



4-H Agent, Program Assistant, and Adult Volunteer Information Packet

June 16-19, 2026

If you are a person with a disability and desire any assistive devices, services, or other accommodations to participate in this activity, please contact the State 4-H Office, at 540-231-6372/TDD* during business hours of 8 a.m. and 5 p.m. to discuss accommodations 5 days prior to the event. *TDD number is (800) 828-1120



Virginia Cooperative Extension
Virginia Tech • Virginia State University



www.ext.vt.edu

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2026 CONGRESS LEADERSHIP TEAM

Coordinator	Alyssa Walden
Co-Coordinators	Chad Proudfoot and Maribeth Martin
Business Manager	Cheryl Cox
Congress Dean	James Mason
Assistant Congress Dean	Bailey Robertson & Hunter Romano
Past Congress Dean	Kelly Mallory
Dean of Women	Hannah Bishop
Assistant Dean of Women	Sarah Gardner
Dean of Men	Aaron Martin
Assistant Dean of Men	Bailey Robertson & Hunter Romano
Congress Elections Chair	Karen Baker

Headquarters/Logistics	Chad Proudfoot
Assemblies	Carly Wright and Tonya Price
4-H All-Stars	Glenda Snyder
Clover Fest	Hermon Maclin, Isaiah Morton, MaryBeth Lerch
Competitions	Katherine Carter, Hunter Liles, Lauren McCroskey
Programming	Sam Fisher
Volunteers	Chad Proudfoot
Workshops	Maribeth Martin, Dennis Donaldson
Multimedia Team	Brian Hairston, Lisa Laliberty

	<u>Advisor to Men</u>	<u>Advisor to Women</u>	<u>Elections Chair</u>
Central	Brian Hairston	Kelsey Laubach	LK Mondrey
Northeast	TBD	Rachael Morris	Kim Monroe
Northwest	Sam Leech	Morgan Allen	Elizabeth Walker
Southeast	Jalen Anderson	LaSonya White	LaSonya White
Southwest	Bailey Robertson & Hunter Romano	Crystal Peek	Ashley Clark

CONGRESS LEADERSHIP ROLES AND COMMITTEE STRUCTURE

Congress Leadership Staff Roles

The overall role of the Congress Leadership Staff (designated state office staff and field faculty assigned to leadership roles) is to coordinate the event, supervise delegates and adults, ensure their health, safety, and well-being, and respond to situations in which delegates or adults have not followed the Congress Code of Conduct.

The **Congress Coordinator(s)**, comprised of Virginia State 4-H Staff, is responsible for the programmatic functions of 4-H Congress.

- Provide input to State 4-H Cabinet on the educational significance of 4-H Congress and maintain fidelity to local and district programs
- Determine how the programmatic events at Congress exist as culminating events to local and district programs and interface with field staff regarding overall program suggestions and solutions
- Initiate the Congress Leadership Rotation Schedule in September and help fill roles via district directors at each 4-H District Meeting (initiate the request in the September quarterly 4-H Agent Meeting and finalize by the December quarterly 4-H Agent meeting)
- Interface and communicate consistently with the Congress Leadership Team through the Congress Dean
- Coordinate the registration process, assign duties, secure space, food and lodging, workshop presenters, speakers, competition needs, elections process, assemblies, and recreational activities/events.
- Review the prior budget and determine participant costs and adjustments for the current year.
- Communicate with All-Stars to plan events they sponsor.
- The Congress Dean will receive forms and procedures for the Congress Headquarters Notebook related to the following activities/functions: accidents/illnesses, infirmary visits, delegate sign-out and early departure, lost meal tickets, lost room keys, lost and found items, health history forms/code of conduct forms, and state car usage.

The **Dean of Congress**, working in collaboration and consultation with the **Congress Coordinator(s)** is responsible for decision-making for all issues related to delegate and adult Code of Conduct infractions and violations and is responsible for the management of and communication with Congress Leadership Staff and Congress Coordinator(s).

Specific responsibilities of the **Dean of Congress** include:

Before Congress:

- Develop a rotational schedule for Congress Headquarters for Congress Leadership Staff to provide daily support and send to the State 4-H Office.
- Provide consistent communication with the field and Congress Coordinators on relevant updates before the event.
- Provide support and guidance into final Congress planning with the State 4-H Cabinet by attending one day of the Spring Congress Shakedown meeting.
- Provide input into the registration and procedural process as necessary.
- Serve as liaison to the State 4-H Office through the development of the 4-H Congress program (i.e. phone calls, Zoom sessions) initiated through the State 4-H Office and by the 4-H Congress Leadership Team as needed.

At Congress:

- Remain in and provide leadership from the State 4-H Congress Headquarters office (present daily); be prepared with an alternative delegation plan as necessary.
- Communicate changes as they occur to the coordinator(s)/ designees.
- Coordinate and be responsible for nightly delegate check-in procedure with the assistance of Chaperones, District Advisors, and Deans of Men and Women.
- Familiarize yourself with all forms and procedures in the Congress Headquarters Notebook related to the following activities/functions: accidents/illness, infirmary visits, delegate sign-out and early departure, lost meal tickets, lost room keys, lost and found items, health history forms/code of conduct, and state motor pool vehicle usage.
- Know and be able to implement the process for locating missing delegates and adults. Develop a communication system with designated fill-in folks throughout the day.
- Be familiar with Congress event locations and times and be prepared to direct delegates and adults to appropriate areas for information and assistance.

- Assist Congress Coordinators with programmatic decisions made during Congress (e.g., programmatic changes due to severe weather, etc.).
- Responsible for final decisions related to disciplinary actions for Code of Conduct violations.

The Assistant Dean of Congress supports the Dean, serves in his/her absence, and is in a learning mode to serve as Dean the following year.

- Required to provide support (physical presence in the office) to the Congress Dean daily.
- Be familiar with Congress event locations and times and be prepared to direct delegates and adults to appropriate areas for information and assistance.
- Know and be able to implement the process for locating missing delegates and adults.
- Assist Congress Dean with nightly delegate check-in procedure.

The Past Dean of Congress is an advisor and supports the current Dean of Congress.

- Ensure that dorm supervisors monitor all occupied floors of the dorm.
- Be familiar with Congress event locations and times and be prepared to direct delegates and adults to appropriate areas for information and assistance.

Deans of Men and Women

- Responsible for implementing nightly delegate check-in procedures to ensure that all delegates are present.
- Provide support to the Congress Deans on a daily rotational basis as outlined by Congress Deans.
- Know and be able to implement the process for locating missing delegates and adults.
- Be familiar with Congress event locations and times and be prepared to direct delegates and adults to appropriate areas for information and assistance.
- Assist Congress Dean with nightly delegate check-in procedure.
- Assist in resolving immediate behavioral and Code of Conduct issues and refer major issues of concern to the Congress Dean.
- Support the staffing of Congress Headquarters.

Assistant Deans of Men and Women

- Support and shadow the Deans of Men and Women to be prepared to take over responsibilities the following year.

- Be familiar with Congress event locations and times and be prepared to direct delegates and adults to appropriate areas for information and assistance.
- Assist Congress Dean with nightly delegate check-in procedure.
- Support the staffing of Congress Headquarters.

State Elections Chair

- Distribute Cabinet Applications to the 4-H listserv promptly and send a follow-up deadline reminder email to the 4-H listserv.
- Collect all paperwork and photos from those running for the Officer and Ambassador positions.
- Create the virtual ballots for the statewide officer and ambassador elections in each district and submit them to the State 4-H Office.
- Work with State 4-H Office and District Election Chairs to plan and carry out virtual town halls.
- Create election posters for each officer position as well as for candidates running from each district to hang during Congress registration. These posters should be submitted to the State 4-H Office for approval four weeks before Congress so that they can be sent to the Virginia Tech Printing Department.
- Contact District Election Chairs two months before Congress regarding their responsibilities. Send a reminder email to election chairs two weeks before Congress.
- Verify ballot counts and certify results after voting. Inform Alyssa Walden of the results.
- Work with State 4-H Staff in settling disputes and/or problems that may arise regarding the election.

District Advisors for Men/Women are provided with a list of all of the adults and their room numbers who are serving as chaperones for the boys or girls in their district.

- Primary responsibility is to collect the nightly report forms from chaperones and submit them to the Dean of Men or Dean of Women (respectively) in a timely fashion.
- Assist in resolving immediate behavioral and Code of Conduct issues and refer major issues of concern to the Congress Dean.

Chaperones are responsible for conducting the nightly unit meetings and completing the delegate check-in paperwork at the end of each day. Chaperones submit these nightly report forms to District Advisors in a timely fashion.

- Can be paid or unpaid staff.
- Assist Congress Dean with nightly delegate check-in procedure.

- Refer behavioral issues to District Advisors and/or the Dean of Men or Women to be taken to the Congress Dean.

2026 Committee Descriptions

Headquarters/Logistics – Chad Proudfoot

The Headquarters/Logistics committee will be responsible for the overall scheduling and logistics of conducting State 4-H Congress. The main committee members will be a part of the Congress Leadership team. Before the start of Congress, this committee will be responsible for reviewing Congress registrations to ensure all data has been entered, assigning lodging, creating and printing reports, health history forms, etc. During Congress, this committee will help other committees ensure they are prepared for their sections, help with set-up/tear-down, address emerging issues, and coordinate all evening paperwork.

Assemblies – Carly Wright

The Assembly committee will work to prepare all Assemblies. This committee will determine evening emcees, prepare and write scripts, prepare and plan rehearsals and work directly with Virginia Tech production. The Assembly committee will be responsible for stage set-up and overall evening theme and decorations. This team will also relay any specific needs to the headquarters/logistics committee to ensure that all needs are met.

4-H All-Star – Glenda Snyder

The 4-H All-Star committee will serve two purposes. The committee chair will coordinate between the State 4-H Congress and the committee. This committee will ensure that the site is ready for the All-Star ceremony and coordinate the logistics with Headquarters/Logistics.

Clover Fest– Hermon Maclin, Isaiah Morton, MaryBeth Lerch

The Share-the-Fun committee will work to prepare the Thursday evening show. This committee will work to highlight youth and alumni from across the state. This committee will also work to create a fair and equitable way to highlight youth and alumni for the performance portion of the evening. This committee will need to work with Assemblies to create and write scripts and determine the evening emcee.

Competitions – Katherine Carter, Hunter Liles

The Competitions committee will work together to prepare and plan for Congress Competitions. This committee will be directed to determine how to incorporate Congress Competitions into the overall schedule. In addition, this committee will ensure that competition rules and guidelines are established and distributed to ensure proper entry during registration. This committee will also ensure all awards are ordered and ready for distribution, as well as prepare for award recognition during the Share-the-Fun show. The competition committee will work with the State 4-H Program

leader to determine the amount of Congress incentives available to each district and a fair and equitable way to divide those incentives per district.

Programming – Sam Fisher

The Programming committee will be responsible for finding additional programming outside of competitions, workshops, and assemblies. It will also determine the schedule's activities and programs for potential downtime. This committee will work with all other committees to ensure that no conflicts exist with other programming and that activities and programs are planned to be inclusive of all 4-H programming.

Volunteers – Chad Proudfoot

The Volunteer committee works directly with volunteers through the other committees. This includes assigning volunteers to teams and preparing and conducting volunteer orientation at the start of Congress. This committee works closely with other committees to ensure that all programming has adequate volunteers to host a successful event. The committees overseeing the various tasks make individual volunteer assignments.

Workshops – Maribeth Martin, Dennis Donaldson

The Workshop Committee will determine how to solicit and conduct workshops during Congress. Workshops should include all 4-H programming. This committee will determine speaker needs and relay the information to the Headquarters/Logistics team. The committee will also determine what day works best for all attendees to participate in Congress workshops.

EXPECTATIONS OF ALL ADULT VOLUNTEERS AND PAID STAFF

1. The minimum delegate/adult ratio at Congress is 10:1. In cases where units have no adult accompanying their delegation, ***it is the responsibility of that unit*** to recruit the assistance of an adult from a neighboring unit to supervise their delegation. Units should work with each other to ensure that every youth has an adult chaperone assigned – male for males and female for females. It is necessary to list the adult chaperone for every delegate on the electronic Congress Registration form. Please do not list a chaperone for a delegate without checking with that adult first! Find a chaperone from your district for male and female delegates, if possible. It will be necessary to assist with lodging assignments and management issues.
2. It is the responsibility of the 4-H Agent to make sure each Congress delegate is enrolled and active with 4-H Online and that all authorization forms are complete and up-to-date. If authorizations are not complete and up-to-date within 4-H Online, the 4-H Agent is responsible for working with the youth to become an enrolled 4-H member. Paper enrollment and registration papers **WILL NOT** be accepted. Please note that State 4-H Congress has its own Code of

Conduct Form, which must be completed as a part of the Congress registration process in 4-H Online

3. Agent/volunteer orientation is very important. Meetings will take place on Tuesday afternoon. Please check the schedule for specific times and locations. **All adults are expected to view the pre-recorded training videos and attend the mandatory sessions on Tuesday.** This session will review specific guidelines, schedules, volunteer assignments, and changes from the year before or since registration.
4. All adults at Congress share the following responsibilities:
 - **Model and enforce** the State 4-H Congress CHARACTER COUNTS!® Expectations, Code of Conduct, and Dress Code with all Congress participants.
 - o CHARACTER COUNTS! ®: The six pillars of character are trustworthiness, respect, responsibility, fairness, caring, and citizenship. They provide the foundation for which Virginia 4-H character is grounded. Each participant will be expected to use these six pillars to guide their thoughts and conduct throughout the week. As an adult at Congress, you will be provided with ribbons in your registration packet which mark the six pillars of character. We will be celebrating one or two pillars each day. As you encounter youth delegates that you believe exemplify those pillars in their actions, you will be able to celebrate this positivity by giving them a ribbon for that pillar to add to their nametag. If you run out of ribbons, please stop by Congress Headquarters to get more. The pillars we will celebrate each day are:
 - Tuesday, June 16 – Respect & Trustworthiness
 - Wednesday, June 17 – Caring & Responsibility
 - Thursday, June 18 - Citizenship
 - Friday, June 19 – Fairness
 - **Be concerned and take action as warranted** for the health, safety, and well-being of all Congress delegates.
 - **Serve as mentor** to all Congress delegates and assist in the supervision of the unit delegation.
 - **Ensure that all delegates** attend and participate in Congress events, activities, assemblies, etc.
 - **Participate** in assigned responsibilities. **Do not switch out responsibilities without notifying Congress Headquarters.**
 - Adult chaperones are responsible for planning activities and ensuring all youth are supervised during scheduled Unit Free Time.

ADULT VOLUNTEER POSITION DESCRIPTIONS

The assistance of adult volunteers and agents at Congress is critical to its success. While at Congress, we depend on agents and adult volunteers to perform jobs assigned by the State 4-H Office.

Each adult attending State 4-H Congress is expected to volunteer daily to help ensure a positive experience for our youth delegates. The Volunteer Committee will be making assignments to help with these efforts. Unless the Volunteer Committee approves of a change, each adult is expected to perform their assignment(s) each day. Many tasks can be anticipated, while others occur on an “as needed” basis. We ask that each adult be flexible and willing to jump in wherever needed.

Adult volunteers must be 19 or older by January 1 of the current year. Virginia Cooperative Extension summer interns who do not meet this age requirement may still attend 4-H Congress as volunteers.

For 2026, the Volunteer Committee and Congress Leadership Team have identified broad categories to classify the multitude of volunteer duties that might occur at Congress. These categories will help target the specific volunteer assignments that adult volunteers/chaperones might be assigned to. Adults will be asked to indicate their order of preference for volunteer assignments throughout Congress. This will be requested on the Congress Registration Form.

Facilities Team

Team members are responsible for helping with directional signage, supervising and moving Congress delegates, and serving as staff for dances and evening activities.

Headquarters Team

Team members will work with the Headquarters Committee and be called upon to answer questions, work with healthcare needs, and assist with the administration of Congress Headquarters. This will include staffing the headquarters during program functions and other events.

Operations Team

Team members will serve as assembly ushers and workshop room monitors, assist with Congress photos, monitor district meetings and elections, and supervise dorms.

Program Team

Team members will support activities and programmatic events, such as the fun run, resource fair, congressional games, dance and assist with refreshments. This also includes set up and clean up duties.

4-H CONGRESS MANAGEMENT INFORMATION

GENERAL INFORMATION

1. **4-H delegates attending Congress are expected to participate in an orientation on the expectations and outcomes of Congress.** Congress can be an incentive for older 4-H members, offering expanded experiences beyond their local level. We would suggest that youth who are new to 4-H and wish to attend be oriented to and commit to the ideals, goals, and expectations of 4-H. This makes it easier for the youth to fit into the "4-H culture" that exists at Congress. It is also safer for you or the adult chaperoning that youth have behavioral expectations clearly outlined.
2. To provide a safe environment for Congress participants, we will have medical staff personnel on our Congress management team.

REGISTRATION

1. Any Virginia 4-H member who will be at least 14 by September 30, 2026, may attend the 2026 Virginia 4-H Congress. Any youth who turned 19 on or before December 31, 2026, may not attend Congress as a delegate. Adult volunteers must be at least 19 or older by January 1 of the current year. Virginia Cooperative Extension summer interns not meeting this age requirement may still attend 4-H Congress as a volunteer.
2. Delegates, Volunteers, and Extension Faculty and Staff must register for Congress via 4-H Online. All delegates, volunteers, and Extension Faculty and Staff must be enrolled members within the 4-H Online system.
3. Delegates will be asked to select their top five (5) Educational Workshop selections during the registration process. Once workshop capacities are established and final workshop times are assigned, delegates will be placed in one of their selections. Best efforts will be made to get all delegates in their top choices, but final workshop assignments will depend on interest and availability in the particular workshop. Workshop assignments will be distributed in the Congress Welcome packets. Once workshops are assigned, there will be no changes in workshop assignments upon arrival at Congress
4. Delegates who will be participating in state **competitions** are to mark their choice of competitive events within the 4-H Online registration. A list of competitive events is provided in this packet.
5. Be sure to have a copy of everyone's health form and code of conduct when traveling to and from Congress in the event of an emergency.
6. **REGISTRATION PROCESS FOR DELEGATES AND ADULTS:** Registration will be online only through 4-H Online. All participants must be enrolled 4-H members or adult volunteers. Registration is available through enrolled member family accounts at: <https://v2.4honline.com>.

Registration will close at 11:59 PM on May 15th, 2026.

7. **REGISTRATION PROCESS FOR FACULTY AND STAFF:** Faculty and Staff will need to register for Congress using 4-H Online as well. Each Extension Faculty/Staff member must create a personal member profile within 4-H Online to ensure they are properly enrolled. For more information, please see the tip sheet on [How VCE Faculty/Staff need to enroll](#). If you should have any problems or questions about this process, please contact a member of the 4-H Online Training Team.

NO REGISTRATIONS will be accepted after May 15.

8. **If participants give permission to be included in media, yes should be marked on the consent form within the 4-H Online registration system. If the participants do NOT wish to be photographed or videotaped, NO should be marked within the 4-H Online registration system.** For those who marked no, units will be asked to review the Congress slide show that might contain images of these individuals. We will remove those pictures before distributing the purchased slideshow.
9. All youth and adult delegates will be responsible for their Congress registration payments.
 - After the registration process each participant will receive an email confirmation that their registration has been submitted. Once the agent approves the registration, the participant will receive a second email with payment details and information. Payment can be made directly to the local Extension Office.

Need-Based Scholarship – Youth may be requesting a need-based scholarship to State 4-H Congress. Scholarships will be determined after the registration deadline and applied directly to the youth's registration. If a youth has requested a need-based scholarship, then we are asking that they pay \$200 until a determination has been made. Scholarship applications will be reviewed at the State-level and the youth and unit office will be copied on the award notification email. If the youth is not approved for the need-based scholarship, unit offices will need to follow up to ensure the remaining \$110 is collected.

10. Dorm rooms will be assigned after registration forms are received. Delegates should indicate roommate preferences on the Congress registration form. Please let your 4-H'ers know that there will be **no room switches** after arrival at Congress without permission from their adult chaperone and clearing through Headquarters. Adult chaperones must immediately notify the Congress Headquarters of all room changes. Room switching makes finding people very difficult in emergencies. Each delegate will be supplied with a room sign to place on their door; all delegates will be required to post on Tuesday. Adults will also be supplied with a room sign of a different color to make it easy for youth to identify their rooms in case of an emergency and these should also be posted on Tuesday.

11. Please refer to your local Extension agent for a list of policies and guidelines about State 4-H Congress Competitions. Contact Katherine Carter (meadows@vt.edu) about issues related to Congress competitions. **Be sure to note special equipment (piano, CD player, etc.) requirements on your delegate's registration.** All requests will be considered and met where possible.

12. All one-day delegates participating in a competitive event must be registered for Congress using 4-H Online. This fee (\$70) covers one meal on competition day, insurance, a t-shirt, and registration. One-day delegates must arrange for their transportation and lodging if remaining in the area overnight. **NOTE:** All "one-day" delegates will receive an email before Congress with instructions on the location and time of their competitive event, and a campus map. Delegates must report to the competition registration area to pick up their check-in packet and t-shirt. **Competitive event delegates are the only "one day" registrants allowed for Wednesday of Congress.** All other Congress participants will be required to remain for the full event.

FEES

1. Any enrolled senior 4-H member and adult volunteer leader may attend Congress, but all must be registered under one of the following categories. The full fee is \$310. Additional items, such as photos, slideshow, and Congress memorabilia will be available for purchase during the registration process.

Registration Structure and Fees:

- ☘ Full Congress Registration - \$310/person
 - For both Youth and Adults
 - Includes
 - Lodging for Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday nights in Air-Conditioned Dorms (double occupancy)
 - 8 meals
 - Breakfast on Wednesday, Thursday and Friday
 - Lunch on Wednesday and Thursday
 - Dinner on Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday
 - Congress T-Shirt

- ☘ Competition Registration [one-day only] - \$70/person
 - For both Youth and Adults
 - Includes:
 - Congress T-Shirt
 - One meal (lunch in Dietrick Hall on Wednesday)

- ☘ A La Carte Items
 - Color Fun Run/Walk
 - \$10 to participate; proceeds will help support State 4-H Congress
 - Digital Congress Slideshow - \$5
 - Digital Congressional Delegation Photo - \$5

- Digital Unit Photos - \$5

GENERAL SCHOLARSHIPS

1. **First-time Delegate Scholarship** - The Virginia 4-H Foundation will provide each unit with one \$155 scholarship for a 4-H member attending Congress for the first time. VCE employees may NOT use this scholarship.
2. **Adult Volunteer Leader Scholarship** - The State 4-H Office offers a \$310 scholarship to each unit to send one volunteer leader to Congress. VCE employees may NOT use this scholarship.
3. **Virginia 4-H Cabinet Officers/Ambassadors and Advisors** serving on the Congress Planning Team will receive \$75.00 scholarships. (The cost to the Cabinet member is \$235.) Cabinet Members must register for Congress through their member profile within 4-H Online.
4. **Air Force Youth 4-H Event Scholarships** – The Air Force 4-H Military Partnership Outreach & Support Project for Virginia is providing a limited number of 4-H event scholarships for youth ages 5 to 18 of Army-Connected families living in Virginia. These scholars will be awarded on a first-come, first-served basis. Eligible youth may live on or near an installation or live in communities across the state. Scholarships awarded can be used to assist with the cost of participating in Virginia 4-H camping opportunities or State 4-H Congress. The youth's military parent must currently serve in one of the following: **Active Duty Air Force/Space Force, Air Force Reserve, or Air National Guard**. Please contact Chad N. Proudfoot, 4-H Organizational Specialist, at CNProudfoot@vt.edu, if you need more information.
5. **Virginia Youth in Action Award Winner Scholarships** – The four winners of the Virginia Youth in Action Awards will receive a full scholarship (\$310.00).



**Beyond
Ready**

STATE 4-H AREAS OF COMPETITION

Held at State 4-H Congress. Congress registration (1 day or 4 days) required

Categories may be combined as needed by competition committee to ensure the contest rooms run efficiently

Discussion Meet

Rules can be found at:

<https://www.vafb.com/membership-at-work/farmers-in-action/young-farmers>

Extemporaneous Speaking

Fashion Revue-Constructed Garment

Fashion Revue- Purchased Garment

Food Challenge

Presentation – Animal Science – Dairy/Livestock/Poultry/Horse/Camelid/Domestic Food or Fiber Animal

Examples: How to Groom a Horse, Dairy Free Stall Barn Design, How to Shear an Alpaca

Presentation – Animal Science – Pet

Examples: Geckos, Dogs, Cats, Exotic animals

Presentation – Careers, Entrepreneurship, & Economic Education

Examples: How to Start Your Own Business, Careers that Interest Me, How to Budget Money

Presentation – Citizenship and Leadership

Examples: The History of the Constitution, How to Be a Good Citizen in My School, Parliamentary Procedure

Presentation – Food Demonstration (includes food preparation)

Examples: How to Make Chocolate Chip Cookies, How to Preserve Garden Vegetables

Presentation – Food Knowledge

Examples: How to Prevent Foodborne Illness, Cooking Methods for Beef, Gluten Free Recipes

Presentation – Home, Family & Personal Management

Examples: How to Prepare Meals on a Budget, Furniture Upholstery, How to Manage Your Time More Efficiently

Presentation – Natural Resources & Environmental Education –

Examples: Forestry, Wildlife, Conservation, Fisheries, Recycling

Presentation – Nutrition, Health, and/or Fitness

Examples: How to Prepare to Run a 5K, Proper Tooth Care and Hygiene

Presentation – Outdoor Adventure, Sports & Recreation

Examples: Fishing, Hunting, Trapping, How to Dribble a Basketball, Safety Gear for Rock Climbing

Presentation – Communications & Performing Arts

Examples: Ballet, Knowledge presentations about instruments (How to Care for your Violin), HAM radio, How to Give a Presentation

Presentation – Plants, Soils, & Entomology

Examples: The Importance of the Honey Bee, establishing a Community Garden, Amending Soil to Grow Fruit Trees, How to Grow a Plant from a Seed, Understanding Invasive Plant Species

Presentation – Shooting Education

Examples: Understanding Shooting Disciplines, Precision and Accuracy for Hitting the Target, Safety Whistle Commands on the Archery Line

Presentation – Science, Technology, Engineering, Math (STEM Topics)

Examples: Minecraft, Coding, Web Page Design, Gravity, How to Use a 3D Printer, How to Create Effective PowerPoint Presentations

Presentation – Visual & Creative & Constructive Arts

Examples: Tie Dye, Friendship Bracelets, How to Make Paper, Duct Tape Art, How to Compose a Photo, Architecture Styles, How to Use a DSLR camera

Public Speaking

Radio Spot/4-H Promotion

Science Fair Presentation & Display Experiments, Research

Share the Fun – Combination

Share the Fun – Dance

Share the Fun – Drama

Share the Fun – Instrumental

Share the Fun – Variety

Share the Fun – Vocal

Table Setting

2026 State 4-H Congress Competition Policies and Guidelines

This policy document outlines the official rules and expectations for youth participating in 2026 Virginia State 4-H Congress competitive events. All participants, adult volunteers, and 4-H Agents should review these guidelines carefully prior to competition.

1. Participant Responsibility

Participants must review all rules, resource materials, and score sheets with their local 4-H Agent prior to competing at State 4-H Congress.

2. Use of Official State Rules

All state-level contests will use only the rules, score sheets, and materials posted on the official competition webpage. Local and district rules may differ, but units are encouraged to align with state rules to ensure fairness. For contests with a national-level equivalent, participants should review related national rules for potential differences.

3. Age Eligibility

Only senior-level 4-H youth ages 14–19 (as of September 30 of the 4-H year) are eligible to participate in competitions at State 4-H Congress. Mixed-age acts that include members younger than 14 are not eligible.

4. Participation in Qualifying Events

All State Congress competitors must participate in a qualifying contest, which may occur at the unit or district level depending on local practices. Units and districts are encouraged to hold their contests prior to Congress.

5. Competition Categories and Topics

A list of sample topics is provided for reference but does not restrict participant creativity. All entries must clearly fit into one of the designated category areas. Judges and contest managers have final authority. Categories may be combined as needed by the competition committee to ensure the contest room runs efficiently.

6. Scoring System

The Danish Awards System will be used: Blue Ribbon: 90–100; Red Ribbon: 75–89; White Ribbon: 74 and below

The highest-scoring blue ribbon in each category will receive a medal. Modifications have been made for competition categories with scores exceeding 100 points.

7. Single Event Participation Rule

A participant may compete in only one competitive event at State 4-H Congress, even if they qualified in multiple events at earlier levels. This rule helps prevent scheduling conflicts.

8. Share-the-Fun Entry Limits

For Share-the-Fun (STF) contests, each unit may submit one act per STF category.

9. Entries in Other Categories

Except for Share-the-Fun, units may send multiple participants in all other categories (e.g., Public Speaking, Presentations, Fashion Revue). Contest-specific rules determine numbers of teams and team sizes.

10. Consistency of Genre Across Levels

The genre of the project, presentation style, performance type, garment, etc., must remain consistent from unit/district levels to the state contest. Youth may improve or refine their entry based on judge feedback, but cannot change genres.

11. Restrictions for Past State Winners

A youth who earns the overall state winner medal in a category may not compete in that same category again at the state level. They may, however, compete in other categories in future years. Medal winners should not modify an existing project to fit into a new category.

12. Attendance Requirements

While contestants are encouraged to attend the full Virginia 4-H Congress experience, attendance is not mandatory. Youth may register as one-day participants to compete. Pre-registration is required; deadlines will be posted with Congress registration materials.

13. Competitor Presence During Contest

All competitors must remain in the designated competition room or area for the entire duration of their contest. This expectation supports peer learning and encourages sportsmanship.

14. Restrictions on Audience Attendance

Only competitors, room chairs, judges, and approved contest staff or assistants may remain in the competition area. Parents/guardians, Agents, coaches, and other supporters will not be allowed in the contest room. This policy fosters youth independence and mirrors real-world interview and evaluative settings.

Educational Workshops

Wednesday, June 17th and Thursday, June 18th

Delegates will select their workshops in 4-H Online this year during registration. Workshops will be first come, first serve, and once a workshop is filled it will no longer be available in 4-H Online. Delegates will choose workshops for morning session one, morning session two, and afternoon session (if they are not competing).

2026 4-H Congress Workshops

Wed. 9:00 to 10:00 a.m.	Workshop Title	Description
	Balancing Biodiversity: A Game of Invasive Species Management	Join us for an informative workshop on biological invasions. Participants will receive a brief introduction to the impacts of invasive species, pathways of introduction, and common prevention and management techniques, illustrated with examples of famous invasive species. Following the introduction, participants will engage in a hands-on activity to apply what they've learned.
	Beyond the Clover	Ready to level up? Join the Southeast District Ambassadors for a hands-on leadership experience designed for teens who want more — more confidence, more clarity about their future, and more real-world skills they can actually use. Through interactive stations rooted in the four pillars of 4-H, using teamwork and strategic decision making, you'll step into real-life scenarios that challenge you to think critically and consider real life consequences while making smart choices under pressure. The workshop wraps up with a personal vision-board activity to help each student define their next steps as a leader. Walk in unsure. Walk out with direction.
	Beyond the Template	In this hands-on session, teens will explore how to elevate their content creation using one of today's most popular design tools. You'll learn practical tips, tricks, and creative strategies for customizing designs, building visual identity, and creating content that truly stands out. 4-H members and adults will share how they use Canva for everything from social media to school projects, while also highlighting real-world marketing approaches used to promote brands and community programs. Participants will leave with fresh ideas, stronger design confidence, and tools they can use for their brand, their club, and their future.
	Bugs Tell the Story: Stream Health Workshop	Discover how tiny stream bugs can reveal big clues about water quality in this hands-on field workshop at the VT StREAM Lab. Students will collect, sort, and identify macroinvertebrates using the Virginia Save Our Streams method, then use their findings to assess the stream's overall health. They'll also compare specimens from a healthier stream to see how biodiversity changes with water quality. Perfect for curious learners who enjoy science, nature, and outdoor exploration
	Build Your Biome	Join the Northwest District Ambassadors in exploring architecture around the world in this hands-on, interactive workshop!
	Build Your Strength, Boost Your Power!	Get ready to move, stretch, and power up! In this hands-on fitness workshop, teens will learn how to build their own strength-training routine using simple, accessible tools—bodyweight exercises, resistance bands,

		and basic free weights. Participants will practice safe techniques, discover how different exercises support muscle growth, and learn how to design a routine they can confidently complete at home. Alongside strength training, youth will explore a beginner-friendly cardio plan that supports endurance, heart health, and overall wellness. This session focuses on building healthy habits, boosting confidence, and helping teens understand how physical fitness can fit into their everyday lives.
	Consumer Challenge	The 4-H Consumer Decision Making contest is a fun challenge where teens compare products or services, decide which is best, and explain why. Everyone makes purchases, so why not be really good at it? You get to think, solve problems, and show off your smart choices while competing with friends!
	Cool, Calm and Collected: Tools for a Balanced Life	This interactive, beginner-friendly workshop focuses on nurturing social-emotional wellness and building a personal "tranquility toolkit." Participants will explore practical strategies to manage stress and improve self-regulation. The session blends creative DIY projects, like making stress balls with mindfulness techniques including yoga and guided relaxation. By the end of the session, youth will have developed a deeper understanding of their emotions and gained tangible resources to maintain resilience and a sense of calm in their daily lives.
	Drones in Agriculture	Join us for an exciting workshop on drones and their applications in the agriculture industry. Discover how drones are revolutionizing farming practices, from crop monitoring to precision agriculture. Learn about the latest technologies and techniques, and see real-world examples of drones in action. This workshop is perfect for anyone interested in the intersection of technology and agriculture.
	Finding the World's Most Common Animal	In this hands-on workshop, participants will head outdoors in small teams to collect soil samples and bring them back to the lab for nematode extraction using a semi-automatic elutriator. After isolating these tiny creatures—the most abundant animals on Earth—teams will count their finds under microscopes and compare results. Along the way, participants will learn about soil ecology, sampling methods, and the hidden biodiversity beneath our feet.
	Going Pro: The Ins and Outs of Professionalism	Join the Northeast District 4-H Cabinet Ambassadors for an immersive course that covers the nuances of professionalism. With this hands-on workshop you will be able to polish your interpersonal skills in real time to carry with you into your future professional career!
	Hokie Tour	Join the Southwest District Ambassadors/Cabinet members for a walking tour around Virginia Tech Campus. Stop at select destinations that are important to agriculture and the values that Virginia 4-H represents.
	How Discovery Happens: Foundational Skills for the Next Generation of STEM Professionals	In this multi-part, hands-on workshop, high-school students will explore how scientists design rigorous research methods and use specialized tools to answer real scientific questions. Participants will rotate through four interactive stations, including a LEGO activity on research methods, a guided tour of the Discovery Lab's scientific instruments, a demonstration using the fluorescence microscope or elemental analyzer, and a pipetting and sample-prep skills lab. Working in small groups, students will gain firsthand experience with authentic research practices and scientific equipment. This workshop is ideal for curious learners eager to see how science happens behind the scenes.
	How Do I Become A	As you grow up, you often say I want to be a Doctor, a Horticulturalist, or

	Scientist?	<p>an Environmental Scientist. But what does it mean to be a scientist? And what type of education is required to become a scientist and have a successful career?</p> <p>In this workshop, students explore what it means to be a scientist and then learn about the education options needed for their career path. Students will begin with a simple hands on soils experiment to begin thinking like a scientist and then complete an interactive quiz about the education options needed such as an Associates, Bachelor's, or Master degree.</p>
	Measuring Aerobic Fitness	This will be a workshop where the participants will learn how to measure aerobic fitness in a laboratory setting. We will show how to use a metabolic cart, how to conduct a fitness test, and how the participants would be able to use and interpret the results.
	Sensory Science: Understanding the How and Why of Food Flavor	Students will be introduced to Food Science through Sensory Evaluation of different foods, exploring how all 5 senses contribute to the flavor of food.
	Share Your Story	This comprehensive workshop engages students' creativity by guiding them in the development of an original story through writing, visual art, acting, dance, and music.
	Soil Health the 4-H Way!	This hands-on session uses the 4-H values of Head, Heart, Hands, and Health to explore the core principles of soil health. Participants will learn how soil functions, why soil resources are limited, and how management decisions shape long-term outcomes through demonstrations like the "Apple as the Earth" activity, rainfall simulators, slake tests, and biodiversity comparisons. Each soil health principle is paired with a 4-H value to help youth connect leadership skills with real-world stewardship. By observing how soils respond under different conditions, teens will build systems-thinking skills and understand the cause-and-effect relationships behind soil management.
	STEM in Sports Field Management	Attendees will discover first-hand how STEM principles are fundamental to making sure Worsham Field looks its best for Hokies all over the world and plays it's best so that athletes can stay safe as they score on the field! Attendees will learn the Science behind turfgrass management and the Technology that examines the relationships between athlete performance and field safety, the Engineering principles incorporated into professional turf equipment, and the Mathematical knowledge required to maintain high-quality athletic fields.
	STEM Majors in Sustainability, Environment, & Conservation	Environmental careers are often overlooked in STEM, but this session introduces students to high-demand, high-impact fields that urgently need skilled professionals. Students will explore Virginia Tech's top-ranked natural resources programs, learn about environmentally focused STEM majors, and discover career paths with strong job placement and competitive starting salaries. The session includes an interactive careers-and-majors matching activity and practical guidance on how to become a strong applicant to Virginia Tech. It's a great opportunity for students to see exciting STEM futures beyond the traditional paths.
	Technology Teaches Teamwork	Join the Central District Ambassadors for a hands-on Cubelets challenge! Cubelets are small, magnetic robotic blocks that snap together to create working systems. Teens will team up to crack clues, design, and build

		creative structures using Cubelets. This fast-paced workshop brings teamwork, friendly competition, and strong communication skills to life—all while having a blast!
	The Inside Tract: Cud & Calves	We'll dive into rumination and reproduction of livestock, utilizing real digestive and reproductive tracts to give participants insight into what happens in the inner workings of livestock.
	Virginia Tech Application Workshop	Learn about the Virginia Tech application process and workshop your essays with the Director of Student Recruitment for the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences.
	VT Helmet Lab: Build-A-Helmet Challenge!	Gear up for a fast-paced, hands-on engineering challenge! After a quick tour of the lab, students will team up in groups of 3–5 to design and build their own protective helmet. Using a helmet shell and a box of padding supplies, each group will compete to create the design that offers the best impact protection. Teams will build, test, rebuild, and retest their helmets as time allows—learning about problem-solving, safety engineering, and the science behind impact absorption along the way.

Wed. 11:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.	Workshop Title	Description
	Agribusiness is Everybody's Business	Most people, when they hear agriculture, think of farming. However, agriculture is farming and so much more. The wide world of agribusiness will be introduced, using the chocolate chip cookie as an example. Career opportunities will be explored.
	Balancing Biodiversity: A Game of Invasive Species Management	Join us for an informative workshop on biological invasions. Participants will receive a brief introduction to the impacts of invasive species, pathways of introduction, and common prevention and management techniques, illustrated with examples of famous invasive species. Following the introduction, participants will engage in a hands-on activity to apply what they've learned.
	Beyond the Clover	Ready to level up? Join the Southeast District Ambassadors for a hands-on leadership experience designed for teens who want more — more confidence, more clarity about their future, and more real-world skills they can actually use. Through interactive stations rooted in the four pillars of 4-H, using teamwork and strategic decision making, you'll step into real-life scenarios that challenge you to think critically and consider real life consequences while making smart choices under pressure. The workshop wraps up with a personal vision-board activity to help each student define their next steps as a leader. Walk in unsure. Walk out with direction.
	Bugs Tell the Story: Stream Health Workshop	Discover how tiny stream bugs can reveal big clues about water quality in this hands-on field workshop at the VT StREAM Lab. Students will collect, sort, and identify macroinvertebrates using the Virginia Save Our Streams method, then use their findings to assess the stream's overall health. They'll also compare specimens from a healthier stream to see how biodiversity changes with water quality. Perfect for curious learners who enjoy science, nature, and outdoor exploration.
	Build Your Biome	Join the Northwest District Ambassadors in exploring architecture around the world in this hands-on, interactive workshop!

	Consumer Challenge	The 4-H Consumer Decision Making contest is a fun challenge where teens compare products or services, decide which is best, and explain why. Everyone makes purchases, so why not be really good at it? You get to think, solve problems, and show off your smart choices while competing with friends!
	Cool, Calm and Collected: Tools for a Balanced Life	This interactive, beginner-friendly workshop focuses on nurturing social-emotional wellness and building a personal "tranquility toolkit." Participants will explore practical strategies to manage stress and improve self-regulation. The session blends creative DIY projects, like making stress balls with mindfulness techniques including yoga and guided relaxation. By the end of the session, youth will have developed a deeper understanding of their emotions and gained tangible resources to maintain resilience and a sense of calm in their daily lives.
	Drones in Agriculture	Join us for an exciting workshop on drones and their applications in the agriculture industry. Discover how drones are revolutionizing farming practices, from crop monitoring to precision agriculture. Learn about the latest technologies and techniques, and see real-world examples of drones in action. This workshop is perfect for anyone interested in the intersection of technology and agriculture.
	Fun with Flowers!	Create a mason-jar floral arrangement while learning the basics of flower care, handling, and simple design techniques. This hands-on workshop lets teens explore color, creativity, and floral mechanics.
	Going Pro: The Ins and Outs of Professionalism	Join the Northeast District 4-H Cabinet Ambassadors for an immersive course that covers the nuances of professionalism. With this hands-on workshop you will be able to polish your interpersonal skills in real time to carry with you into your future professional career!
	Hokie Tour	We will be walking around Virginia Tech Campus and stopping at select destinations that are important to agriculture and the values that Virginia 4-H represents.
	How Discovery Happens: Foundational Skills for the Next Generation of STEM Professionals	In this multi-part, hands-on workshop, high-school students will explore how scientists design rigorous research methods and use specialized tools to answer real scientific questions. Participants will rotate through four interactive stations, including a LEGO activity on research methods, a guided tour of the Discovery Lab's scientific instruments, a demonstration using the fluorescence microscope or elemental analyzer, and a pipetting and sample-prep skills lab. Working in small groups, students will gain firsthand experience with authentic research practices and scientific equipment. This workshop is ideal for curious learners eager to see how science happens behind the scenes.
	Livestock Judging 101	Participants will have the opportunity to learn about livestock judging with real livestock and from actual youth livestock judging competitors. This workshop will be led by Virginia 4-H Youth Livestock Ambassadors and advisors and seeks to give participants insight into why and how youth livestock members do what they do.
	Measuring Aerobic Fitness	This will be a workshop where the participants will learn how to measure aerobic fitness in a laboratory setting. We will show how to use a metabolic cart, how to conduct a fitness test, and how the participants would be able to use and interpret the results.
	Mighty Mung Bean Food Challenge	In this hands-on culinary workshop, students will explore the global importance of mung beans and how this protein-rich legume supports diet

		diversification and reduces malnutrition in regions such as Senegal. Working in small groups, participants will each have their own workstation and ingredients to prepare a unique mung-bean-based dish, including hummus, fruit salad, egg omelets, or mung bean “caviar.” A brief presentation will introduce the production, utilization, and nutritional value of mung beans before students dive into cooking. By the end, participants will gain both cultural insight and new food-prep skills while discovering creative ways to incorporate mung beans into everyday meals.
	Sensory Science: Understanding the How and Why of Food Flavor	Students will be introduced to Food Science through Sensory Evaluation of different foods, exploring how all 5 senses contribute to the flavor of food.
	Share Your Story	This comprehensive workshop engages students’ creativity by guiding them in the development of an original story through writing, visual art, acting, dance, and music.
	Soil Health the 4-H Way!	This hands-on session uses the 4-H values of Head, Heart, Hands, and Health to explore the core principles of soil health. Participants will learn how soil functions, why soil resources are limited, and how management decisions shape long-term outcomes through demonstrations like the “Apple as the Earth” activity, rainfall simulators, slake tests, and biodiversity comparisons. Each soil health principle is paired with a 4-H value to help youth connect leadership skills with real-world stewardship. By observing how soils respond under different conditions, teens will build systems-thinking skills and understand the cause-and-effect relationships behind soil management.
	STEM in Sports Field Management	Attendees will discover first-hand how STEM principles are fundamental to making sure Worsham Field looks its best for Hokies all over the world and plays it’s best so that athletes can stay safe as they score on the field! Attendees will learn the Science behind turfgrass management and the Technology that examines the relationships between athlete performance and field safety, the Engineering principles incorporated into professional turf equipment, and the Mathematical knowledge required to maintain high-quality athletic fields.
	STEM Majors in Sustainability, Environment, & Conservation	Environmental careers are often overlooked in STEM, but this session introduces students to high-demand, high-impact fields that urgently need skilled professionals. Students will explore Virginia Tech’s top-ranked natural resources programs, learn about environmentally focused STEM majors, and discover career paths with strong job placement and competitive starting salaries. The session includes an interactive careers-and-majors matching activity and practical guidance on how to become a strong applicant to Virginia Tech. It’s a great opportunity for students to see exciting STEM futures beyond the traditional paths.
	Technology Teaches Teamwork	Join the Central District Ambassadors for a hands-on Cubelets challenge! Cubelets are small, magnetic robotic blocks that snap together to create working systems. Teens will team up to crack clues, design, and build creative structures using Cubelets. This fast-paced workshop brings teamwork, friendly competition, and strong communication skills to life—all while having a blast!
	The Living Cell Lab	The Living Cell Lab invites participants to explore the hidden world of cellular biology through exciting, hands-on experiments. From extracting real strawberry DNA to modeling animal cells with edible components and

		examining tissues under a microscope, learners discover how cells function and why they matter.
	Virginia Tech Application Workshop	Learn about the Virginia Tech application process and workshop your essays with the Director of Student Recruitment for the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences.
	VT Helmet Lab: Build-A-Helmet Challenge!	Gear up for a fast-paced, hands-on engineering challenge! After a quick tour of the lab, students will team up in groups of 3–5 to design and build their own protective helmet. Using a helmet shell and a box of padding supplies, each group will compete to create the design that offers the best impact protection. Teams will build, test, rebuild, and retest their helmets as time allows—learning about problem-solving, safety engineering, and the science behind impact absorption along the way.

Thurs. 9:45 to 11:15 a.m.	Workshop Title	Description
	4-H Bridges Beyond Borders: Dominican Republic Service, Culture & Leadership Abroad	This workshop gives teens a behind-the-scenes look at the Dominican Republic service-learning experience, where youth step into a new culture, build leadership skills, and partner with Dominican teens on community-focused projects. Participants will learn how U.S. and Dominican teens work together to support local initiatives and lead a structured day camp for children. As part of the session, teens will also create handmade bracelets that will be gifted to Dominican youth during the camp. This hands-on activity highlights global citizenship, creativity, and the impact of meaningful cross-cultural connections.
	Abe Lincoln's Top Hat (and 250 Years of American Stories)	During this workshop, participants will use images from the Smithsonian Museum's Open Access Gallery to explore how objects can tell a story of America. They will work in small groups to select five images that make connections, capture moments, and reflect change. Teams will put these images together to curate their own museum exhibit telling a story of America.
	Applying to be a Virginia 4-H All Star	Youth will learn the qualifications to apply to become a 4-H All Star. Participants will be able to participate in an active "working workshop" to learn how to complete a Virginia All Star application.
	Beginner Swimming	There are several localities in Virginia that do not have safe access to water for youth to learn how to swim. This class will provide an introduction to water, floating, breathing and putting your face in the water.
	Beyond the Barn: 4-H Horse Opportunities	Meet the Virginia 4-H Horse Ambassadors and explore everything the 4-H Horse Program has to offer—from horse shows to exciting equine educational opportunities. After a brief introduction, ambassadors will lead teens through hands-on, interactive activities that bring the horse world to life, no horses required! Participants will rotate through engaging stations such as a horseless horse show, hippology challenges, and a horse-judging experience. This workshop is perfect for both seasoned horse lovers and those brand-new to the equine world.
	Cute Clothes, Clean Conscience: How Fast Fashion Affects the Environment	Fast fashion is a term that describes cheap, low-quality clothing items that are sold to consumers who are looking for deals and to be part of the latest trends, in today's current environment many teens are shopping on TEMU or SHEIN to find these alternatives. While these can be economical

		in the short-term, in the long-term these clothing items don't last and fall out of fashion quickly. Additionally, the cycle of buying and discarding creates an environmental problem as many of our landfills are full of textile waste. Participants will discover practical ways to make more sustainable clothing decisions and try a hands-on activity to put those ideas into practice. By the end, they'll feel empowered to choose fashion that reflects both their values and their personal comfort.
	Discovering the Science in Dairy Science	Hey, there's more to that glass of milk than meets the eye! In this workshop, participants will explore the science behind many of the processes that take place on the dairy farm and in milk processing. There will be plenty of hands-on activities allowing you to learn about the biology of the dairy cow and what makes her so special. Learn about milking procedures, milk safety, and cheesemaking.
	Duct Tape & Diapers: How to protect a horse's sore hoof!	Lameness is a frequent problem in horses and sometimes lameness can be caused by hoof problems. Participants will learn and practice skills that they might use if their horse is lame such as measuring for a boot, applying a boot, and hoof wraps. Tips and tricks will be discussed for common problems such as boots causing rubs and hoof wraps that keep coming off. While this presentation will focus on horse hooves, these principles can apply to other animal species as well.
	Exploring the Agricultural Technology Program at Virginia Tech	Discover Virginia Tech's 2-Year Agricultural Technology Program—a hands-on, career-focused path into agriculture, landscaping, and turfgrass management. Explore interest areas like agribusiness, crop and livestock production, landscape management, and turfgrass through interactive activities and a plant-propagation project. Participants will tour the Hahn Horticulture Garden to see real student work and learn how to navigate the application process. Join us to explore your passions, build practical skills, and jump-start your future in the green industries!
	From Ideas to Action: Youth Leading Food Security Solutions	The workshop is an interactive, youth-led leadership experience designed to help 4-H State Congress participants move from awareness to action on community food access. It brings Youth in Action (YIA) winners into a coaching role where they guide participants through a structured process for turning a real community concern into a practical project idea they can implement through 4-H Beyond Ready or Lead the Change projects
	Improving Shelter Dog Welfare using Canine Science	This session will introduce attendees to canine science, especially focused on behavior and welfare. We will discuss the stressors of shelter living and how stress affects behavior, health, and adoptability. After a brief discussion of shelter stress and welfare, participants will work in groups to analyze a shelter-dog profile (e.g., fearful, high-energy, etc.) and design enrichment tailored to that dog's needs. We will give enrichment items to demo dogs and attendees will assess which enrichment items the dogs preferred. Attendees will be able to use their knowledge when providing enrichment to their own dogs or volunteering at local shelters.
	Invisible Clues: Using eDNA to Track Aquatic Life & Protect Virginia Waters	This interactive workshop will introduce 4-H Congress participants to environmental DNA (eDNA) as an exciting, cutting-edge tool for monitoring aquatic ecosystems. Youth will learn how organisms, from fish to amphibians, leave behind tiny traces of DNA in the water, and how scientists use that DNA to detect biodiversity and identify ecological changes. Participants will engage in hands-on water sample collection using field-safe materials, practice simple contamination-aware techniques, and explore real or simulated eDNA results to understand

		how species presence is detected. Youth will leave with the skills and inspiration to participate in or lead their own community-based environmental monitoring projects.
	Sawdust Energy: Unlocking Your Inner DIY	Teens will learn to measure, cut, drill, and assemble their own wooden photo frame or recipe board in this hands-on workshop. Participants gain confidence with common tools while personalizing their project through sanding, staining, or wood burning. Perfect for beginners and DIY enthusiasts alike, this session blends creativity, skill-building, and fun—everyone leaves with a finished piece they built themselves!
	Social Innovation Design Challenge	Students will learn about and practice the 5-step design thinking process and investor-style, lean canvas pitch used by social entrepreneurs to solve real-world problems in their communities.
	Storyboards: Exploring Personal and Family Narratives	This interactive workshop invites teens to explore how personal and family stories shape their identity, values, and perspectives. Through guided reflection and creative storyboard design, participants will uncover meaningful moments, cultural influences, and community lessons that guide their choices. Youth will practice communicating their stories with confidence while gaining a deeper understanding of what shapes how they show up in the world. It's a reflective, creative experience designed to help teens connect with their roots and express their authentic voice.
	Tracks to Trees: Exploring Wildlife Identification & Habitat Management through 4-H WHEP	Explore wildlife up close through hands-on ID stations, teamwork-based habitat management challenges, and a fun wildlife knowledge game. Teens will learn how to identify animals, understand habitat needs, and create simple management plans just like real wildlife biologists!
	VT Helmet Lab: Build-A-Helmet Challenge!	Gear up for a fast-paced, hands-on engineering challenge! After a quick tour of the lab, students will team up in groups of 3–5 to design and build their own protective helmet. Using a helmet shell and a box of padding supplies, each group will compete to create the design that offers the best impact protection. Teams will build, test, rebuild, and retest their helmets as time allows—learning about problem-solving, safety engineering, and the science behind impact absorption along the way.
	Who's Sprouting Who?	"Who's Sprouting Who?" is a hands-on 4-H workshop where youth explore the science of growing microgreens in urban spaces, while developing leadership and healthy living skills. Participants will learn how to plant, care for, and harvest microgreens. Along the way, they'll discover the nutritional benefits of microgreens, explore food systems in urban settings. This engaging activity blends science, sustainability, and youth empowerment right from the windowsill.
	Wool to Wear	Ever wondered how a sheep's fleece becomes the cozy sweater you wear? In this hands-on workshop, we'll explore the journey of wool from farm to fiber to finished project. Participants will learn about sheep, wool processing, and the incredible versatility of natural fibers before trying their hand at creating something wearable. You'll get an introduction to knitting, crochet, and/or loom knitting while making a simple project you can take home. No experience needed, just curiosity and creativity!

4-H AGENT'S CONGRESS CHECKLIST

Preparation and Recruitment

1. **Advertise** State 4-H Congress via your 4-H newsletter, newspaper, social media outlets, etc.
2. Identify and **recruit** delegates and volunteers. Use the Information packet and the 2026 Congress website to help.
3. Ensure that every delegate has a **chaperone** of the appropriate gender assigned to him or her and that the adult chaperone-to-delegate ratio is a minimum of 10:1. If utilizing a chaperone from another unit, **ASK** permission before listing them to ensure ratios are met and they are capable of assuming this responsibility. Make sure the chaperone's name is listed on the registration.
4. Select a 4-H leader who will receive the **volunteer scholarship** and be sure to designate that via this [Google Sheet](#).
5. Select a 4-H Member who will receive the **first-time delegate scholarship** and be sure to designate that via this [Google Sheet](#) [*check the tabs at the bottom for the appropriate sheet*].
6. Advise if any delegates are receiving other scholarships through the district.
7. Identify delegates who wish to participate in 4-H **competitions**. Competition Areas, Policies, and Guidelines are included in this packet.
8. Please encourage your top 4-H'ers to apply for **State 4-H Ambassadors & Cabinet Officer** positions. These are important and fulfilling roles in state 4-H teen leadership. The *Responsibilities, Requirements, and Election Procedures for the Virginia 4-H Cabinet* packet can be found on the 2026 Congress website.

Registration

1. **Provide a 4-H Congress information packet** to all delegates and adult volunteers. Information packets are found on the 4-H Congress website <https://ext.vt.edu/4h-youth/state-congress.html>
2. **Registration** of Congress participants must be completed no later than **May 15**. See registration details in the Congress management section of this packet.
3. Delegates and adults need to complete their enrollment directly in the 4-H Online system.

Unit Delegate Orientation

1. Schedule unit orientation session(s) prior to Congress. Please don't allow your delegation to come unprepared – provide an orientation. Suggested topics to cover include:
 - a. Review the **Congress mission**

- b. Review the **Congress schedule**
 - c. Review and discuss **CHARACTER COUNTS! ® at Congress** and the **Code of Conduct**
 - d. Review **Dress Code**. Be sure to pack appropriate clothing for all Congress activities
 - e. Discuss **travel arrangements**
2. Remind delegates that there is to be **no switching of rooms** once they arrive at Congress without permission from their adult chaperone. Chaperones must immediately notify the Congress Headquarters of any approved room changes. Room switching disrupts rosters and makes locating delegates very difficult in emergencies. All delegates must post a room sign on their door by Tuesday evening.
 3. All Congress participants are expected to **bring bed linens, towels, and toiletries** from home. Lodging is in an air-conditioned dorm.
 4. Advise delegates that they will need to **bring money** if desired for souvenirs. Large sums of cash are not necessary or recommended.
 5. Review **campaign speeches** and other campaign material of any candidates from your unit who are running for State 4-H Cabinet.
 6. Encourage teens within the local unit program to participate in Virtual Town Hall meetings to get to know the candidates for State 4-H Cabinet officer and ambassador positions.
 7. Encourage delegates to bring and use a personal water bottle. There will not be bottled water available at the volume in the past, delegates will be expected to use their own water bottles.
NOTE: Water bottles are not allowed to be filled in the dining hall! New filling stations have been installed inside and outside at various locations across campus.
 8. Remind delegates that suggestive dancing is NOT appropriate at 4-H Congress.
 9. Remind everyone to be respectful by not using/turning off cell phones at assemblies and workshops.

Upon Arrival in Blacksburg

1. **Check-in** – June 15, 2026 | 1:00 PM – 3:30 PM
Adult and teen participants will arrive on campus. All youth delegates and adult chaperones will proceed to the designated location to check in to receive their registration packets and dorm room assignments. Delegates who leave before the conclusion of Congress must check out through Congress Headquarters.

instructions will be provided in a final Congress information email. All vehicles must display parking permits while on campus to avoid getting ticketed.

3. 4-H members are not to drive during the week.