



Guidelines for National and Multi-State 4-H Competitive Events

National 4-H Competitive Event – Denotes a multi-state 4-H competitive event designated as “the” national contest in a given program area. Examples include the National 4-H Livestock Judging contest in Louisville, Kentucky, the 4-H Shooting Sports National Championships in Grand Island, Nebraska, and the National 4-H Food Challenge in Dallas, Texas.

Multi-state 4-H Competitive Event – This designation is given to a multi-state 4-H competitive event that is not designated as “the” national contest in a given program area. Examples include the livestock judging contest at the Western 4-H Roundup in Denver, Colorado and livestock judging at the American Royal in Kansas City, Missouri.

Approval Process for National 4-H Competitive Events and Multi-State 4-H Competitive Events

In order to secure use of the 4-H Name and Emblem, all National 4-H Competitive events and all Multi-State 4-H Competitive events are required to submit a multi-state application to the USDA-NIFA Division of Youth and 4-H to the following e-mail address: christopher.petty@usda.gov

Application Documents and information are available at: <https://nifa.usda.gov/resource/4-h-events-resource>

Suggested National and Multi-State 4-H Competitive Event Rules:

A State/territory/District of Columbia is allowed only one entry in only one division of a contest in a national 4-H competitive event each year. An entry is an individual, in the events where individuals compete against individuals only, or a team in events where total team scores are computed and recognition given to the team. Individuals may be recognized in those events that are primarily team events.

Entries not officially entered will not be permitted to participate for any reason.

An individual may enter a **National 4-H competitive event** in a specific program area only once. Participating members of a team entry (even if they are designated alternate by low score) are ineligible to enter the same event again as a part of another team.

The eligibility requirements to enter a National 4-H Competitive Event or a Multi-State 4-H Competitive event are:

Contestant must already have passed his or her 14th birthday, and may not have reached his or her 19th birthday as of January 1 of the year in which the National 4-H Competitive Event is held. However, the State 4-H Leader may grant a special authorization to compete, for youth with developmental disabilities who exceed the upper age limit.

All contestants must be members of 4-H in the state they are representing during the year in which the National 4-H Competitive Event is held.

The contestant(s) or team(s) of contestants must be certified as the official state entry by the State 4-H Leader or by a person designated by the State 4-H Leader. The individual(s) or team(s) may be selected by any procedure the State 4-H Leader believes is appropriate.

The contestant, his or her county 4-H staff member, and the State 4-H Leader must certify as follows on the application form or an accompanying memo:

“This contestant has not participated in post-secondary coursework in the subject area of the national 4-H competition, nor has he or she participated in training for post-secondary competition in the subject area of the national 4-H competition.”

Violation of the above will result in forfeiture of any awards or recognition which have been won in the National 4-H Competitive Event.

Guidelines for 4-H Competitive Event Committees:

The following are guidelines for organization, appointment, and operation of Contest Management Committees:

The Contest Management Committee is responsible for the overall management and operation of the competitive event.

The Contest Management Committee must be made up of at least 50 percent Extension salaried staff, either in the subject matter area of the contest or in 4-H. Other members of the committee may be business or industrial representatives and/or other university personnel. At least two members of the Management Committee should be 4-H youth volunteers, and Management Committees are encouraged to include adult 4-H volunteers as well. National 4-H Council may or may not choose to name a staff member to the committee. The Contest Superintendent(s) should be members of the committee.

It is desirable that committee members have experience with youth development education.

The term of office for committee members should be for three years, except for the first committee. One-third of the terms of the first committee should be for three years, one-third for two years, and one-third for one year so that there will be continuity. Members may be re-appointed.

The term of office for the superintendent(s) will be one to three years at the discretion of the contest management committee. He/she may be re-appointed.

The Contest Management Committee will be responsible for establishing and updating rules. If Eastern and Western divisions exist, the superintendents and contest committee chairs must coordinate classes, awards, budgets, etc. in order to provide similar experiences for youth.

The Contest Management Committee will serve as the appeals committee and receive recommendations for procedural changes.

The committee will establish a system (individual or sub-committee) to solicit the private sector for funds and awards for the event.

Results of the contest should be given to each team at the contest, and shared with the states.

Revised 2016 by a committee of state 4-H program leaders and 4-H event coordinators. Reviewed and approved by the National 4-H Program Leaders Working Group. Updated by USDA-NIFA Division of Youth and 4-H May 2021