



Overview of Mark of Excellence and the State 4-H Awards Program

Purpose

The purpose of this awards program is to recognize 4-H youth for engaging in rich learning experiences that result in outstanding knowledge and life-skill development.

After participating in the State 4-H Awards Program youth will:

- Learn to better communicate and represent their accomplishments on professional applications such as scholarships, college-entrance applications, résumés and cover letters for employment.
- Have more experience and be better able to communicate during job interviews
- Build long-lasting friendships and establish connections with industry and academic leaders
- Be encouraged to set new goals, continue building skills and assets, and broaden interests

Who

Michigan 4-H members currently enrolled in a county 4-H program and are 11 to 19 years of age (as of January 1, 2015) are eligible for the program. The State Awards Recognition Program is divided into three age divisions.

Applicants who are	Are eligible for this division
11 to 12 years old	Mark of Excellence Essay Contest
13 to 15 years old	Junior State Awards (state awards application and leadership-development program)
16 to 19 years old	Senior State Awards (state awards application and interview)
13 to 19 year old	Group Awards (group awards application and presentation)

Where

Applications for all State 4-H Awards Recognition Programs can be completed from your home, school or other computer. Up to two Mark of Excellence winners will be announced per county. Up to 12 youth in each award area for both the junior and senior age divisions and up to 12 groups will be invited to participate as State Awards delegates during 4-H Exploration Days on Michigan State University's campus. There is no limit to how many junior or senior delegates can come from a county.

When

All essays and applications are due by February 1. Mark of Excellence essays are submitted to the county MSU Extension office, while State Award Applications are submitted via email to the State 4-H Awards Planning Committee at State4HAwards@anr.msu.edu. **IMPORTANT:** Delegates need to use a specific naming process when saving and submitting their application and photo.

Selected applications in the junior and senior age divisions and group awards will be invited to participate as State Award delegates at MSU during 4-H Exploration Days, June 24 to 26, 2015.

Naming and Submitting your files

Your award application and photo must be named and sent as follows:

Junior Applicants:

Application: Last name, Jr Award, Award Area, County.doc

Photo: Last name, Jr Award, Award Area, County.jpg

Senior Applicants:

Application: Last name, Sr Award, Award Area, County.doc

Photo: Last name, Sr Award, Award Area, County.jpg

Group Applicants:

Application: Group name, Group Award, County.doc

Photo: Group name, Group Award, County.jpg

Form of Recognition

Mark of Excellence and State 4-H Awards Program winners will receive the following recognition.

Award division	Type of award
Mark of Excellence	Certificate and a medal. Essays are added to the Mark of Excellence history book at the Michigan 4-H Foundation, State 4-H office and Kettunen Center. Essays may also be used locally to promote 4-H programs. Winners may receive other recognition locally.
Junior & Senior delegates	Certificate
Junior winners	Certificate and \$50
Senior winners	Certificate and \$200
Winning Group	Certificate for each group representative and (1) \$200 award for the group

Junior and senior division delegates and groups will have their images and biography information posted on the Michigan 4-H Youth Development web site to be recognized throughout the year. State 4-H Award winners will belong to an elite group of 4-H youth who have demonstrated the highest level of excellence.

Cost to Participate

There is no cost for members to participate in the Mark of Excellence and State 4-H Awards Program. This program is made possible by generous donations and sponsorships to the State 4-H Awards Program. However, delegates invited to participate in the State 4-H Awards Program on campus will need to register to attend 4-H Exploration Days. A \$45 scholarship is made available to delegates to help defray the expense of attending 4-H Exploration Days. Delegates should contact their county 4-H office for more details.

Supporting the State 4-H Awards Program

Gifts in the amount of \$600 will fully sponsor an award area. Of that gift, \$200 will be directly awarded to the winning group or senior State 4-H Award winner in that award area and \$50 will be directly awarded to the junior State 4-H Award winner. The remaining gift will be used to help support the entire award area delegation through participating in the State 4-H Awards Program, interviews, leadership development program and State 4-H Awards Recognition Program on Thursday morning. Gifts less than \$600 (partial sponsorships) are also appreciated. If you are interested in helping to recognize Michigan's best 4-H youth, contact the Michigan 4-H Foundation at 517-353-6692 or at www.mi4hfdtn.org/stateawards.html.



Mark of Excellence Essay Contest

Theme

The theme of the essay is “Because of 4-H I can...”

Eligibility

To be eligible for this contest, the applicant must:

1. Be a 4-H member between the ages of 11 and 12.
2. Write an essay that focuses on the theme, “Because of 4-H I can...”
3. Follow these guidelines, when submitting an essay.
 - a. All essays must be computer generated, typed or handwritten in blue or black ink on 8 ½ x 11” paper, single sided, in 500 words or less (no more than 2 pages in length). If typed, use a 12 pt. font.
 - b. Put your name and county in the top right-hand corner of each sheet of paper (including the first page). Do not include photos or other graphics in your essay!
 - c. The essay **must be held together with a paperclip**. Do not staple your essay or put essays into binders or folders.
 - d. **Do not use a cover page.**
 - e. All essays and media release forms (see page 4 of this document) must be turned into your county office by February 1.

Selection

Individuals may only be selected for this award once. Each county will have the opportunity to select up to two winning essays. The winning essays will be forwarded to the State Coordinator for Mark of Excellence and will be added to the Mark of Excellence history book at the Michigan 4-H Foundation, State 4-H Office and Kettunen Center. The authors of the winning essays will receive a certificate and medal and may receive other recognition locally.

Note: While participation in 4-H Exploration Days is not required, it is strongly encouraged. County representatives will be responsible for all costs related to 4-H Exploration Days. Individual counties may choose to award scholarship monies to these individuals.



Mark of Excellence Media Release Form

This form is required for participation in the Michigan State University Extension 4-H Mark of Excellence program. Youth who apply for the State 4-H Awards Program need not complete a separate media release form because the form they submit to their county will be used as a part of their 4-H Exploration Days registration.

Participant Name _____

County of 4-H Participation _____ **Program Year:** _____

I authorize Michigan State University Extension/4-H to record my image and/or voice for use by Michigan State University Extension or its assignees in research, education, and promotional programs. I understand and agree that these audio, video, film, and/or print images may be edited, duplicated, distributed, reproduced, broadcasted and/or reformatted in any form and manner without payment of fees in perpetuity.

_____ I do authorize. _____ I do not authorize.

Parent/Guardian Signature _____
(Participant must sign if over 18.)

Date _____



2015 Mark of Excellence Time Line

**October 2014 -
January 2015**

Promote Mark of Excellence to 11 to12-year-old 4-H members

February 1

Mark of Excellence **essays due to county staff**

February 1-10

County 4-H staff coordinate selection committee to select two winning essays from their county

February 15

County 4-H staff submit the following:

- County Submission Form
- Media Release Form (3 copies)
- Original copies of their county's two winning essays
- Two copies of each essay

by U. S. mail, to:

Janice Zerbe, State Coordinator
4-H Mark of Excellence
Van Buren County MSU Extension
Suite 201
219 Paw Paw Street
Paw Paw, MI 49079

February 15-May 2

4-H staff encourage Mark of Excellence winners to participate in 4-H Exploration Days

Mid-May 2014

Each Mark of Excellence winner receives congratulatory letter and certificate



State 4-H Awards Program (Individual Applications)

Completing the 2015 State 4-H Individual Awards Application

The State 4-H Awards Application includes a cover letter, your 4-H Story and a series of questions about your 4-H experiences. All of those areas will be included in one Microsoft Word document entitled "2015 State 4-H Awards Individual Application" The application is a Word document which means applicants can download the file and save it onto their computers.

The applicant will send an email with the following attachments: (1) completed 2015 State 4-H Awards Application and (2) a single photograph (headshot) for individuals to the following email address: State4HAwards@anr.msu.edu by February 1.

IMPORTANT: Delegates need to use a specific naming process when saving and submitting their application and photo.

Naming and Submitting your files

Your award application and photo must be named and sent as follows:

Junior Applicants:

Application: Last name,Jr Award,Award Area,County.doc

Photo: Last name,Jr Award,Award Area,County.jpg

Senior Applicants:

Application: Last name,Sr Award,Award Area,County.doc

Photo: Last name,Sr Award,Award Area,County.jpg

****Please Note:** Individuals applying for the group award will complete a separate application "2015 State 4-H Awards Group Application". A group award application should be completed as a group effort, but only be submitted once on behalf of the entire group. Refer to the section labeled directions for Group Applications.

Members may only submit one application per year. They may submit an individual application or be a group representative.

Members should read all instructions carefully before starting. Creating your application is an exercise in professionally communicating your experiences in a standardized format similar to scholarship and employment applications.

General Guidelines

- All applications will be submitted electronically to State4HAwards@anr.msu.edu. Hard copies will not be accepted.
- Applications should be completed in full. Do not leave a question blank.
- Applications must be typed and responses submitted within the 2015 State 4-H Awards Application.
- Do not include or attach project reports, news clippings or letters. Answer the questions on the application and do not include supplemental items. You should only submit via email the 2015 State 4-H Awards Application and one picture of yourself. The picture you submit will be used during the

State 4-H Awards Recognition Program, shared with donors and used to promote the State 4-H Awards Program and your accomplishments.

- For individual junior and senior applicants, the picture should be a head-and-shoulder shot. We strongly recommend that you wear professional attire for this head and shoulder shot.
- Following are a few additional guidelines for individual applicants:
 - Email one photo as an attachment along with your 2015 State 4-H Awards Application.
 - Submit a recent color photo of yourself from the shoulders up.
 - Wear professional clothing, such as you would for an interview.
 - Wear solid colors when possible to limit distractions.
 - Do not submit a photo of you wearing a hat.
 - Photo must be high resolution; a blurry photo will not be used.
 - Be mindful of glare, shadow, overhead light placement and red eye.
 - Photos taken outside work well.
- Just like professional applications for scholarships, college, and employment, your State 4-H Awards applications should use a professional style 12 point, black-colored font, be single spaced and use a 1 inch margin on each of the four sides (top, bottom, left, right).
- Each question has a maximum word limit. It is important to stay within that limit. There is not a minimum word limit. Most word-processing programs have a “word count” feature which can help you meet the maximum word limit requirement.
- Information contained in the State 4-H Awards Application should be factual and concise, yet fully representative of all your major accomplishments in 4-H. Concentrate on content. The judges are evaluating your 4-H career, much as an employer would evaluate your résumé.
- Use correct grammar and spelling. Proofread your work for errors and have others assist you with proofreading.
- After you have completed your State 4-H Awards Individual Application, review all the sections carefully. Your application should be an organized presentation of what you have learned and accomplished in the 4-H program. When accurately kept and carefully assembled, it is a useful tool for determining your own progress and personal growth. Completing a State 4-H Awards Individual Application will better prepare you to complete other professional portfolios, for example a job or scholarship application.

Instructions for Completing the 2015 State 4-H Awards Application Individual Junior and Senior Divisions

The application sections and what needs to appear in them are listed below. Submit information for each question.

Part of application	How to complete it
Personal Information	Include your name as you would like it to be listed on all State 4-H Awards Program materials.
State 4-H Award Area	Select the one State 4-H Award area for which you would like to apply. If you have won the State 4-H Award within that area, you may not apply for it again, unless you are now in a different age division. You can find information about the award areas and how to select which one to apply for by referring to page 14 in this document. When selecting age division, use your age as of January 1, 2015. In previous years, alternative award areas were offered. If you won a State 4-H Award in an area not listed, note the name of that award in the space provided.
Biography	Write a short (200-word maximum) summary about yourself and your 4-H involvement. You can include future ambitions, too. The text you provide will be used during the State 4-H Awards Recognition Program during 4-H Exploration Days and it will be shared with State 4-H Awards Program donors.
Approval of Application	After you submit your application, the State 4-H Awards Planning Committee will send an electronic copy of your application to your county 4-H program coordinator and your 4-H leader for review and approval. This step helps ensure accuracy. Therefore, provide correct email addresses for both your county 4-H program coordinator and your 4-H leader. Your application must be electronically approved by both individuals before it is evaluated by the selection committee.
Cover Letter	The cover letter should contain a maximum of 500 words and it should introduce you, tell the selection committee which award you are applying for and why you feel you are the best candidate for them to select. See an example on page 15 of this document.
Your 4-H Story	<p>The 4-H story should contain no more than 1,500 words. Your story should focus on the award area in which you are applying and also convey how your participation in 4-H contributed to your self-respect and concern for others, how it has influenced you in school, in your use of leisure time and in your career plans. “Your 4-H Story” is the place to expand on facts and figures by telling what your experiences have meant to you, how they have developed and affected your confidence, your attitude and other factors. This is an appropriate place to talk about your experiences and achievements you have had in your project area.</p> <p>“Your 4-H Story” adds warmth and depth to your application. Be creative and personal but avoid being “cutesy.” Themes and gimmicks can be effective or they can be overdone to the point of becoming a disadvantage to you. Have someone proofread your work before you submit it. The following outline may help you develop “Your 4-H Story.” It is divided into parts simply to help you outline what you want to say about yourself. Do not identify these parts in “Your 4-H Story.” This is only one example.</p> <p>Part 1 Introduce yourself. Include information about your age, interests, family, where</p>

	<p>you live, where you go to school, when and why you became involved in 4-H.</p> <p>Part 2 Tell about the project area in which you are applying, how 4-H helped you learn things about this area you didn't know before, how your project grew in size and scope, and some of your successes (and failures!) in the project area.</p> <p>Part 3 Highlight your other 4-H projects and activities, including major learning experiences, special interests and unusual situations you have encountered.</p> <p>Part 4 Explain how 4-H has helped you become a better leader and citizen, how 4-H has increased your interest and participation in community affairs, and what you have learned from your team or group involvement and efforts.</p> <p>Part 5 Describe how 4-H participation has impacted the way you feel about yourself, influenced your school and career goals, and your use of leisure time. Tell about your future plans and the career you want to pursue.</p>
<p>Application Questions 1 to 8</p>	<p>In questions 1 through 6, frame your responses around the 4-H award area for which you wish to be recognized. In questions 7 and 8, think about all your 4-H experiences, not just those in the award area for which you are applying. Information should be presented and organized in a logical sequence. You get these results from careful planning, thorough reflection about all your 4-H experiences, and selection and emphasis of only the most important information. Submit a thoughtful response to each question. Here are the questions and the beginning of some sample answers.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Choose four life skills from the diagram on page 20 (one from each of Head, Heart, Hands, and Health) and describe how you have developed each life skill through your 4-H project. <i>Through my Healthy Lifestyles 4-H project I have learned personal safety, planning/organizing, cooperation, and marketable skills. Cooking in the kitchen has taught me the importance of practicing safety including using care with hot surfaces while using the oven. I have learned safe handling of knives and sharp objects. Food safety is an important aspect of keeping safe in the kitchen(up to 500 words)</i> Describe how you have applied any life skill (from the diagram on page 20) in your 4-H project (16 to 19 only). <i>I learned planning/organizing in my Communications and Expressive Arts project. When I prepared my photography exhibit for fair, I reviewed the available options to enter and brainstormed ideas for photographs. I made a list of the photos that I wanted to shoot and planned times when I would take them. I planned photo shoots with friends and families and kept track of my appointments in my calendar (up to 500 words)</i> Describe how you have applied any life skill (from the diagram on page 20) in life outside of 4-H (16 to 19 only). <i>I learned about disease prevention in my Healthy Lifestyles project. I have applied this skill to my cooking for my family. My grandmother has diabetes. Through my 4-H project I learned about this disease and learned how to prepare meals that are appropriate for my family. I made my grandmother a sugar-free pie for her birthday(up to 500 words)</i> Identify up to four areas of content knowledge you have learned in your 4-H project and describe what you have learned and how you learned it <i>In my 4-H Goat project I have learned showmanship, hoof care, milk processing and nutrition. In the area of nutrition, I have learned the various</i>

	<p><i>feed stuffs, ration amounts and protein contents of each feed stuff . . . (up to 500 words)</i></p> <p>5. Describe how you have applied the knowledge you have learned (from one or more of the areas identified in question 4) to your 4-H project (16 to 19 only). <i>In my beef project, I kept records of my finances. From my records, I was able to create a budget for my project for the coming year and begin my savings account. I have put together a plan to save enough money to purchase a heifer to expand my herd next year . . . (up to 500 words)</i></p> <p>6. Describe how you have applied knowledge you have learned in your 4-H project to life outside of 4-H (16 to 19 only). <i>In my Technology and Engineering project, I learned the scientific procedure to complete my science experiment on water quality. In my school science fair, I applied the same process to complete my science fair project . . . (up to 500 words)</i></p> <p>7. Identify up to three 4-H leadership experiences you have had and describe their significance to your personal growth and development. <i>One of the most significant leadership experiences I have had in my 4-H career was serving as a club officer. I have held the positions of secretary, vice president and president. The last two roles allowed me to learn parliamentary procedure and how to conduct a meeting. Being a club officer taught me how to make decisions as a group . . . (up to 500 words)</i></p> <p>8. Identify up to three 4-H citizenship/community service experiences you have had and describe their significance to you and your community. <i>My favorite community service project in my 4-H club was learning about world hunger and raising funds to donate to the food bank in my community. Through this community service project, our 4-H club had a guest speaker who taught us about the issue. Our club members shared what we learned with many people in our community to raise awareness about the hunger issues locally and collect funds to meet this need . . . (up to 500 words)</i></p>
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Selection and Scoring for Individual Applications

1. Once applications are received on February 1, they will be forwarded to your county 4-H Program Coordinator and the 4-H leader you identified on your application for verification of accuracy of the application. Your application will only be eligible for evaluation after these two individuals confirm that the information in your application is factual.
2. Each award area has a selection committee who will review the junior and senior applications in their assigned award area. The selection committee will complete a State 4-H Awards Application Evaluation Form for each applicant.
3. Up to 12 applicants in each age division (junior and senior) may be selected to advance as State Award Delegates in their award area based on their scores.
4. All applicants will be notified by March 15 about whether or not they have been selected as a delegate for their award area in their age division. Feedback from the selection committee will be provided immediately to applicants not selected to be a delegate. Following the State 4-H Awards Recognition Program, applicants selected to be delegates will receive feedback from both the application and the interview.
5. During 4-H Exploration Days, senior delegates will complete an interview with the selection committee in their award area. The selection committee will complete a State 4-H Awards Interview Evaluation Form for each delegate. During this time, the junior delegates will participate in a special leadership-development program.
6. State Award winners in both the junior and senior age divisions will be announced at the State 4-H Awards Recognition Program Thursday morning during Exploration Days. Selection for each age division will be as follows:
 - a. Junior winner will be selected from the highest-scoring application.
 - b. Senior winner will be selected from the highest-scoring interview. In the event of a tied score, the winner will be selected from the highest-scoring application between the tied individuals.

Scoring Criteria

The application evaluation [on page 17](#) will be used by each selection committee to assess and score each application. A minimum score of 16 is required to be eligible to advance as a delegate. The top eligible scores (maximum of 12) will be selected to advance.

The interview evaluation form [on page 18](#) will also be used by each selection committee to assess and score each delegate's interview. A minimum score of 24 is required to be named a State 4-H Award winner.

State 4-H Awards Program (Group Applications)

Completing the 2015 State 4-H Group Awards Application

The State 4-H Awards Application includes a cover letter, your 4-H Story and a series of questions about your 4-H experiences. All of those areas will be included in one Microsoft Word document entitled "2015 State 4-H Awards Group Application" The application is a Word document which means applicants can download the file and save it onto their computers.

The applicant will send an email with the following attachments: (1) completed 2015 State 4-H Awards Application and (2) a single photograph of your entire group to the following email address: State4HAwards@anr.msu.edu by February 1.

IMPORTANT: Delegates need to use a specific naming process when saving and submitting their application and photo.

Naming and Submitting your files

Your award application and photo must be named and sent as follows:

Junior Applicants:

Application: Last name,Jr Award,Award Area,County.doc
Photo: Last name,Jr Award,Award Area,County.jpg

Senior Applicants:

Application: Last name,Sr Award,Award Area,County.doc
Photo: Last name,Sr Award,Award Area,County.jpg

Group Applicants:

Application: Group name,Group Award,County.doc
Photo: Group name,Group Award,County.jpg

****Please Note:** A group award application should be completed as a group effort, but only be submitted once on behalf of the entire group. Members may only submit one application per year. Members may submit an individual application or be a group representative.

Members should read all instructions carefully before starting. Creating your application is an exercise in professionally communicating your experiences in a standardized format similar to scholarship and employment applications.

General Guidelines

- All applications will be submitted electronically to State4HAwards@anr.msu.edu. Hard copies will not be accepted.
- Applications should be completed in full. Do not leave a question blank.
- Applications must be typed and responses submitted within the 2015 State 4-H Group Awards Application.
- Do not include or attach project reports, news clippings or letters. Answer the questions on the application and do not include supplemental items. You should only submit via email the 2015 State 4-H Awards Application and one picture of the group. The picture you submit will be used during the State 4-H Awards Recognition Program, shared with donors and used to promote the State 4-H Awards Program and your accomplishments.

- Following are a few additional guidelines for group applicants:
 - Email one photo as an attachment along with your 2015 State 4-H Awards Group Application.
 - Submit a recent color photo of your group.
 - Wear professional clothing, such as you would for an interview.
 - Wear solid colors when possible to limit distractions.
 - Photo must be high resolution; a blurry photo will not be used.
 - Be mindful of glare, shadow, overhead light placement and red eye.
 - Photos taken outside work well.
- Just like professional applications for scholarships, college, and employment, your State 4-H Awards applications should use a professional style 12 point, black-colored font, be single spaced and use a 1 inch margin on each of the four sides (top, bottom, left, right).
- Each question has a maximum word limit. It is important to stay within that limit. There is not a minimum word limit. Most word-processing programs have a “word count” feature which can help you meet the maximum word limit requirement.
- Information contained in the State 4-H Awards Application should be factual and concise, yet fully representative of all your major accomplishments in 4-H. Concentrate on content. The judges are evaluating your 4-H experience, much as an employer would evaluate your résumé.
- Use correct grammar and spelling. Proofread your work for errors and have others assist you with proofreading.
- After you have completed your State 4-H Awards Group Application, review all the sections carefully. Your application should be an organized presentation of what you have learned and accomplished in the 4-H program. When accurately kept and carefully assembled, it is a useful tool for determining your own progress and personal growth. Completing a State 4-H Awards Group Application will better prepare you to complete other professional portfolios, for example a job or scholarship application.
- The State 4-H Group Award Application is a separate document from the Individual Award Application completed by Junior and Senior applicants.
- A group must consist of three or more 4-H members; do not all need to be from same club or county.
- A group may be represented (application and presentation) by 2-5 youth. Group representatives may not apply for individual award recognition in the same year they are representing a group.
- Group award representatives must be ages 13-19 (4-H age). There is no minimum year of experience required in 4-H, project, or group to be selected as a group representative.
- Groups will submit application according to directions for State 4-H Awards Program (email)
- There is one Group Awards Recognition Area in the Michigan 4-H State Awards Program. The following are examples of potential projects for which a group may seek recognition (please note these are not separate recognition areas; nor is this an exclusive list): community service projects, citizenship projects, group learning in a project area, entrepreneurial or fundraising projects, a special activity held by the group, or a group representing the county at a state or national event or contest.
- Up to 12 groups will be invited to participate in the State Awards Assembly during 4-H Exploration Days. Judges may select up to one winning group based on presentations.
- During State 4-H Awards Assembly on Wednesday of Exploration Days, groups will present a prepared presentation for judges. The presentation may be any format the group chooses (power point, poster, demonstration, oral speech, etc). All group representatives must have a role in the presentation. Presentation should be up to 10 minutes; followed by 5 minutes of questions. Presentations will be scored using the Campus Interview Evaluation Form; with consideration for team participation.
- The group application should reflect a current project or a project that has been completed within 12-months of the State 4-H Awards application deadline.
- A group may apply for the State 4-H Group Award annually. However, the group may not be represented by any youth who has previously been a representative of a winning State 4-H Group Award.
- The Group Award application must be prepared by current group representatives to reflect their experiences in the group and as individuals.
- Some sections of the State 4-H Group Award Application request individual group representatives to each prepare an answer for the question. In these sections, begin each person’s response with a new paragraph and their name bolded as following:
Suzy Clover: (insert Suzy’s response here)

The application sections and what needs to appear in them are listed below. Submit information for each question.

Part of application	How to complete it
Personal Information	Include your group name and representative names as you would like it to be listed on all State 4-H Awards Program materials.
State 4-H Award Area	BE CERTAIN TO USE THE STATE 4-H GROUP AWARD APPLICATION
Biography	Write a short (200-word maximum) summary about your group and your group's 4-H involvement. You can include future ambitions, too. The text you provide will be used during the State 4-H Awards Recognition Program during 4-H Exploration Days and it will be shared with State 4-H Awards Program donors.
Approval of Application	After you submit your application, the State 4-H Awards Planning Committee will send an electronic copy of your application to your county 4-H program coordinator and your 4-H leader for review and approval. This step helps ensure accuracy. Therefore, provide correct email addresses for both your county 4-H program coordinator and your 4-H leader. Your application must be approved by both individuals before it is evaluated by the selection committee.
Cover Letter	The cover letter should contain a maximum of 500 words and it should introduce your group, tell the selection committee which award you are applying for and why you feel you are the best candidate for them to select. See an example on page 15 of this document.
Your 4-H Story	<p>Maximum 2,000 words total parts 1, 2, 3 and 4; plus 300 words for each representative part 5. Your story should focus on the award area in which you are applying and also convey how your participation in 4-H contributed to your self-respect and concern for others, how it has influenced you in school, in your use of leisure time and in your career plans. "Your 4-H Story" is the place to expand on facts and figures by telling what your experiences have meant to you, how they have developed and affected your confidence, your attitude and other factors. This is an appropriate place to talk about experiences and achievements you have had in your project area.</p> <p>"Your 4-H Story" adds warmth and depth to your application. Be creative and personal but avoid being "cutesy." Themes and gimmicks can be effective or they can be overdone to the point of becoming a disadvantage to you. Have someone proofread your work before you submit it. The following outline may help you develop "Your 4-H Story." It is divided into parts simply to help you outline what you want to say about yourself. Do not identify these parts in "Your 4-H Story", with the exception of Part 5—identify each representative as indicated in Group Award guidelines above.</p> <p>Part 1 Introduce your group. Include information about who is involved in your group; where you are from; what your group does; how many total people make up your group; how long has the group existed; which members were selected to represent the group.</p> <p>Part 2 Tell about the group project for which you are applying, how 4-H helped you learn things you didn't know before, how your project grew in size and scope, and some of your successes (and failures!) in the project area. What are the major goals of the group and/or project? Who helped in the learning process of your group and/or project—leaders, experts, teen leaders, others? What are/were the individual and committee responsibilities?</p>

	<p>Part 3 Highlight your other 4-H projects, activities and experiences, including major learning experiences, special interests and unusual situations your group encountered. Example: Beef project may include information on leadership.</p> <p>Part 4 Explain how 4-H has helped members of your group become better leaders and citizens, how 4-H has increased your interest and participation in community affairs, and what you have learned from your team or group involvement and efforts.</p> <p>Part 5 (Individual responses from group representatives) Describe how 4-H participation has impacted the way you feel about yourself, influenced your school and career goals, and your use of leisure time. Tell about your future plans and the career you want to pursue.</p>
<p>Application Questions 1 to 6</p>	<p>For the following questions, include only information that relates to the 4-H award area for which you wish to be recognized. Groups should answer the application questions from a group perspective unless otherwise noted; with emphasis on skill development in a group dynamic. Limit your response to no more than 500 words for each question unless otherwise noted.</p> <p>In questions 1 through 4, frame your responses around the 4-H award area for which you wish to be recognized. In questions 5 and 6, think about all your 4-H experiences, not just those in the award area for which you are applying. Information should be presented and organized in a logical sequence. You get these results from careful planning, thorough reflection about all your 4-H experiences, and selection and emphasis of only the most important information. Submit a thoughtful response to each question. Here are the questions and the beginning of some sample answers.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Choose four life skills from the diagram (one from each of Head, Heart, Hands, and Health) and describe how your group has developed each life skill through your 4-H group experience. <i>Our group learned teamwork, conflict resolution, service learning, and managing feelings through our community service initiative this year. When we volunteered at our community soup kitchen . . . (up to 500 words)</i> 2. Describe how your group has applied any life skill (from the diagram) in your 4-H experience. <i>Our group learned planning/organizing when we planned a fundraiser to support our fieldtrip to the zoo. We had to brainstorm the steps we needed to take . . . (up to 500 words)</i> 3. Each representative of your group (300 words each)—Describe how you have or will apply skills learned in a team setting to a life situation outside of 4-H. <i>I learned about teamwork in preparing for the State 4-H Livestock Judging Contest with my county judging team. I am also on my school's track team....</i> 4. Identify up to four areas of content knowledge your group learned in your 4-H project and describe what you have learned and how you learned it. <i>Our group learned content in many areas while planning and conducting our birdhouse fundraiser. We learned how to count back change, the importance of providing wildlife habitat, customer service, and how to use power tools to build birdhouses....</i> 5. Each representative of your group (300 words for each delegate)—Identify one 4-H leadership experience you have had and describe its significance

	<p>to your personal growth and development. <i>One of the most significant leadership experiences I have had in my 4-H career was serving as a club officer. I have held the positions of secretary, vice president and president. The last two roles allowed me to learn parliamentary procedure and how to conduct a meeting. Being a club officer taught me how to make decisions as a group</i></p> <p>6. Identify up to three 4-H citizenship and/or community service experiences your group has had and describe their significance to you, your group, or your community. <i>Our group has worked in the community soup kitchen, organized a literacy campaign, and provided a petting zoo at our local Project RED event.....</i></p>
--	--

Selection and Scoring for Group Award Applications

1. Once applications are received on February 1, they will be forwarded to your county 4-H program coordinator and the 4-H leader you identified on your application for verification of accuracy of the application. Your application will only be eligible for evaluation after these two individuals confirm that the information in your application is factual.
2. The Group award area has a selection committee who will review applications. The selection committee will complete a State 4-H Awards Application Evaluation Form for each group.
3. Up to 12 group award applications may be selected to advance as State Award Delegates based on their scores.
4. All group applicants will be notified by March 15 about whether or not they have been selected as a delegates. Feedback from the selection committee will be provided to applicants not selected to be a delegate. Following the State 4-H Awards Recognition Program, applicants selected to be delegates will receive feedback from both the application and the interview.
5. During 4-H Exploration Days group award delegates will present to the judges their group's project. The selection committee will complete a State 4-H Awards Interview Evaluation Form for each group.
6. State Award winners in the group award category and junior and senior age divisions will be announced at the State 4-H Awards Recognition Program Thursday morning during Exploration Days. Selection for each will be as follows:
 - a. Junior winner will be selected from the highest-scoring application.
 - b. Senior winner will be selected from the highest-scoring interview. In the event of a tied score, the winner will be selected from the highest-scoring application between the tied individuals.
 - c. Group Award winner will be selected from the highest-scoring presentation. In the event of a tied score, the winner will be selected from the highest-scoring application between the tied groups.

Scoring Criteria

The application evaluation on [page 17](#) will be used by each selection committee to assess and score each application. A minimum score of 16 is required to be eligible to advance as a delegate. The top eligible scores (maximum of 12) will be selected to advance.

The interview evaluation form on [page 18](#) will also be used by each selection committee to assess and score each delegate's interview. A minimum score of 24 is required to be named a State 4-H Award winner.



2014 Program Time Line for 4-H Members

November 2014 – January 2015 – Training will be available to counties about the new 4-H State Awards process, including completion of applications, interview process and recognition program. For more information about the training, get in touch with one of the individuals on the list of regional contacts on page 13 of this document.

Counties will begin promoting the process by distributing information to eligible members and helping their 4-H members answer questions as they complete the application.

State Award applicants will work with their 4-H leaders and county staff person to complete the application.

February 1 Award applications and photo (individual and groups) must be submitted via email to: State4HAwards@anr.msu.edu.

February 6 A reply to the submitting e-mail address will be sent as a confirmation, notifying the sender that the application was received.

March 15 Applicants selected to move forward will be announced as State Award delegates. Email notifications will be given to both applicants and their county offices.

March 15 Applicants *not* selected to move forward will receive notice and feedback from selection committees. County staff will also be notified.

March 17 Delegates begin registering for 4-H Exploration Days through their county 4-H office.

June 1 Deadline for reservations and ticket order for guests attending Awards Recognition Program. Limited seating is available.

June 24 State Awards Assembly will be held at MSU during 4-H Exploration Days. Senior delegates will participate in interviews and junior delegates will attend a leadership program.

June 25 State Awards Recognition Program will be held at the Huntington Club in Spartan Stadium at Michigan State University. Junior and senior delegates will Attend and are allowed to register two guests.

July Press releases and photos will be distributed to counties and donors. State Award presentation will be uploaded to MSUE 4-H web site.

August Feedback to delegates from selection committee

Appendices

- A. List of Regional Contacts
- B. State 4-H Awards Recognition Areas
- C. Example of Cover Letter for State 4-H Awards Application
- D. Sample Interview Questions for State 4-H Awards Interview
- E. State 4-H Awards Application Evaluation Form
- F. State 4-H Awards Campus Interview Evaluation Form
- G. Targeting Life Skills Model

Appendix A

2015 Michigan 4-H Awards Regional Contacts

Feel free to send questions to us. We are happy to help!

<p>UP Region Dave Radloff Delta County MSU Extension 2840 College Avenue Escanaba, MI 49829-9591 (906) 786-3032 Email: radloff@anr.msu.edu</p>	<p>North Region Dorothy Munn Ogemaw County MSU Extension 205 East Eighth Street West Branch, MI 48661 (989) 345-0692 Email: munnd@anr.msu.edu</p>
<p>Central Region Michelle Neff Clare County MSU Extension 225 West Main Street Harrison, MI 48625 (989) 539-7805 Email: hydemich@anr.msu.edu</p>	<p>Southeast Region Betty Jo Nash Sanilac County MSU Extension 171 N. Dawson Street Sandusky, MI 48471 (517)676-7202 Email: nashbett@anr.msu.edu</p>
<p>Southwest Region Janice Zerbe Van Buren County MSU Extension Suite 201 219 Paw Paw Street Paw Paw MI 49079 (269) 657-8213 Email: rajzerj@anr.msu.edu</p>	
<p>State 4-H Awards Program Coordinator Jennifer Weichel Michigan State University Justin S. Morrill Hall of Agriculture 446 West Circle Drive East Lansing, MI 48824 (517) 432-7606 Email: Weichel@anr.msu.edu</p>	<p>State Awards Committee Contact Diane Brazier Emmet County MSU Extension Suite D 3434 M-119 Harbor Springs, MI 49740 (231) 439-8974 Email: brazier@msu.edu</p>

Appendix B

2015 State 4-H Awards Recognition Areas

The following award recognition areas will be offered for the 2015 Michigan State 4-H Awards Program. Members may apply in either the junior or senior age division. Youth may only win one time in each age division for each award area. These recognition areas reflect the National 4-H Mission Mandates and align with the Michigan 4-H project codes. Examples of a few 4-H project areas and fields of study connected to each recognition area are included in parentheses.

Members should keep in mind the recognition area they pick should reflect and emphasize the majority of their 4-H learning experience. For example, Joe is a 4-H member involved with beef science. Depending on what Joe's experiences and interests are, he may decide to apply for the Beef Science Award, Biological Science award (emphasizing learning about veterinary science, genetics, or meat science), or perhaps Civic Engagement (emphasizing public education of animal agriculture). Another example may be a member who is enrolled in the clothing and textiles project but focuses his or her learning experience on how to create a marketing plan to sell products. This member may consider applying in the Leadership and Personal Development award area that includes entrepreneurship. The application will emphasize the skills and knowledge you have learned through your 4-H project experiences. Pick the award area that best reflects the 4-H knowledge, skills and experiences you wish to convey.

- **Beef Science**
(Programs, projects and activities related to beef science and management)
- **Biological Science**
(Aquatic science, biological science, entomology and bees, food chemistry such as meat science, embryology, veterinary science)
- **Birds and Poultry Science**
(Programs, projects and activities related to birds, poultry science and management)
- **Civic Engagement**
(Citizenship and civic engagement, global and cultural education, community service, service learning, Folkpatterns, global and cultural heritage)
- **Communications and Expressive Arts**
(Communication, expressive arts, visual arts, performing arts, photography)
- **Companion Animal Science**
(Dogs, cats, small animals, pocket pets, lab animals, llamas/alpacas)
- **Consumer and Family Science**
(Child development, child care, clothing and textiles)
- **Dairy Science**
(Dairy cattle, milk production and processing)
- **Environmental and Earth Science**
(Environmental resource management, environmental science and natural resources, outdoor education/recreation, soils and soil conservation, wildlife and fisheries, shooting sports)
- **Equine Science**
(Horse and pony, horseless projects, Proud Equestrian Program)
- **Goat Science**
(Programs, projects and activities related to goat science and management)
- **Healthy Lifestyles**
(Food and nutrition, health and fitness, safety)
- **Leadership and Personal Development**
(Business and entrepreneurship, career exploration and workforce preparation, college and independent-living readiness, financial literacy, Introductory 4-H projects, leadership skills development, leisure education, life skill and character education)
- **Plant Science**
(Horticulture, agronomy, crops)
- **Rabbit and Cavy Science**
(Programs, projects and activities related to rabbit and cavy science and management)
- **Sheep Science**
(Programs, projects and activities related to sheep science and management)
- **Swine Science** (Programs, projects and activities related to swine science and management)
- **Technology and Engineering**
(Aerospace, computer and digital technology, engines and transportation, GPS/GIS, mechanical sciences, robotics)
- **Group Award**

Appendix C

Example of a Cover Letter for a State 4-H Awards Application

A cover letter is typically a brief, typed letter of introduction reflecting the candidate's individuality and interest in a specific opportunity. A sample cover letter appears below. Use your own knowledge, skills, experiences and creativity to show your unique personality and highlight your 4-H experience.

Date

State 4-H Awards Program Beef Science Selection Committee
Michigan State University
Justin S. Morrill Hall of Agriculture
446 West Circle Drive,
East Lansing, MI. 48824

Dear Awards Selection Committee:

I would like to be considered for the 2015 Michigan 4-H Awards program in the beef science area. I have been in 4-H for 6 years and the beef project for 4 years. My 4-H experience has taught me how to select a feeder calf, arrange financing for the purchase and upkeep of the calf, keep records of the feed, veterinary and other expenses related to raising a calf, and feed and prepare the calf for show at my county fair. I have also gained important life skills such as coping with the stress of preparing for and showing at the fair, decision making and problem solving.

The time management skills I learned in 4-H have helped me juggle my schoolwork, a part-time job at a local store and the vice-presidency of the 4-H Clover Beef Club. I have also been able to fit in two school plays this year and look forward to our county 4-H spring achievement day at the local mall.

Another ability I have developed through 4-H is public speaking. In addition to acting in school plays, I prepared and gave a demonstration on halter training a calf to a joint meeting of two 4-H beef clubs in our county.

In the future, I plan to attend college to study business and Polish. My experiences with the Polish-American 4-H exchange have inspired me to seek a career in international business.

Thank you for considering my application for the 4-H Beef Science Award.

Sincerely,

Your Name typed



Appendix D

2015 State 4-H Awards Sample Interview Questions

The selection committee may use the following list of questions during the interview. Additionally, the committee may ask questions about the information in your portfolio, the project area, industry or your leadership experience.

1. As you reflect on your 4-H involvement, describe an important change in yourself that has taken place as a result of 4-H.
2. Tell us about a leadership role you have fulfilled in this project.
3. Describe the most significant idea, technique or skill you have learned.
4. Describe the most unusual idea, technique or skill you have learned.
5. What have you learned from this project area that will prepare you for the future?
6. Talk about a disappointment you experienced in your 4-H project area. What did you learn from it?
7. What activities in 4-H have been your favorite and why?
8. What have you done to encourage others to participate in your project area? To participate in 4-H?
9. What was the most rewarding experience in your 4-H project?
10. Describe what you do to manage a stressful situation.
11. What have you done in 4-H to make a difference and get involved in your community?
12. Describe your most memorable 4-H experience.
13. Why do you feel you should be chosen for this award? What sets you apart from the other candidates?
14. In your opinion, what qualities make a good leader?
15. Describe a challenge or a problem you have faced and how you solved it?



Appendix E

2014 State 4-H Awards Application Evaluation Form

Applicant's Name _____ County _____

Award Area _____ Age Division _____

Application Section	Excellent 4	Good 3	Average 2	Needs Improvement 1
Cover Letter <i>A brief introductory letter reflecting the candidate's interest in the State Awards program, his or her project area and some key experiences or skills learned through 4-H.</i>				
4-H Story <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A brief, enjoyable format and insight into how 4-H has influenced the candidate's life • Grammar, neatness and spelling <i>The 4-H story should add depth to the reader's understanding of the 4-H member's project work and overall involvement in the 4-H program. The story should include personal information about the 4-H member; give information about his or her experiences and growth in the project area; mention details of involvement in other 4-H projects and experiences; explain how 4-H has helped the member become a better leader and citizen; and describe the positive influences 4-H has had in the member's life.</i>				
Life Skills (Questions 1-3) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Question 1 for juniors (ages 13-15) • Questions 1-3 for seniors (ages 16-19) • Questions 1-3 for Groups 				
Knowledge (Questions 4-6) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Question 4 for juniors (ages 13-15) • Questions 4-6 for seniors (ages 16-19) • Question 4 for Group Awards 				
Leadership <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Question 7 for juniors and seniors • Question 5 for Groups 				
Citizenship and Community Service <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Question 8 for juniors and seniors • Question 6 for Groups 				

Overall Score (Total scores from above) _____

Reviewer's Comments:

Strengths

Areas to Improve

Note to Reviewers: For the applicant to be eligible to move on to campus interviews, the total score in the "Overall Score" line above must be 36 or higher. If the total score is 35 points or lower, the applicant will not advance to campus interviews. Scores from multiple reviewers will be averaged together to form one overall score. Up to 12 of the highest scores will be invited to campus for interviews.



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Appendix F

2015 State 4-H Awards Campus Interview Evaluation Form

Delegate's Name _____ County _____

Award Area _____

Campus Interview Criteria	Excellent 6	5	4	3	2	Needs Improvement 1
Personal Appearance <i>Clothing choice, tidiness, grooming</i>						
Greeting <i>Courteous, professional, handshake</i>						
Communication <i>Grammar, pronunciation, volume, articulation</i>						
Body Language <i>Eye contact, posture, no fidgeting</i>						
Content Knowledge <i>Knowledgeable about project, and conveys experiences and information in application **Group Presentation- group awards only</i>						
Life Skills <i>Understands life skills learned, and conveys experiences and information in application</i>						
Demeanor and Attitude <i>Confident, passionate, positive, engaged</i>						
Response to Questions <i>Thoughtful, responsive, prompt, perceptive listener, answered questions fully</i>						
Overall Impression						

Overall Score (Total scores from above) _____

Note to Reviewer: For the applicant to be eligible to receive a 4-H State Award, the total score in the "Overall Score" line above must be 36 or higher. If the overall average score on this form is 35 or lower, the applicant is ineligible to receive a State 4-H Award. Scores from multiple reviewers are averaged together to form one overall score.

(continued)

2015 State 4-H Awards Campus Interview Evaluation Form (Also used for Group Presentations)

Delegate's Name _____ County _____

Award Area _____

Reviewer's Comments

Strengths

Areas to Improve



Extension

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Appendix G

Targeting Life Skills Model



Hendricks, P. A. (1996). *Targeting Life Skills Model: Incorporating Developmentally Appropriate Learning Opportunities to Assess Impact of Life Skill Development*. Ames: Iowa State University Extension and Outreach.

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Time Lines

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State 4-H Awards Program 17