

# Building Strong Website Event Listings

Strategies for creating robust, keyword-rich event listings that will drive registrations and enhance Extension's reputation.

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Events are one of the key pathways for Illinois Extension to connect with our communities. And event listings on our website are the primary driver of traffic to all the other content we feature on the state and unit websites.

To help event listings perform well with search engines, and to ensure that potential participants have enough information to evaluate their interest in an event, follow these suggestions for creating good event listings. These best practices will improve the readability and visibility of your events.

## Building an Engaging Listing

When you create a new event on the website, you must provide several specific pieces of information. The content below provides detailed instructions for how to best complete all of the essential information so that your event listing is most useful to a prospective attendee and so that it can most easily be found by search engines like Google.

### General Editing Tip

To copy and paste content from Word or another document into the text module, you must remove the formatting.

- Select all the content
- Click the 'Remove Formatting' tool; it looks like a capital T with an x in the lower right corner. Even though the website asks to remove formatting, that function does not fully strip the formatting carried over from a Word document.

### Name

- Use a short name (5-8 words) that describes the content of the event. Someone should be able to understand what the event is just from the title.
- Include the county name for in-person events so visitors can easily determine if the meeting is applicable to them.  
*USE: White County 4-H Leader Meeting*  
*DO NOT USE: 4-H Leader Meeting*
- For online programs, include "webinar" in the title.

### Image

- Size photos and graphics to 1080 x 560 pixels. Acceptable file types include .png, .gif, .jpg, and .jpeg.
- Use limited text, if any. Do not upload flyers created for print.
- Since the event lives on the Extension website, the graphic does not need the wordmark.

### Body

This is the main section of your event. It should provide all relevant information. We suggest organizing content in the order listed below.

**REQUIRED:** Description of content or what will happen at the event. Think about what phrases your audience would use to search for an event like yours and add those terms.

**DO NOT INCLUDE:** The time, date, location, cost, or registration link. This information will be added in the next section.

**SUGGESTED:** Speakers or partnering groups, with bios and links to their organizations.

**OPTIONAL:** Include agenda as text, or use "Related links."

**OPTIONAL:** Hyperlink to supporting materials, images, or forms, such as permission slips. Or, use the "Related links" section.

**REQUIRED:** Participation requirements, including prerequisites such as membership in a group or age limitations. *Example: This event is only for active Master Gardener volunteers.*

**REQUIRED:** Registration deadline or date registration opens.

**OPTIONAL:** Other ways to register: Call, in person.

**REQUIRED:** Name and email and/or phone number of who to contact for more information.

**SUGGESTED:** List details someone would need to bring, know, or wear to the event. *Example: Please wear closed-toed shoes.*

**SUGGESTED:** Detailed directions for hard-to-find locations or entry and safety procedures.

**OPTIONAL:** Additional resources related to the event. Links to other resources, such as a Facebook group or a video.

**REQUIRED:** "If you need a reasonable accommodation to participate, please contact the event coordinator at [contact phone/email]. Early requests are strongly encouraged to allow sufficient time to meet your needs, when possible."

**DO NOT INCLUDE:** Do not insert images of flyers into the event description. Use "Related links" to upload event flyers, if needed.

## Location

**In person:** Use the exact physical address of the event. If the event is at a specific location, such as the Farm Bureau office or the Jones County Extension office, include the name of the building in the address.

**Virtual:** Use “online” if the event will be delivered virtually. Do not use “anywhere internet is available,” “webinar,” or “Zoom link.”

## Dates

**Single date event:** Select the date and year.

**Consecutive events:** If an event is more than one day consecutively, such as Monday to Thursday, use the start date and the final date. Note: Consecutive events will not stay on the calendar view past the first date.

**Non-consecutive events:** If an event takes place across multiple, nonconsecutive days, such as every Wednesday for four weeks, **always create a new event for each date**. If participants need to register before the first date to participate in later days, remove the registration link from subsequent dates and list the requirements in the description.

Building events like this is important because it shows stakeholders we have a lot of events going on and increases our placement in search engine results.

## Time

The event node instructions “*Please format as closely to this as possible: 6:00 PM - 7:00 PM*” are incorrect. Please follow the formatting instructions outlined below.

Format the date as follows:

- 2 – 3 PM (Do not use AM or PM twice)
- 11:30 AM – 1 PM (Do not use :00)
- Noon – 4 PM (Use noon, not 12 PM)
- Include an expected end time
- Add CT for central time if there is an expectation that people in other time zones may attend.

Please note that this formatting is different than AP Style used in media releases. This is the preferred formatting style for online event directories.

## Event fee

- List only the dollar amount without cents. *Example: \$5 not \$5.00.*
- If the event is free, leave the field blank.

## Related link

This is the preferred location to add a registration link.

- **Line 1:** Add the URL.
- **Line 2:** Use “Register Online” for the title of the button.

You may also add links to related materials, such as brochures, photo releases, health forms, reading assignments, or partner organizations. Keep the resource titles brief.

If you add links to materials here, do not duplicate them in the description.

## Share with group

**Event has statewide appeal and access:** Prepare the event and save, then notify the state communication team to have the event shared with other units.

**Event has regional appeal and access:** You may select up to five units to share. This will likely be neighboring units. Notify units you have shared an event opportunity with them.

## Keywords

It is important that you enter at least one website keyword so people can find similar content to your event. Keywords may only be selected from a pre-populated list.

The keywords list is available at [extension.illinois.edu/commit/website-keywords](https://extension.illinois.edu/commit/website-keywords).

## Program area

Select the program area(s) affiliated with this event.

## Event Postponement or Cancellation

If an event needs to be canceled, we recommended using this status rather than deleting the event listing. If a prospective participant has previously found the event description on your page and they come back to double-check the details but can't find the event description, it will likely generate confusion for the public and phone calls to your office.

Use this setting to select a postponed or canceled status, if needed. Although this tool was useful at the beginning of the COVID-19 stay-at-home order, it should be used rarely now. A good example of how it can be used now is for an outside event that may need to be postponed for inclement weather.

Note that the proper spelling is “canceled” not “cancelled.”

## Examples

### Original Event Posting

This is an example of an event listing that needs some improvements. As written, this event listing is unlikely to perform well in an online search and it is less likely to attract the attention of prospective attendees due to missing or vague information.

#### Event Graphic

The graphic is not sized properly and has too much text. Small text is both illegible and distracting.

#### Location

The stated location is vague and may not be helpful to all prospective attendees.

#### Event Description

This event description largely duplicates information found in the right side column.

#### Keywords

Only one keyword is used, limiting connections to other content on Extension and unit website.

#### 4-H and Somewhere Library Reading Robotics



#### Event Date(s)

March 31, 2021

#### Event Time

9:00 A.M. - 11:00 A.M.

#### Location

ANYWHERE WITH INTERNET ACCESS

Join us for a youth robot workshop in partnership with Somewhere Library.

Date: March 31st, 2020

Time: 9:00 AM to 11:00 AM

Cost: Free with registration

#### Keywords

4-H

#### Program Areas

4-H Youth Development

### Optimized Event Posting

This example demonstrates some simple modifications that will help an event listing perform better in online searches. There are more robust details that provide prospective attendees with easy-to-understand information that is essential to making a decision about participating in the event.

#### Event Graphic

The wide image has limited text, allowing the robot illustration to shine. The wordmark is not required, but was included.

#### Location

The event uses the standard description for an online event for Illinois Extension.

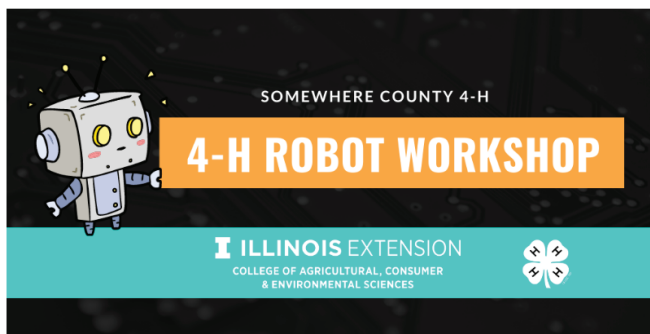
#### Event Description

The first line is bolded to emphasize it as a call to action. Short sentences across several paragraphs makes for easier scanning. Language is active and includes details about the speaker and workshop materials.

#### Keywords

Multiple keywords will allow users to find the content more easily because it will be networked with similar pieces of content.

#### Somewhere County 4-H Robot Making Workshop



#### Event Date(s)

March 31, 2021

#### Event Time

9 - 11 AM

#### Location

Online

#### Related Link

[Register Online](#)

**Join us for a youth robot workshop in partnership with Somewhere Library!**

Do you want to build a robot? Join Somewhere County 4-H to make a robot to take home in this fun, interactive youth STEM workshop.

4-H Educator Jane Smith will introduce the basic concepts of electrical engineering before walking through the process of building a simple robot. Order the kit [on this website](#).

Open to ages 8-14. This program is free. Register in advance by March 14.

Program Coordinator: Jane Smith, 217.877.6052, [jsmith@illinois.edu](mailto:jsmith@illinois.edu).

*University of Illinois Extension provides equal opportunities in programs and employment. If you need a reasonable accommodation to participate, email [jsmith@illinois.edu](mailto:jsmith@illinois.edu). Early requests are encouraged to allow time to meet individual requests.*

#### Keywords

4-H

Youth development

STEM

Robotics

#### Program Areas

4-H Youth Development



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