension, 1125 W N 2nd Street, Shelbyville, IL 62565

Contact Yolanda via email at nation2@illinois.edu if you would like to receive a form to complete and mail with your sponsorship. We hope you will consider supporting the 400+ Shelby County 4-H members!

Farm Credit Service Grant Opportunities

Friday, February 27

Shelby County 4-H would like to ask clubs to consider applying for one of fifty \$500 grants which are available to 4-H clubs implementing valuable community improvements within their communities. Grants could focus on building improvements through painting and repairing, updating landscaping, purchasing a tree, constructing a welcome sign to your community, planting a garden, trees and flowers, etc. The deadline to submit a Farm Credit Illinois Community Improvement Grant is February 27, 2026.

For more information: <https://www.farmcreditiil.com/Community>

Unit opportunities:

Confident Communicators 4-H Public Speaking

Saturday, February 21

Join us for our Confident Communicators 4-H Public Speaking Field Trip! For Coles, Cumberland, Shelby, and Moultrie-Douglas 4-H Members Ages 8-18 as of 9/1/25.

Date: Saturday, February 21, 2026

Destination: University of Illinois, Lincoln Hall

Transportation Schedule:

- 8:00 AM – Bus departs from Shelby County Extension Office, Shelbyville
- 8:40 AM – Bus departs from Cross County Mall Rural King, Mattoon
- 9:10 AM – Bus departs from Kirby Foods Grocery Store, Tuscola

Event Schedule:

- 10:00 AM – 12:30 PM – Public Speaking Workshop at U of I Lincoln Hall
- 12:30 – 1:00 PM – Lunch provided by the Department of Communications
- 1:00 – 1:30 PM – Guided Campus Tour
- 1:30 – 3:00 PM – Interactive Activity (TBA)
- 3:15 PM – Depart for home

Drop-Off Schedule:

- 3:45 PM – Drop-off at Kirby Foods Grocery Store, Tuscola
- 4:10 PM – Drop-off at Cross County Mall Rural King, Mattoon
- 4:45 PM – Drop-off at Shelby County 4-H Center, Shelbyville

Registration Details:

- Deadline: Friday, February 6, 2026
- Cost: FREE – All expenses are generously covered by a grant from Coles County Wind

Register here: <https://go.illinois.edu/ConfidentCommunicators>

Parent Attendance: Parents/guardians are welcome to attend if it would make their child more comfortable. Please indicate on the registration form if a parent/guardian will be joining.

Preparation Tips:

- Dress Warmly! We'll be walking outside during the campus tour, so wear layers and comfortable shoes.
- Stay Hydrated: Bring a refillable water bottle or cash to grab a drink if needed.
- Know Your Presentation Type - During the workshop, youth will begin preparing for their local 4-H public speaking contest. Participants should come prepared with which type of presentation they'd like to work on:
 - Formal Speech
 - Illustrated Speech
 - Original Works
 - Oral Interpretation

More details about each speech division can be found here:

<https://4h.extension.illinois.edu/events/state-events/illinois-4-h-public-speaking-contest>

Mini Livestock Camp

Join us for a fun and educational Mini Livestock Camp designed for youth who exhibit animals! This engaging event features hands-on activities, a skillathon to test your livestock knowledge, and YQCA training to ensure responsible animal care.

This YQCA training will complete the yearly required course for anyone showing beef, goats, sheep, or swine. Lunch will be provided.

- Date: February 16
- Time: 12-4 p.m.
- Where: Clark County Extension Office, 15493 IL 1, Marshall, IL 62441
- Who: Open to members ages 8 and up.
- Register in ZSuite

Calendar:

February

- 4 – Federation meeting, 7 p.m., 4-H Center
- 14 - Steer Weigh-in, 8 a.m. Shelbyville Sale Barn
- 14 - Bank Steer Pick-up, 10 a.m. Shelbyville Sale Barn
- 16 – YQCA 6-7 p.m., 4-H Center
- 21 – Confident Communications Public Speaking Field Trip, 8 a.m.
- 23 – Fair Book Cover submission deadline

March

- 2 – Enrollment deadline to exhibit at the Shelby County 4-H Fair
- 4 – Federation meeting, 7 p.m., 4-H Center
- 7-8 – JLC Conference, Crowne Plaza, Springfield
- March 14-21 – 4-H Week
- 24 – YQCA 6:30 – 7:30 p.m., 4-H Center
- 30 – Spring Clean-up at the fairgrounds, 6 p.m.

April

- 1 – Federation meeting, 7 p.m., 4-H Center
- 7 – Tailwaggers Registration at Show Arena 6-6:30 p.m., Class 6:30-7 p.m. Classes will continue for 8 weeks with graduation and continue until the fair.
- 23 – YQCA 6:30 – 7:30 p.m., 4-H Center

May

- 4 – Last day to add/drop projects in ZSuite
- 21 – YQCA 7-8 p.m., 4-H Center
- 25 – Office closed

June

- 1 – Fair Entries must be submitted in Fair Entry.
- 1 – Junior fair exhibitor cards and entries are due into the Extension office
- 1 – 4-H Scholarship applications are due into the Extension office
- 19 – Office closed

July

- 3 – Office closed
- 11 – Fair Clean-up
- 17 – Lawn Mower and Tractor Driving contest
- 18 – 4-H Foods, Photography (a.m.), 4-H misc. Visual Arts (p.m.) 4-H Center
- 18 – Horse Show 4 p.m.
- 19 – Move-in day, animals in place by 4 p.m.
- 19 – Sheep Show 5 p.m.
- 20-22 – Fair
- 23 Fair Clean-up

Aug

- 16 – General project day at the IL State Fair

Office Information:

Staff:

County Director: Jessie Streit

4-H Program Coordinator: Yolanda Nation

Office Support Assistant: Diana Litteral

Shelby County 1125 W North 2nd Street, Shelbyville, IL 62565, Phone: 217-774-9546

Office Hours: Monday-Friday 8 -12, 1-4:30

Find us on Facebook: Shelby County IL 4-H

Website: <https://extension.illinois.edu/ccdms/4-h-shelby-county>

If you need reasonable accommodation to participate, please contact the Shelby County Extension office.