



# NEW YORK STATE 4-H YOUTH DEVELOPMENT State Event Participation Policy

nys4-h.org

## Contents

<a href="#">Summary</a>	<a href="#">1</a>
<a href="#">Belonging &amp; Thriving</a>	<a href="#">2</a>
<a href="#">Joining State Events</a>	<a href="#">2</a>
<a href="#">At the Event</a>	<a href="#">5</a>
<a href="#">Event Roles &amp; Responsibilities</a>	<a href="#">7</a>
<a href="#">4-H Events</a>	<a href="#">9</a>

## Summary

This policy outlines structures and procedures supporting our goal to create NYS 4-H events that are welcoming to all youth and actualize the values of our positive youth development program.

**The first priority of the NYS 4-H program 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 status, sex, gender, gender identity and expression, transgender status, sexual orientation, age, marital or family status, educational level, learning style, socio-economic status, physical appearance, body size, protected veterans, and individuals with disabilities. CCE actively supports [equal educational and employment opportunities](#).

All New York State Youth are eligible and invited to enroll in and join the New York State 4-H Program through [your local county Cornell Cooperative Extension \(CCE\) 4-H program](#). All New York State 4-H Youth are eligible to attend State Level 4-H Events. This includes Youth new to 4-H and experiencing 4-H programming for the first time. For more information, please see our [NYS 4-H - Membership Policy](#). Some events have age or participation requirements; please see specific event for details. All events require a registration process, which includes a registration form, the NYS 4-H Permission Slip, and agreeing to follow the NYS 4-H Code of Conduct. Event registration may also include a fee. Information from registration materials will be used to help ensure a safe, positive experience for youth and adult participants. Personally identifiable information (including gender identity and sex assigned at birth) will be kept confidential.

Inclusion is one of the core values of NYS 4-H. Each NYS 4-H event will be designed to be free of barriers so that each person can participate fully and will feel welcomed and valued. Program activities will be culturally relevant and center youth's values and goals. No person will be denied participation because of an inability to pay. To request an accommodation or for inquiries about accessibility, please contact [Adam Davis](#).

Each event has a team of CCE professionals, volunteers, and youth leaders who work together to create the most valuable experience we can for participants. Please work with your local CCE 4-H Educator and review event materials to partner with this team and prepare for participating in NYS 4-H events.



## Belonging and Thriving

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**The first priority of the NYS 4-H program 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 status, sex, gender, gender identity and expression, transgender status, sexual orientation, age, marital or family status, educational level, learning style, socio-economic status, physical appearance, body size, protected veterans, and individuals with disabilities. CCE actively supports [equal educational and employment opportunities](#).

No person shall be denied admission to any educational program or activity on the basis of any legally prohibited discrimination. CCE is committed to the maintenance of affirmative action programs that will assure the continuation of such equality of opportunity. NYS 4-H is committed to creating programs that value the diverse cultural and social capital each young person has. Read more about our commitment to youth by reading our [Code of Conduct](#) and [NYS 4-H Mission, Vision, Values Statement](#).

This policy outlines structures and procedures supporting our goal to create NYS 4-H events that are welcoming to all youth and actualize the values of our positive youth development program.

## Joining State Events

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### Eligibility

All New York State Youth are eligible and invited to enroll in and join the New York State 4-H Program through your [local county Cornell Cooperative Extension \(CCE\) 4-H program](#). All New York State 4-H Youth are eligible to attend State Level 4-H Events. This includes Youth new to 4-H and experiencing 4-H programming for the first time. For more information, please see our [NYS 4-H - Club Membership Policy](#).

Some events have age requirements. For example, STARR is open to youth age 13 and older. Age requirements are based on 4-H age -the young person's age as of January 1 of the current 4-H year. Others have participation qualification requirements. For example, to be invited to the exhibit items at the State Fair, youth must first exhibit that item in their county fair event. Please see specific event information for more details.

Any person(s) who believes they have been subjected to discrimination in programs, activities, or services of the 4-H Youth Development Program may file a complaint using this form.



## Advertising

NYS 4-H opportunities are advertised to Extension Educators, our community partners, and the public through the following methods:

- **NYS 4-H Website**
- **Social Media**
- **4-H Online (direct email to families)**
- **CCE Youth Listserv**
- **Friday News**
- **NYS 4-H App (available on the google and apple app store)**

For more information on state event advertising, please contact [Jenn Bassman](#).

## Forms and Fees for the Registration Process

All participants will need to submit the following to register for NYS 4-H events:

- **Signed NYS 4-H Code of Conduct**
- **Signed NYS 4-H Permission Slip**
- **Event Registration form**
- **Registration fee (if applicable)**

Code of Conduct and Permission Slip forms will be collected electronically. Each person needs to submit only one signed version of each form per year for state events (so sending in your form in October would cover you for all state events for the 4-H year). Please work with your local Extension 4-H Educator to submit forms and event registration. Some events may require additional forms. For example, NYS Fair requires participants to submit the State Fair Dorm form. Please see specific event details for more information.

These forms will all be available as online forms and in a format suitable for printing. All forms will be available in English and Spanish. Please contact [Adam Davis](#) if you require our registration forms in a different language and/or format.

## Event Registration Forms

The Event Registration Form will ask for the information necessary to support each person's full participation in the event and to communicate with participants and their families.

Registrations are handled through your local county Cornell Cooperative Extension (CCE) 4-H program. Each event has a separate process for signing up. Interested youth and families should reach out to their local CCE 4-H office for more information. ([Look here to find yours!](#))



## Permission Slip

The Permission Slip includes medical release, media release, and program evaluation permission information. Only Cornell Cooperative Extension and 4-H staff (including the event coordinator and medical director) will be able to view this form and information will only be used as needed.

## Registration Fees

Registration payments are collected by participating CCE Associations. CCE Associations may charge additional fees to cover the cost of transportation and chaperone expenses. Please contact your [local CCE 4-H Program](#) for more information.

## Scholarships

Several events offer scholarships to offset the cost of registration. Scholarships are limited and will be awarded to qualified applicants through a needs-based, competitive review process.

## Event Refund/Cancellation Policy

Refunds are handled on an event by event basis. Unless in extreme circumstances, or an otherwise stated policy is in effect, the following guidelines regarding refunds and cancellations will be followed:

- **No shows are charged in full.**
- **Participants who register for an event and cancel before registration closes will not be charged.**
- **Once registration has closed, no refunds will be awarded unless a documented medical emergency or natural disaster inhibits a participant from attending. In such a circumstance, please contact the Event Coordinator as soon as possible.**

## Protecting Your Privacy

Information from registration materials will be used to help ensure a safe, positive experience for youth and adult participants. Personally identifiable information (including gender identity and sex assigned at birth) will be kept confidential. This information will only be disclosed to 4-H staff and volunteers that have a legitimate programmatic need for the information.

Even if an individual has disclosed their gender identity or sexual orientation to some members of the 4-H community, the Event Coordinator shall not disclose this information to others. Protecting transgender, binary, and intersex individuals' privacy is critical to maintaining safety and well-being, ensuring that individuals are treated in a way that is consistent with their gender identity, and preventing potential harm. The same is true for sexual orientation.

## At the Event

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### Orientation

Each state event will have mandatory on-site orientation in addition to the preparation Educators provide at the county level. Orientations will give youth and adults an idea of what to expect at the event, including a review of the [NYS 4-H Code of Conduct](#), inclusivity, event policies, goals, and incident response procedures.

### Code of Conduct

Youth, families, volunteers, and Extension staff in or attending any activity or event sponsored by Cornell University's Cornell Cooperative Extension (CCE) 4-H Youth Development Program are required to uphold the values of the NYS 4-H program and conduct themselves according to the New York State 4-H Code of Conduct. The standards also apply to online 4-H activity, including social media internet presence. In addition to these expectations, CCE volunteers are accountable to additional expectations outlined in the CCE Volunteer Code of Conduct. Extension staff are accountable to additional standards of professionalism that are outlined by position descriptions and CCE Human Resource Policies.

### Accessibility and Inclusion

Inclusion is one of the core values of NYS 4-H. Each NYS 4-H event will be designed to be free of barriers so that each person can participate fully and will feel welcomed and valued. Program activities will be culturally relevant and center youth's values and goals.

Taking care to create an accessible event benefits not only individuals with visible or known disabilities, but also helps to ensure that all participants, including individuals with non-obvious disabilities and/or chronic health conditions, and people of all ages and body types, are able to fully engage in the program.

Name tags and rosters, etc. will include individuals' expressed pronouns and names. With the exception of overnight lodging, event activities will avoid segregating and categorizing participants by gender.

All participants will be given a chance to indicate who they would prefer to share a room with when overnight accommodations include room sharing.

We will respect each participant's privacy. When there are gender segregated facilities and/or activities, all individuals, including but not limited to those who identify as transgender, non-binary, or intersex will be allowed to sleep, use the restroom, shower and participate in alignment with their gender identity. A single-user facility or other private option will be made available to anyone who requests it.

4-H prohibits discrimination based on gender expression and sexual orientation. 4-H may not limit individuals' participation in activities because they appear or behave in a manner that is consistent with their gender identity or in a manner that does not conform to stereotypical notions of masculinity or femininity.



# NYS 4-H State Event Participation Policy

To be respectful of those with allergies and environmental sensitivities, we ask that you please refrain from wearing strong fragrances.

To request an accommodation or for inquiries about accessibility and inclusion, please contact [Adam Davis](#).

## Program Evaluation

NYS 4-H may use surveys or other evaluation tools to ask youth and adult participants about their experiences in programs and activities. The data collected from these efforts is used for program improvement purposes. Participation is anonymous, voluntary, and there is no impact on program participation if someone decides not to complete a survey. Parents and participants give or deny their permission to participate in program evaluation efforts by completing the Permission Slip. A participant, parent, or guardian may withdraw consent at any time and a participant may refuse any survey request at any time. Please contact the Event Coordinator if you would like to withdraw consent or if you have any questions related to Program Evaluation.

## Cell Phones

Please turn off or keep cell phones on silent during programs. Event Staff will have their phones on in case of emergency. If you need to make or take a call during a program because of an emergency, please do so in a way that doesn't interrupt the program.

## Incident and Emergency Planning

The NYS 4-H Incident and Crisis Action Plan is intended to give staff, educators, volunteers, and youth a procedure to follow and information on notification requirements in the event of an emergency, accident, or incident. In every situation, safety (including physical and psychological) is the primary concern. Everyone should remain calm and follow the event communication tree. Each event will have a specific communication tree to complement this Plan. This communication tree will be shared with Educators and Chaperones at the event.

## Reporting an Incident

The NYS 4-H team is committed to responding promptly and compassionately to all incidents at our events. Please report all incidents to the Event Coordinator in accordance with the Incident and Crisis Action Plan.

We encourage anyone who experiences or witnesses a bias incident (acts of discrimination, directed at individuals from a protected status including sexual harassment) or hate crime to report it. Please call, text, or email the Event Coordinator as soon as possible (with phrase – bias incident). The Event Coordinator will work together with the New York State 4-H Program Leader & CCE Administration to investigate the incident and apply appropriate procedures. The NYS 4-H Incident and Crisis Action Plan for the event will have specific contact information.



## Event Roles and Responsibilities

### Event Coordinator

The Event Coordinator directs overall event planning and communication, connecting and integrating the work of each person in the program. The Coordinator is the first point of contact for the event. Each event has different event coordinators. See specific event towards the end of this document for more details.

### Event Registration Contact

The Event Registration Contact designs and maintains the registration database, managing data collection and reporting. For more information, please contact [Adam Davis](#).

### Accessibility Advocate

NYS 4-H is committed to having a specialist who acts as an ally and advocate for youth and volunteers. The Accessibility Advocate will consult with Parents and Educators and work with the Event Coordinator to reduce participation barriers and make the event as meaningful as possible for participants. For more information, please contact [Adam Davis](#).

### Mobile Safe Spaces Advocates

We will use a variety of strategies to work in partnership with youth and adults at New York State 4-H events to create a welcoming environment for all. If you are having challenges in this area during an event or have suggestions for improvement to share, please look for the 4-H Safe Spaces sign and event leaders wearing the 4-H Safe Spaces shirt “Mobile Safe Space” to find someone to talk with. Individuals wearing a Mobile Safe Space shirt are trained in handling incidents related to exclusion, bias or harassment. If anyone feels their identity or safety is not being respected, they can connect with these individuals as allies who are ready and able to provide support and resources to manage the situation.

### Nurse

Each event will have a nurse, EMT, or medical lead and a first aid kit onsite. The medical lead will collaborate with CCE staff to provide a safe and healthy environment for all program participants, including dealing with physical, social, emotional, and psychological health issues. They will identify participants’ pertinent medical needs (including any special diets, ongoing health concerns, and/or special precautions) from the Permission Slip and ensure communication with appropriate chaperones and staff. They will provide appropriate nursing intervention for program participants in the case of illness, chronic/acute health conditions or emergency care. They can administer and/or advise chaperones and staff in medication administration during program participation. All medications should be in original containers from the pharmacy. Families should only send the number of pills their child will need plus one or two extra; please don’t send an excess of medication. Families should also let the medical lead know if their child can self-medicate or not. Refer to specific event information for the medicine storage and distribution process. Communicate all health concerns and incidents to the medical lead in accordance with the event communication plan.



## Teen Leaders

State Events often include teen leadership roles (for example, members of the STARR Planning Committee, Career Explorations Focus Assistants or State Fair Junior Superintendents). Partnering with teens to plan, run, and evaluate our events improves the impact of our events and provides young people with leadership and work readiness skills.

Teen Leaders are recruited through an application process, which includes asking for a cover letter, the young person's resume, and letters of recommendation from CCE Educators and others. Teens may be required to interview prior to being selected. Teens are selected in a competitive process, looking for the best fit of interests, experience, and skills just like a paid work opportunity.

Selected Teen Leaders then become part of the event planning team, according to their role and job description. Teen Leaders often earn free or reduced registration fees in exchange for their work. Adult members of the event planning team mentor and provide Teen Leaders with feedback on their application materials and job performance.

## Lead Educators

Each County Association must designate a CCE staff person as the Lead Educator for their group attending a state event. This person must attend the state event. The Lead Educator will be the main contact for your county group during the event. They will be responsible for supervising Chaperones from your Association during the event. If there is a situation that arises with a youth or adult participant from your Association, event staff will work with the Lead Educator to resolve the situation.

## Chaperones

CCE Educators or screened volunteers may be chaperones at state events. Every participant must have a designated chaperone. If you are interested in chaperoning for a state event, please contact your local CCE 4-H Educator.

Chaperones are expected to provide 24 hour supervision for all youth. Thus, chaperones must adhere to the same schedule as established for youth. For example, curfews should be observed by all. Supervision includes knowing where youth are at all times and being able to contact them, ensuring the health and safety of all participants, helping to model and uphold event policies, and reporting any issues or emergencies to event staff. A designated safe area should be located for your group at the program or event site. This is a location where all individuals know to convene in the case of an emergency. Please be mindful that you need to be within close proximity when chaperoning youth from your counties and partnered counties.

Chaperones may make decisions to maximize the educational value of the event and to maintain the health and safety of every participant. If you have concerns with youth from another county, speak with their county chaperone. If this does not help, please contact the Event Coordinator who will intervene as





necessary and appropriate. Chaperones may make decisions about suitable times to leave events in such cases as bad weather.

Chaperones must intervene with discretion in situations that violate the rules of the event or the basic rights of others. This includes youth from other counties. Any serious problem with youth from other counties should be addressed and then immediately reported to the Lead Educator and the Event Coordinator.

Each event has different expectations for how chaperones participate in activities. See specific event information for more details.

## Volunteer Chaperones

CCE volunteers are accountable to expectations outlined in the [New York State 4-H Code of Conduct](#) and the [CCE Volunteer Involvement and Policy](#). Volunteers should be prepared to accept supervision as outlined in their volunteer agreement and according to specific event guidelines. Volunteer chaperones have authority to make decisions in the absence of County or State 4-H staff if needed but must notify their Lead Educator as soon as possible.

## 4-H Events

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### State Teen Action Representative Retreat (STARR)

The [State Teen Action Representative Retreat \(STARR\)](#) is a three-day, fun-filled event where 4-H members participate in a variety of workshops and activities meant to challenge, excite and further develop life skills. The event is planned by teens and adults serving on the youth/adult STARR planning committee and is held at the NYS Fairgrounds in Syracuse, NY. STARR is open to all NYS 4-H Teens (13-19 years old). For more information, please contact [Jamila Walida Simon](#) - STARR Event Coordinator.

### 4-H Career Explorations

For over 90 years, the New York State 4-H Office has hosted the annual [Career Explorations Conference](#) on the Cornell Campus. Nearly 500 4-H youth and chaperones attend the action-packed, three-day event to immerse themselves in exploring their future education, career opportunities, and to experience Cornell University and campus life! Cornell faculty and graduate students conduct engaged-learning workshops in two age-specific tracks:

- 1) Focus for Teens programs for youth entering grades 10-12
- 2) University U programs for youth entering grades 8-9

Over 20 programs are offered to help youth understand what a particular career field entails, what type of education they would need to pursue, and to learn from the experiences of the Program Facilitators. For more information, please contact [Alexa Maille](#) - Career Explorations Event Coordinator.



## NYS 4-H Communication Institute

The annual [NYS 4-H Communication Institute](#) takes place at Cornell University. Youth attend workshops and communication-related sessions and have opportunities to give their public presentations and receive peer/mentor evaluations. For more information, please contact [Jamila Walida Simon](#) - 4-H Communication Institute Event Coordinator.

## International Exchange

New York State 4-H has a long-standing relationship with [States' 4-H International Exchange](#). Currently the program is overseen by the State 4-H Office. The State 4-H office works with counties to recruit and screen families to host a Japanese delegate for a period of 4 weeks during the summer, usually from Mid-July thru Mid-August. Every year New York requests a certain number of delegates to host and works to find Host families for those delegates within the 4-H population. Families may participate in any number of 4-H programs at any level to be eligible to host a delegate. Delegates range in age from 12-18 (most are 12-14). Outbound opportunities are also available for NYS 4-H Youth. For more information, please contact [Autumn Lavine](#) - International Exchange Program Coordinator.

## 4-H at the GREAT New York State Fair

[4-H at State Fair](#) is synonymous with fun and excitement! For 18 days, youth from around New York are invited to attend Fair as representatives of their County Cooperative Extension and 4-H offices.

New York State 4-H Youth Development is fortunate to have continued support from the NYS Department of Agriculture & Markets and Cornell University for our strong presence at State Fair. Through our partnership, we are committed to an engaging experience for families. We highlight the best of 4-H, positive youth development, and New York itself through a focus on: agriculture and animal care; public presentations; renewable energy; health and fitness; robotics; teen leadership; and more. For more information, please contact [Autumn Lavine](#) - State Fair Event Coordinator.

## National 4-H Conference

The Premier Youth Development Opportunity of the Department of Agriculture, [National 4-H Conference](#) is the pinnacle experience in 4-H Civic Engagement, providing the opportunity for young people to connect, learn, engage, lead and impact their communities, their nation and their world.

Land Grant University 4-H Departments send delegations of 4-H youth between ages 15 and 19 to participate in the National 4-H Conference. At the conference, delegates prepare and present briefings on important societal topics to federal officials in Washington, D.C. 4-H youth also have the opportunity to engage in personal development experiences that increase their knowledge, resources, and skills while discussing topics affecting youth and 4-H programming nationwide.



# NYS 4-H State Event Participation Policy

Delegates not only learn while at the conference: they are empowered to create positive social change in their communities and have the opportunity to practice and apply their skills in a real-world setting.

Registration to attend the National 4-H Conference is coordinated through each state's 4-H program office. Youth and adult participants are selected by their respective state 4-H program and attend the conference as part of a group delegation. NO individual registrations are accepted. For more information, please contact [Jamila Walida Simon](#) - New York State Coordinator for National 4-H Conference.

## National 4-H Congress

National 4-H Congress is a five-day Educational Experience held in Atlanta, GA. Congress is the premiere nation-wide event for 4-Hers to network with others from around the country, Canada, and Puerto Rico. While at Congress, 4-Hers engage in leadership, citizenship, global awareness, and inclusion. Each state has their own registration process.

Registration to attend the National 4-H Conference is coordinated through each state's 4-H program office. Youth and adult participants are selected by their respective state 4-H program and attend the conference as part of a group delegation. NO individual registrations are accepted. For more information, please contact [Jamila Walida Simon](#) - New York State Coordinator for National 4-H Congress.

