

Kentucky 4-H Achievement Application Instructional Guide

Eligibility Requirements, Application Instructions, and Frequently Asked Questions

For 4-H Member Use

This document has important information about the Kentucky 4-H Achievement Application, including who can apply, instructions on how to fill out the application, and answers to common questions.

Who Can Apply - Eligibility Requirements

To ensure that you meet the necessary criteria for participation, please review the following eligibility requirements:

- You must be an active, enrolled 4-H member in good standing within your county and have participated in 4-H in Kentucky for at least one year.
- You must have at least 6 hours of 4-H involvement within your county 4-H program for the year you are applying.
- You must meet the age requirements for the Achievement level you are applying for.
- If you have turned 19 but were an active, enrolled 4-H member in the previous program year, you are eligible to apply.
- All information in your application must be accurate and truthfully represent your 4-H involvement and experiences. If the application is found to be falsified, it will be disqualified.

Level Requirements

Please refer to the following sections for additional information and requirements regarding the My 4-H Story, Resume, Cover Letter, and Video.

Level	Minimum Age Requirement	Application Requirement	Interview Requirement
Clover Level 1	10	• Completed Application • My 4-H Story	
Clover Level 2	11	• Completed Application • My 4-H Story	
Clover Level 3	12	• Completed Application • My 4-H Story	
Bronze	13	• Completed Application • My 4-H Story Essay • Photo	
Silver	High School	• Completed Application • My 4-H Story Essay • Resume • Photo	
Gold	High School	• Completed Application • My 4-H Story Essay • Resume • Cover Letter • Photo	Virtual Interview
Emerald	Received/Receiving Gold	• Completed Application • My 4-H Story Essay • Resume • Cover Letter • Video • Photo	• Virtual Preliminary Interview • In-person Preliminary Interview • In-person Call-Back Interview



Program Area Champion

4-H members applying for Gold or Emerald are eligible to be considered for Program Area Champion. 4-H Program Area Champion is a way for youth to be recognized for their knowledge, achievement, “spark”, and giving back within a program area. On the first page of the Achievement Application, you can choose to be considered for the Program Area Champion process. If selected, you may have the opportunity to participate in additional progressive experiences at the state and possibly national level. This could include career exposure in your program area, involvement in committees or planning groups where your voice is needed, and media or marketing opportunities related to the area in which you excel.

Guidelines and Directions for Completing Application

To successfully complete your application, please follow these guidelines and directions:

- Applicants may record all qualifying entries from ages 9-18 years old.
- Cloverbud activities are not eligible and should not be included in the application.
- Applications should report on 4-H-specific programs, projects, events, and activities unless otherwise noted.
- Applicants must meet the age requirements for the Achievement level they are applying for.

Instructions for Completing Category Boxes

For each section of the application, boxes are provided for the following categories: Club, Contest, Project, Special Event, or Participation. A list of various clubs, contests, projects, events, and programs is provided to help you determine which items belong in each category box. You can include multiple entries for each category, but each category box should contain only one entry. If you have more than one entry for a category, you will need to copy and paste the category boxes accordingly. Below are instructions on how to copy and paste the category boxes, along with an example. For instance, if you are in both the livestock club and the horticulture club, you will list the livestock club in one club category box, and then copy and paste another club category box for the horticulture club. See the example below.

If you don't have anything to put in one section or box, don't delete it. It's okay if you don't have something for every section or box, as most 4-H members probably won't. Leave the empty sections or boxes there in case you want to add something next year when you update your application.

A few notes to consider:

The Additional Details section in the category boxes should clarify your 4-H experience for the judge and be kept to just a few sentences. If you have written multiple paragraphs, your 4-H agent should help you summarize and rewrite it with limited text. Judges will not read sections with multiple paragraphs.

Examples of details to include in this section under clubs, special events, or participation:

- Title of a class, presentation, or activity you led and where you led it.
- Title of the newsletter article you created and the newsletter it was included in.
- Title of the service project you participated in or led and where the project took place.
- Title of the fundraiser you participated in.

Examples of details to include in this section under contests and projects:

- Title of the speech or demonstration you gave (such as How to Cure a Country Ham Speech Title)
- Title of the 4-H newsletter article you created (such as I wrote an article called “What to Pack for 4-H Summer Camp” for the March 2025 Bourbon County 4-H Newsletter).



If you took part in numerous livestock shows, horse shows, or shooting sports competitions in one year, you don't need to list each show separately. Instead, you can show how many you did by putting the number of shows in parentheses next to your age. For example, if you were 10 years old and went to 5 county sheep shows, you would write "Sheep Shows" in the Contest Category Box in the Agriculture and Animal Science section. Then, in the participation row, you would put your age under the county age column like this: 10 (5). See the example in the *Frequently Asked Questions* section of this handout.

Instructions for Copying and Pasting a Category Box in Microsoft Word

Select the Table:

- Click anywhere inside the category box you want to copy.
- A small square icon with a cross will appear at the top-left corner of the table (see the example below, highlighted with a red circle). Click this icon to select the entire box.



Club	Level	Age	Participation
	☐ County		Member
	☐ Multi-County		Committee Chair
	☐ Area		President or Chair
	☐ State		Vice President or Chair
	☐ National		Secretary
	☐ International		Reporter
			Treasurer
			Led Class, Presentation, and/or Activity
			Created Content for Newsletter, Social Media, or Other Communication Item
			Planned and/or Led Service Project
			Participated in Service Project
			Participated in Fundraising for Club
			Other:
			Additional Details (Optional):

Copy the Category Box:

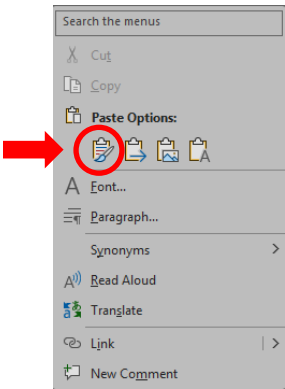
- Right-click on the selected box and choose "Copy" from the context menu.



Level	Age	Participation
☐ County		Member
☐ Multi-County		Committee Chair
☐ Area		President or Chair
☐ State		Vice President or Chair
☐ National		Secretary
☐ International		Reporter
		Treasurer
		Led Class, Presentation, and/or Activity
		Created Content for Newsletter, Social Media, or Other Communication Item
		Planned and/or Led Service Project
		Participated in Service Project
		Participated in Fundraising for Club
		Other:
		Additional Details (Optional):



- Paste the Box:
- Click where you want to paste the box in your document.
 - Right-click and choose "Paste: Keep Source Formatting" from the context menu.



Example of Adding a Category Box in the Agriculture and Animal Science Section for Clubs

Club	Level	Age	Participation
4-H Livestock Club	☒ County	10-15	Member
	☐ Multi-County		Committee Chair
	☐ Area		President or Chair
	☐ State	15	Vice President or Chair
	☐ National	14	Secretary
	☐ International		Reporter
			Treasurer
			Led Class, Presentation, and/or Activity
			Created Content for Newsletter, Social Media, or Other Communication Item
			Planned and/or Led Service Project
		12-15	Participated in Service Project
			Participated in Fundraising for Club
			Other:
		Additional Details (Optional):	



Club	Level	Age	Participation
4-H Horticulture Club	☐ County	9-15	Member
	☐ Multi-County	15	Committee Chair
	☐ Area		President or Chair
	☐ State		Vice President or Chair
	☐ National		Secretary
	☐ International		Reporter
			Treasurer
		15	Led Class, Presentation, and/or Activity
		14	Created Content for Newsletter, Social Media, or Other Communication Item
			Planned and/or Led Service Project
		11-15	Participated in Service Project
			Participated in Fundraising for Club
			Other:
Additional Details (Optional):			

My 4-H Story Section

The purpose of the My 4-H Story section is to help members gain experience in showcasing their 4-H spark. Specific requirements for each entry type are listed below.

For Clover levels 1-3, the My 4-H Story can be a video, essay, drawing, poem, or picture collage, with the entry type chosen by the county agent.

For the Bronze, Silver, Gold, and Emerald levels, your My 4-H Story must be written as an essay. Choose one or more prompts from the Common App website (<https://www.commonapp.org/apply/essay-prompts>) and use your 4-H experiences to answer the prompt(s) you selected.

Requirements:

The *video* should be 2-3 minutes long, created by the 4-H member, and uploaded to YouTube. It must be posted online by the application deadline and remain accessible. Only YouTube links will be accepted.

Drawings, poems, or picture collages should be limited to one page. *Essays* should be between 250-500 words. If using a font, please use 11- or 12-point Times New Roman or Arial. Poems must be at least 5 lines long. Picture collages can be created either digitally or by hand. Please include a PDF document with your application that showcases your picture collage.

Cover Letter and Resume

4-H members should use the Kentucky 4-H resume and cover letter templates. Agents can access these templates on the Kentucky 4-H Programming Teams page (see Achievement Folder in the Leadership Core Area Channel). Candidates must include the cover letter and resume in their application packet.

The cover letter should explain why you are the best candidate for the Gold or Emerald Award. Please include:

- How 4-H has helped you.
- How you will use the skills you have learned in 4-H in your life.

Please note:

- Use standard 8.5 x 11 paper.
- Use font size 12-point Times New Roman or Arial.



- Do not include photographs or project pictures.
- Limit each to one page.

Emerald Video

Create a 2-3 minute video addressing the following prompt: *4-H equips youth with essential life skills, confidence, and a sense of belonging through hands-on learning. Provide an example of a skill 4-H has taught you that will benefit your future career.*

Requirements:

- Created by the 4-H member
- Recorded with a smartphone or simple device (no special equipment or editing required)
- Uploaded to YouTube
- Accessible via YouTube link by the application deadline

Only YouTube links will be accepted.

4-H Summer Camp

For your 4-H Summer Camp involvement, list it in the 4-H Summer Camp section. This includes if you were a counselor, leader, or co-led a class or activity with an adult leader. For overnight or day camps, list them under the section that aligns with the camp's program area focus in the Special Event or Participation category box. For example, Environmental Camp should be listed in the Natural Resources section as a Special Event or Participation, while Horse Camp should be listed in the Agriculture and Animal Science section as a Special Event or Participation.

Instructions for Completing the Extended Activities Outside of 4-H Section

When you fill out the Extended Activities Outside of 4-H Section, choose non-4-H activities that make your application stronger, match your interests ("spark"), and make your story more impactful. You can list up to two activities each year. These activities can stay on your application from past years as you move up and apply for new levels. Extended activities will be evaluated on their relevance to your 4-H involvement, "spark," and interest areas.

Example of Extended Activities Outside of 4-H Section:

Activity	Level	Age	How does this relate or support your 4-H story?
FFA Member	☒ County ☐ Multi-County ☐ Area ☐ State ☐ National ☐ International	14-17	Being in FFA has taught me a lot about animal sciences and helped me take better care of my 4-H sheep project.

Activity	Level	Age	How does this relate or support your 4-H story?
KY Department of Agriculture Essay Contest	☐ County ☐ Multi-County ☐ Area ☒ State ☐ National ☐ International	17	I participated in the KDA Essay Contest, where I wrote about agricultural jobs in Kentucky. Through this experience, I learned about various career opportunities in agriculture.



Frequently Asked Questions

1. **What is the purpose of the new 4-H Achievement Program?** *The new 4-H Achievement Program is designed to capture your involvement in 4-H and tell your 4-H story through your achievement application packet. The application process helps you learn important life skills like being organized, keeping records, and communicating well.*
2. **How will current applicants transition to the new application?** *Current applicants must move their information to the new application. The old application process won't be accepted anymore. To make sure everyone switches over completely, there won't be a grandfather period.*
3. **What's different on the new application?** *The new application is very different from the old one. To help everyone understand the new process, there's an example application. This example shows how to list your 4-H activities, events, and programs on the new application.*
4. **Where can I get the new Achievement application?** *You can get the new application from your county 4-H agent.*
5. **When will the new application go into effect?** *September 1, 2025*
6. **Will there be a “grandfather” option?** *No grandfather period will be provided.*
7. **What format can applications be submitted?** *Applications can be submitted in MS Word or PDF format.*
8. **How many applicants will be awarded at each level?**
 - *Clover Levels 1-3: The county 4-H agent will give out the Clover level awards. These applications won't be judged at the state level.*
 - *Bronze Level: Up to 80% of applicants will be awarded each year*
 - *Silver Level: Up to 60% of applicants will be awarded each year*
 - *Gold Level: Up to 40% of applicants will be awarded each year*
 - *Emerald Level: Up to four youth*
9. **What are the rewards and limits for each achievement level?**

Each achievement level in 4-H comes with specific rewards and limits:

 - *Foundation Provided Pin and Patch: Every level will receive a pin and patch provided by the Foundation.*
 - *Additional Rewards for Bronze, Silver, Gold, and Emerald Levels: These levels will have additional rewards, such as 4-H event scholarships. Sponsorships and funding are currently being considered to determine the exact rewards for each level.*
10. **What is the Achievement application timeline?**
 - *Ask your county 4-H agent about the deadline to turn in your application packet to the county Extension office.*
 - *Gold interviews will happen in February.*
 - *Clover Levels 1-3, Bronze, Silver, and Gold winners will be announced in March.*
 - *Gold winners can apply for the Emerald level.*
 - *If you're applying for Emerald, ask your county 4-H agent about the deadline to turn in your Emerald application packet to the county Extension office.*
 - *Emerald virtual interviews will be in May, and in-person interviews will be in June (on the first day of the 4-H Teen Conference in Lexington).*
 - *Emerald winners will be announced at the Achievement Assembly during the 4-H Teen Conference.*



11. **How will judging/evaluation be as fair and consistent as possible for (Bronze/Silver/Gold/Emerald)?** *To ensure the judging process is fair, transparent, and consistent for all participants, the following measures are implemented:*
- *Clear Rubric Criteria: Judging is based on a well-defined rubric. The rubric will be available to agents for guidance and preparation.*
 - *Judge Orientation: Judges receive training to ensure they understand the purpose of the Achievement Program and the judging rubric, ensuring a uniform approach to judging.*
 - *Multiple Judges: Each application is judged by at least two judges to help balance out individual biases.*
 - *Gold and Emerald applications and their entry requirements will be reviewed by various sources to ensure a diversity of perspectives.*
12. **How will applications be judged without using points?** *Applications will be assessed using a well-defined rubric. The rubric will focus on how 4-H helps you find and grow your "sparks" (interests), and how you develop skills in leadership, communication, civic engagement, and program areas. Your application should show how you've learned, grown, and contributed to your community through 4-H.*
13. **What is a "spark"?** *A "spark" is a passion or interest that gives youth a sense of purpose and direction.*
14. **What is considered a 4-H event/activity/program?** *Any event, activity, or program planned and marketed by 4-H qualifies, whether it is at the county, area, regional, state, national, or international level. (Example: If you exhibit at a livestock show as an FFA member, it would be considered an extended activity. However, if you exhibit as a 4-H member, it would be classified as a 4-H activity listed in the Agriculture section as a contest entry.)*
15. **What activities need to be included in the application year?** *Application entries should cover activities up to the end of the program year on August 31st. Any involvement from September 1st onward in the program year the application is being submitted should not be included.*
16. **How should a 4-H member document participation in numerous livestock shows, shooting sports competitions, or fair projects that fit into the same section on their application?** *Indicate the age in the appropriate column based on the project or contest location (e.g., county level, state level). In parentheses, include the number of shows, contests, or fair projects the 4-H member participated in at that level. Several examples are given to explain how this can be documented on the application.*

Example 1: A 4-H member who shows sheep has participated in five county livestock shows as a 10-year-old, receiving Reserve Overall at one county show. As an 11-year-old, he/she participated in eight county livestock shows and one state livestock show, receiving Champion Overall at the state livestock show. He/she would list it as follows in a Project Category Box in the Agriculture and Animal Science section:

Project	Participation	County Age	Area Age	State Age	National Age	International Age
Sheep Shows	Participant	10 (5); 11 (8)		11 (1)		
	Champion Overall			11 (1)		
	Reserve Overall	10 (1)				
	Other (please explain):					
	Additional Details:					



Example 2: A 4-H Shooting Sports member in archery participated in four county shooting sports contests as a 12-year-old, receiving 2nd place (Reserve Overall) at one county show. As a 13-year-old, he/she participated in five county shooting sports contests and the state 4-H Shooting Sports Competition, receiving Champion Overall in his/her division. He/she would list it as follows in a Contest Category Box in the Natural Resources section:

Contest	Participation	County Age	Area Age	State Age	National Age	International Age
Archery Contests	Participant	12 (4); 13 (5)		13 (1)		
	Champion Overall					
	Reserve Overall	12 (1)		13 (1)		
	Other (please explain):					
	Additional Details:					

Example 3: A 9-year-old 4-H member participates in a county 4-H art project day workshop, where he/she creates a watercolor painting, a black pencil drawing, and a colored pencil drawing. He/she submits all three art projects to the county fair, and two of them win Champion, advancing to the State Fair. At the State Fair, one of his/her entries earns the Reserve Champion award. He/she would list these achievements in the Project Category Box under the Communication and Expressive Arts section.

Project	Participation	County Age	Area Age	State Age	National Age	International Age
Art Projects	Participant	9 (3)		9 (2)		
	Champion Overall					
	Reserve Overall			9 (1)		
	Other (please explain):					
	Additional Details:					



Example 4: A 14-year-old 4-H member participates in a 2-day county 4-H project day workshop, where he/she creates a woodworking project, a bulletin board, and a crate bookshelf. He/she submits all three projects to the county fair. The woodworking project places 1st overall and advances to the State Fair, where it earns the Reserve Champion title. Since the woodworking project falls under Natural Resources and the bulletin board and crate bookshelf are categorized as Home Environment projects within Family and Consumer Sciences, these achievements should be listed as follows:

Family and Consumer Science Section

Project	Participation	County Age	Area Age	State Age	National Age	International Age
Projects	Participant	14 (2)				
	Champion Overall					
	Reserve Overall					
	Other (please explain):					
	Additional Details:					

Natural Resources Section

Project	Participation	County Age	Area Age	State Age	National Age	International Age
Projects	Participant	14 (1)		14 (1)		
	Champion Overall					
	Reserve Overall			14 (1)		
	Other (please explain):					
	Additional Details:					

17. **What if I don't have anything to put in one section or box? Should I delete it?** *No, don't delete the box. It's okay if you don't have something for every section or box. Most 4-H members probably won't. Leave the empty sections or boxes there in case you want to add something next year when you update your application.*
18. **What are guidelines, format, and criteria for interview process (Gold/Emerald)?** *Gold applicants who meet the application requirements will participate in a virtual interview via Zoom with at least two judges, who will ask questions. All interview questions will center on the 4-H program, the member's participation, and their personal journey. For Gold applicants, the total score will be equally divided between the application score and the interview score, with each contributing 50%.*



The Emerald applicants who meet the application requirements will undergo a preliminary virtual interview. Approximately 50-60% of these applicants will advance to the in-person interview process, which includes preliminary in-person interviews followed by callback interviews.

19. What is the Emerald selection process?

- *All Emerald applicants will participate in a virtual interview in May. This interview will highlight the young person's 4-H journey, including their experiences, lessons learned, and future aspirations inspired by their involvement.*
- *50-60% of applicants will be selected from the Emerald virtual interview to participate in an in-person interview. This progressive interview consists of three rooms: one focusing on Civic/Community Involvement, one on 4-H involvement, and one scenario-based. The goal of the in-person interview is to assess how well applicants can think on their feet and communicate effectively. This portion emphasizes their critical thinking and communication skills rather than their 4-H journey and accomplishments.*
- *After the in-person interviews, a select number of candidates will be invited to call-back interviews. This stage will again emphasize the applicants' communication and critical thinking.*
- *The top four candidates will be selected from the call-back interviews and announced at the Achievement Assembly during the Teen Conference.*

20. What are photo requirements and specifications? *Youth photos for Bronze, Silver, Gold, and Emerald applications should be attached as a digital jpg file with the application. Please check for photo quality, ensuring the applicant fills the frame and agents have worked with the applicant to ensure proper surroundings and 4-H dress code are utilized.*

