



# STATE 4-H CONGRESS 2025

## General Information Packet June 24 – 27, 2025

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



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## **MISSION OF VIRGINIA 4-H STATE CONGRESS**

The mission of Virginia 4-H State Congress is to provide competitive and non-competitive educational experiences to Virginia teens and the adults who work with them, helping them to develop life skills and leadership abilities to become contributing citizens in their communities.

## **GOALS OF VIRGINIA 4-H STATE CONGRESS**

1. Provide a high-quality educational experience for 4-H youth ages 14-18;
2. Promote 4-H as a major statewide educational youth program;
3. Provide educational, recreational, and social experiences for youth that would not normally be available at the unit or district level;
4. Enhance skill development through all 4-H Congress activities including Competitions, Hands-on Workshops, and Service Learning projects;
5. Recognize all competition and award winners in front of their peers at a Statewide event;
6. Recognize the support of volunteer adult 4-H leaders that support 4-H Congress;
7. Promote an understanding of the value of diversity among Congress participants;
8. Enhance the delegate's sense of personal and social responsibility through an environment that fosters independence, accountability, decision-making, and time management.

## **2025 PROGRAM INFORMATION AND HIGHLIGHTS**

**4-H STATE COMPETITIONS:** 4-H members have a chance to compete with their peers from across the state. Please review the policy and guidelines found in this packet. Participants with high scores in each blue-ribbon category will be recognized during the Closing ceremony on Friday, June 21, 2025. Please see the competition information for more details.

**PRE-CONGRESS ACTIVITY:** Upon arrival, units and their chaperones can participate in a self-guided campus scavenger hunt after settling into the dorms. The State 4-H Office will provide all materials for the scavenger hunt. This will be a great activity to familiarize yourself and your delegation with the areas of campus we will be visiting throughout Congress.

**WELCOME TO CONGRESS MIXER!** On Tuesday evening, you can enjoy a welcome mixer, which will be held on Dietrick Lawn. This fun time will be hosted by your current State 4-H Cabinet members, along with Meet and Greets by the Congress Cabinet Candidates and 4-H All-Stars. There will be plenty of get-to-know-you activities, ice cream, and fun to go around!

**OPENING SESSION:** Featuring Mario Ferruzzi, Dean of the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences at Virginia Tech!

**EDUCATIONAL WORKSHOPS:** During State 4-H Congress, delegates will have the opportunity to choose from a variety of workshops with hands-on and engaging learning experiences. Congress workshops will consist of two interactive 60-minute sessions on Wednesday morning, followed by a longer 90-minute session on Thursday morning. Participants will be asked to select their top five (5)

workshop choices, and final assignments will be made prior to check-in. There is a listing of 2025 workshops in this packet and on the Congress website.

**DANCES:** At least one dance will be held. This is another great opportunity for delegates to mingle and meet other Congress participants. Alternate recreation will be available for those delegates who choose not to participate in the dance.

**OPPORTUNITY FAIR:** At the opportunity fair, participants can discover diverse pathways to participate in 4-H activities, interact with representatives from numerous ambassador groups, and access valuable resources to shape their future endeavors.

**COLOR RUN/WALK:** join us for our Color Run/Walk on Wednesday evening. This unique paint race celebrates healthiness, happiness, and individuality. Participants will receive a t-shirt and to participate in this event. There will be an additional cost of \$10 to participate in this event, and proceeds will help to support the State 4-H Congress.

**SERVICE LEARNING:** Each delegate will participate in a service learning project that will be held on Wednesday afternoon

**CONGRESSIONAL GAMES:** Congressional Games are coming back this year allowing Districts to compete in both individual and team activities. Points will be awarded in each category to districts based on participation and standing. Tournament style brackets will be utilized and games may include corn hole, volleyball, 3 on 3 basketball, 4 square, chess and other board games, swimming, and much much more! Stay tuned for sign up instructions.

**RECOGNITION OF 4-H ALL-STARS.** During 4-H Congress, current and those who will be tapped into the All Stars will be recognized during an opening assembly program, and the tapping ceremony will be held on Thursday afternoon.

**ALL-STAR TAPPING:** The All-Star tapping will be held in an indoor location on Thursday afternoon (2:00-2:45 PM). **All Congress delegates (youth and adult participants) are expected to attend the All-Star tapping.**

**ALL-STAR ORIENTATION:** The All-Star orientation will be held on Thursday from 2:45 - 3:45 PM.

**STATE AWARDS AND CLOSING CEREMONY:** On Friday morning, State 4-H Congress will close out with a special closing ceremony. This closing ceremony will honor all State 4-H Congress award recipients, including competition winners, 2025 National 4-H Congress delegates, Innovative Programming Awards, Fun Run winners, etc., and installing the 2025-26 State 4-H Cabinet. We will also hear remarks from Virginia Secretary of Agriculture and Forestry Matt Lohr!

**CONGRESS DELEGATION PHOTO:** The entire Congress delegation will come together for a group photo, and more information will be provided when delegates are on-site. The photos of the Delegation may be purchased for \$5 each. Delegates must pay for photos in advance through the registration system.

**UNIT PHOTOGRAPHS:** Unit delegation photos are scheduled for Thursday, and more details will follow once delegates arrive on site. Delegates and chaperones will be in semi-formal attire. Each unit will be designated a time slot for their photo. The unit photos may be purchased for \$5 each. Only those participants from the Unit that paid for their photo will be provided a copy.

**DIGITAL CONGRESS SLIDESHOW:** Do you ever wish you could have a copy to take home of the slideshow produced at Congress? Well, now you can! Digital versions of the 2025 Congress Slideshow can be purchased for \$5 each. Links will be distributed after Congress.

### **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 open on March 1, 2025. Registration will close at 11:59 PM on May 10, 2025.

### **Registration Structure and Fees:**

- ☘ Full Congress Registration - \$295/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
  
- ☘ One-day Competition Registration - \$65/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

**Payments** - 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 information and options. Participants will have to make payments to unit offices.

**Refunds** – All refund requests should come to the State 4-H Office by June 1, 2025.

- If State 4-H Congress is canceled by the state or federal government or us, fees will be fully refunded.
- Refunds will be provided up until June 1, 2025; however, a \$50.00 processing fee will be assessed for all cancellations up until June 1.
- After June 1<sup>st</sup>, no refunds will be issued unless:
  - Between 2 weeks before (June 10, 2025) and up to the day of arrival at Congress, if for **Medical Reasons**, youth are not admitted into Congress, a refund minus \$50 will be provided.

**Need-based Scholarships** – There are a limited number of scholarships available. The final amount and number will be determined based on the number of applicants and need. To apply for a scholarship, please complete the short Google form at <https://forms.gle/BkS6SjpYkZzuBpcg9>. Delegates will be required to make a deposit payment of \$195.00 and will receive additional information about the final payment after the selections. If a scholarship is not awarded, the balance of the registration will be required to be paid.

**Department of the 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 Air Force-Connected families living in Virginia. These scholarships 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 military parent of the youth must currently be serving in one of the following: **Active Duty Air Force/Space Force, Air Force Reserve, or Air National Guard**. For more information, please contact Louetta Jones - 4-H Military Club Director, at [lojones@vt.edu](mailto:lojones@vt.edu) or call 804-712-8467.



# 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 contest runs efficiently

Egg Preparation Demonstration

Extemporaneous Speaking

Discussion Meet

*Rules can be found at: <https://www.vafb.com/membership-at-work/farmers-in-action/young-farmers>*

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, Vitamins and Minerals*

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, The Importance of the Triangle in Designing Structures, 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



## **2025 State 4-H Congress Competition Policies and Guidelines**

1. Participants have a responsibility to review the rules, resource documents, and score sheets with their local 4-H Agent.
2. State contests will use the rules, score sheets, etc. posted only on the competition's web page, regardless of how qualifying county and district contests are run. Local units and districts are encouraged to adopt and abide by the state rules out of fairness to youth participants. For contests in which there is a national event, contestants should check the national rules for any differences at that level of competition.
3. 4-H Congress (and therefore state-level competition at Congress) participation is limited to senior 4-H youth, those ages 14-19, as of September 30 of the 4-H year. Mixed-age acts that competed at the unit or district level will be ineligible at the state level. (Example: four young people in a Share-the-Fun act where at least one is age 13 or less would not qualify.)
4. All Congress competitors must have participated in a qualifying event, whether at the unit or district level, depending on the local situation. All units and districts are encouraged to hold contests prior to Congress.
5. A list of sample topics is provided for additional information only. Participants are not limited to subjects but do have to fit into one of the above categories. Contestants should be prepared to show judges the connection/correlation to the category area. Judges' or contest managers' decisions are final. Categories may be combined as needed by competition committee to ensure contest runs efficiently
6. Competition scoring will follow the Danish Awards System (Blue: 90-100; Red: 75-89; White: 74 and below). Overall high score blue ribbon winner in each category will receive a medal. Modifications have been made for competition categories with a total score of over 100 points.
7. A 4-H member can participate in only one competitive event during Congress even if he/she qualified in more than one contest at previous levels of competition. It is difficult when youth are assigned to multiple competitive event locations and to arrange the scheduling of two competitions to accommodate one individual at two different events.
8. At 4-H Congress, the Share-the-Fun contests have limits on the number of acts each unit can send. Each unit may send one act per Share-the-Fun category.
9. A unit may send more than one participant in all competition categories except Share-The-Fun. For example, a unit may send more than one 4-Her to compete in public speaking, fashion revue, presentations, etc. Check specific team contest rules for the number of teams and the number of participants on a team allowed in state competitions.
10. The genre of presentations, demonstrations, public speaking, STF acts, fashion review garments, etc. must remain consistent between unit/district and state competitions. Improvements based on input provided by the last judging panel can be incorporated, but the genre of the work cannot be changed.

11. Once a youth is the overall state winner in a competition category, he/she cannot compete in that category again at the state level. For instance, if a youth is the overall winner in vocal, he/she cannot compete in vocal again, but could compete in another category such as instrumental, variety, forestry, or foods, etc. State medal winners should not repurpose their act to try to fit into another category in another year.
12. State competition contestants are encouraged to attend 4-H Congress, but are not required to. Competitors may register as one-day participants in order to compete. Pre-registration is required; see Congress information for deadlines.
13. **NEW FOR 2025** Competitors will need to remain in the contest room/designated area the entire time to support other competitors and to learn from their speeches, presentations, performances, etc.
14. **NEW FOR 2025:** Only competitors, the room chair, judges, and others needed to run the contest will be allowed in the competition area. Family members, Agents, leaders, coaches, and others will not be allowed to observe. This provides youth with independence and prepares them for other life situations where supportive adults are not able to be with them in interviews, class projects, or similar situations.

## **Educational Workshops**

*Wednesday, June 25 and Thursday, June 26*

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).

### 2025 4-H Congress Workshops

<b>Wednesday, 9:00 a.m. to 10:00 a.m.</b>	Description
Virginia Tech Helmet Lab - Injury Biomechanics research	Come experience various helmet impact tests, learn about all the unique padding technologies, learn about our Nerf toy testing, and commercial drone impact testing.
Composing a Landscape	Come experience a Gallery Tour of the current exhibition in Moss Arts Center, learning how to compose a landscape (through art and writing) by drawing and writing details with human relation in mind. Upon completion, students will leave with an artwork of their own featuring perspectives and landscapes of Virginia Tech's campus.
Unlocking Leadership: Strengths, Styles, and Strategies	This dynamic, hands-on workshop helps participants develop leadership potential through team-based challenges and reflective discussions. Participants will explore leadership styles, group dynamics, communication, and decision-making. The workshop promotes self-awareness, encouraging reflection on leadership strengths and adaptability. By engaging in leadership scenarios, participants will practice collaboration, problem-solving, and adaptability, gaining practical insights to enhance their leadership abilities and positively impact their teams and communities

STEM Majors and Careers in Sustainability, Environment, & Conservation	<p>There is huge demand for STEM graduates in the world, and students/parents often feel it's essential to get a "good" job. However, environmental careers are often overlooked when students think of STEM. This session seeks to change that mindset by introducing "other" STEM disciplines for your students to consider, and to showcase in-demand career fields that are desperate for people. Virginia Tech is the #1 ranked natural resources college in the nation, and most graduates from our program enjoy a nearly 100% job placement rate and starting salaries above \$60K/year! Students will learn about our cutting edge, in-demand STEM programs and how to identify environmentally focused careers and majors that suit them. The session will also include an overview of our holistic approach to academics, a fun and interactive careers/major matching quiz activity, and most importantly—tips on how to get accepted to Virginia Tech!</p>
Finding the world's most common animals.	<p>In this fun and interactive workshop, participants will be divided into four teams to compete in finding the best locations for nematodes, the world's most common animal. Each team will receive a bag of gummy worms to add a playful twist to the challenge. Join us for an exciting adventure in discovering nematodes!</p>
The Power of Validation – Seeing the Good and True in Others	<p>Exercise in building relationships and learning how to validate those around us. Can be a game-changer! When you "validate" someone, you focus on two things: what is good and what is true.</p> <p>By the end of the session, participants will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>*Understand the importance of validation in building relationships and self-worth.</li> <li>*Practice recognizing and verbalizing positive qualities in others.</li> <li>*Gain confidence in giving and receiving affirmations.</li> </ul>
Balancing Biodiversity: A Game of Invasive Species Management	<p>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.</p>

Measuring Aerobic Fitness	Join us for a hands-on workshop where participants will learn how to measure aerobic fitness and resting metabolic rate in a laboratory setting. Additionally, blood pressure measurements will be taken. This session offers practical insights into fitness assessment techniques.
L.E.T.'s Go! Building Confidence Through Leadership, Etiquette, and Teamwork	Join the Northeast District 4-H Cabinet Ambassadors for a fun-filled workshop that will focus on building life skills, such as how to carry yourself with confidence, prepare for job interviews, become a strong team player, and develop or expand your leadership skills.
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.
Ignite Your Spark: Exploring STEM Through Sphero Balls	This interactive workshop will engage 4-H teens in hands-on STEM activities designed to foster curiosity, critical thinking, and problem-solving skills. Teens will work primarily with Sphero Balls to explore robotics, coding, and engineering principles, reinforcing real-world applications and career connections in STEM fields.
STEM in Sports Field Management	Attendees will learn how STEM principles are fundamental to making sure Worsham Field looks it's 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 measures the relationships between athlete performance and field safety, the Engineering principles between professional turf equipment compared to the mowers that homeowners use, and the Mathematical knowledge required to maintain high-quality athletic fields.
Chill Skills: Tools for Total Tranquility	Join us for an interactive, feel-good workshop all about nurturing your social-emotional wellness! In this hands-on session, you'll dive into fun activities designed to boost your self-care routine and manage stress. Create your very own stress ball and glitter jar, whip up a healthy trail mix snack, and unwind with some relaxing yoga poses. But that's not all—you'll also discover powerful breathing techniques, explore journaling for stress relief, and wrap up with a calming guided relaxation.

<p>Exploring Entomology: Career Pathways and Live Specimens</p>	<p>Join us to discover the exciting world of Entomology – the study of insects! Learn about this multi-faceted field and explore living insects and other arthropod species from the Hokie BugZoo. We will also provide information on the various career paths available to aspiring entomologists.</p>
<p>Part One: Introducing Youth to the Exciting World of Food Challenge - Must enroll in Part 2 also</p>	<p>The Food Challenge contest is an engaging and dynamic competition that many youth are unfamiliar with, but once they experience it, they're hooked. In this workshop I want to introduce participants to the contest, provide them with the knowledge and skills needed to get started. By offering this workshop, we can generate greater interest in the Food Challenge, encourage more youth to get involved, and ultimately increase participation in the state competition. Please sign up for both part one and part two if you choose this workshop.</p>
<p>Virginia Tech Application Workshop</p>	<p>Join us for a comprehensive review of the VT application process. We'll cover important dates and deadlines, how to get started now, and provide an overview of admissions statistics. This workshop is designed to help you navigate the application process with confidence.</p>
<p>“Stream Conservation: Implementing Aquatic Macroinvertebrate Sampling to Outline Stream Health”</p>	<p>Students will learn about aquatic macroinvertebrate sampling, used to outline overall stream health, and how this information can be used to inform conservation actions. They will learn the difference between Sensitive and Tolerant species, and what to look for in a healthy vs. unhealthy aquatic environment.</p>

<p>Aspiring Influencer 101: Social Media Tips and Tricks</p>	<p>This workshop is designed to teach young participants how to create fun, engaging, and colorful social media pages that leave a lasting impression via Instagram pictures and videos. This workshop will guide 4-H'ers through strategies to boost their creativity and engagement online while teaching them how to post effectively, create eye-catching visuals, and write captions. Participants will also learn about the importance of maintaining a positive digital footprint and protecting their online reputation to ensure that their presence reflects their values and aspirations. These same lessons can apply to crafting a social media page for a 4-H club or unit.</p> <p>We'll explore key topics such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•What makes a social media post stand out?</li> <li>•Best practices for audience engagement and storytelling.</li> <li>•Crafting a personal or club brand through design, colors, and themes.</li> <li>•Understanding the impact of your digital footprint and online safety tips.</li> </ul>
<p>From Pig to Pork</p>	<p>Step into the world of meat processing and learn how we go from "Pig to Pork". Participants will learn about (but not view) the harvest process and then visualize how we go from wholesale to retail products. A demonstration of sausage prep will end with a tasting of snack sticks.</p>
<p>Ware Lab Tour</p>	<p>The Ware Lab at Virginia Tech has been a hub for hands-on engineering since 1998, giving students a space to design, build, and collaborate on real-world projects. Before its creation, student design teams were scattered across campus, but thanks to the vision of Joe and Jenna Ware, the lab now brings engineers together in one space. This hands-on experience will give you an opportunity to tour and learn about the lab with faculty and students also sharing their experiences!</p>
<p><b>Wednesday, 11:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.</b></p>	
<p>Virginia Tech Helmet Lab - Injury Biomechanics research</p>	<p>Come experience various helmet impact tests, learn about all the unique padding technologies, learn about our Nerf toy testing, and commercial drone impact testing.</p>

Composing a Landscape	Come experience a Gallery Tour of the current exhibition in Moss Arts Center, learning how to compose a landscape (through art and writing) by drawing and writing details with human relation in mind. Upon completion, students will leave with an artwork of their own featuring perspectives and landscapes of Virginia Tech's campus.
Unlocking Leadership: Strengths, Styles, and Strategies	This workshop is designed to provide participants with a dynamic and hands-on experience that helps them understand and develop their leadership potential. Through engaging team-based challenges and reflective discussions, participants will explore various leadership styles and how they influence group dynamics, communication, and decision-making. The workshop encourages self-awareness, prompting participants to reflect on their strengths as leaders and how they can adapt their approach to different situations. By engaging in leadership scenarios, participants will practice essential skills such as collaboration, problem-solving, and adaptability. The session also offers a supportive environment for participants to gain practical insights into how they can enhance their leadership abilities and make a positive impact within their teams and communities.
STEM Majors and Careers in Sustainability, Environment, & Conservation	There is huge demand for STEM graduates in the world, and students/parents often feel it's essential to get a "good" job. However, environmental careers are often overlooked when students think of STEM. This session seeks to change that mindset by introducing "other" STEM disciplines for your students to consider, and to showcase in-demand career fields that are desperate for people. Virginia Tech is the #1 ranked natural resources college in the nation, and most graduates from our program enjoy a nearly 100% job placement rate and starting salaries above \$60K/year! Students will learn about our cutting edge, in-demand STEM programs and how to identify environmentally focused careers and majors that suit them. The session will also include an overview of our holistic approach to academics, a fun and interactive careers/major matching quiz activity, and most importantly—tips on how to get accepted to Virginia Tech!



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<p>Agribusiness from A to Z: What's in it for Me?</p>	<p>Most people, when they hear the word agriculture, think about farming. This presentation, using the chocolate chip cookie as an example, will share the many types of farms and other businesses that it takes to create the food, fiber, and fuel that we all consume. Collectively, these comprise the agribusiness system. Educational and career opportunities in this broadly-defined agribusiness industry will be discussed.</p>
<p>Building your professional brand</p>	<p>Join us for a dynamic workshop where youth will learn to build their professional brand. Participants will receive tips on writing professional emails and phone call etiquette. They will be provided with examples of creating an elevator speech and have the opportunity to craft their own. Additionally, they will practice handshakes and making introductions in various scenarios. Finally, the workshop will cover the dos and don'ts of social media and its impact on personal branding.</p>
<p>Your Skills, Your Future, Your Choice</p>	<p>Join us for a workshop designed to help students identify their skills, values, and key character traits. Participants will explore career paths that align with their strengths and interests, gaining clarity on their future career direction and making informed decisions.</p>

<p>Part Two: Introducing Youth to the Exciting World of Food Challenge - Must enroll in Part 1 also</p>	<p>The Food Challenge contest is an engaging and dynamic competition that many youth are unfamiliar with, but once they experience it, they're hooked. In this workshop I want to introduce participants to the contest, provide them with the knowledge and skills needed to get started. By offering this workshop, we can generate greater interest in the Food Challenge, encourage more youth to get involved, and ultimately increase participation in the state competition.</p>
<p>Getting Horses Acclimated to New Sights and Sounds</p>	<p>Many horses tend to react or spook when they experience a loud sound or moving object. I'll be showing participants how to get their horse accustomed to objects and sounds, but also explaining the reasons horses might not adjust well to new items. The class will be a mix of classroom and time in the arena. This workshop is perfect for participants who might want to take their horse to shows, liberty events or trail challenges, but topics covered can help horses be more bombproof at home too. While this presentation will focus on horses, these principles can apply to other animal species as well.</p>
<p>Virginia Tech Application Workshop</p>	<p>Join us for a comprehensive review of the VT application process. We'll cover important dates and deadlines, how to get started now, and provide an overview of admissions statistics. This workshop is designed to help you navigate the application process with confidence.</p>
<p>"Stream Conservation: Implementing Aquatic Macroinvertebrate Sampling to Outline Stream Health"</p>	<p>Students will learn about aquatic macroinvertebrate sampling, used to outline overall stream health, and how this information can be used to inform conservation actions. They will learn the difference between Sensitive and Tolerant species, and what to look for in a healthy vs. unhealthy aquatic environment.</p>

<p>Aspiring Influencer 101: Social Media Tips and Tricks</p>	<p>This workshop is designed to teach young participants how to create fun, engaging, and colorful social media pages that leave a lasting impression via Instagram pictures and videos. This workshop will guide 4-H'ers through strategies to boost their creativity and engagement online while teaching them how to post effectively, create eye-catching visuals, and write captions. Participants will also learn about the importance of maintaining a positive digital footprint and protecting their online reputation to ensure that their presence reflects their values and aspirations. These same lessons can apply to crafting a social media page for a 4-H club or unit.</p> <p>We'll explore key topics such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•What makes a social media post stand out?</li> <li>•Best practices for audience engagement and storytelling.</li> <li>•Crafting a personal or club brand through design, colors, and themes.</li> <li>•Understanding the impact of your digital footprint and online safety tips.</li> </ul>
<p>Ware Lab Tour</p>	<p>The Ware Lab at Virginia Tech has been a hub for hands-on engineering since 1998, giving students a space to design, build, and collaborate on real-world projects. Before its creation, student design teams were scattered across campus, but thanks to the vision of Joe and Jenna Ware, the lab now brings engineers together in one space. This hands-on experience will give you an opportunity to tour and learn about the lab with faculty and students also sharing their experiences!</p>
<p><b>Thursday, 9:45 to 11:15</b></p>	
<p>DEMOCRACY IN ACTION: DESIGN, BUILD, CHANGE YOUR COMMUNITY!</p>	<p>How can we create positive change in our local communities? In this hands-on workshop, 4-H members will be inspired to turn their ideas into action. In honor of America 250, participants will explore objects and stories from the Smithsonian collection, learning how community stakeholders throughout history have made an impact in their hometowns through civic engagement. Following this, they will participate in a hands-on activity to design a space that meets a need in a fictitious community. Finally, they'll reflect on how to apply a similar process back home, considering the many ways democracy can be continually perfected through individual and collective</p>

	efforts.
Sharing the Road with Trucks: Tips for Staying Safe on Our Roadways	The Sharing the Road with Trucks community outreach program is designed to educate teen drivers and soon-to-be teen drivers on the five key strategies for staying safe when encountering tractor-trailers, large trucks, buses, and farm equipment on the road. Attendees will also learn about the physics of large trucks compared to passenger vehicles, enhancing their understanding of road safety.
Udderly Awesome	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. 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. Udders, milk samples, dairy products, oh my! Who said science can't be fun?
Eat Beef! The west wasn't won on salad.	During this hands-on workshop, you will be introduced to the hands-on portion BQA Training, with an emphasis on consumer education and advocacy, while demonstrating and allowing participants to view and "do" some of the common animal health practices utilized in beef cattle.
Creating a Sustainable Future through increased wood use and sustainable packaging	Come learn all the wonderful products that can be made from trees, how they are renewable and contribute to building a sustainable future. We will also discuss how packaging of products and the materials used can be shifted to renewable materials. There will be a 20 minute introduction, then with two hands-on labs where participants will design packaging to protect an object (through testing) and one where they will learn about the strength of various wood species based on growth properties, (through testing to failure).

<p>Leadership Strengths Escape Room</p>	<p>Leadership requires collective problem-solving, leveraging the potential of individuals' strengths. This workshop will introduce participants to the strengths-based leadership framework and allow them to experience the concepts through an escape room activity. Participants must crack codes and solve puzzles to successfully access a lockbox of prizes. Get ready; the clock is ticking!</p>
<p>Time Travel: Exploring the Science of the Aging Brain</p>	<p>In collaboration with the ECCA Engagement Center for Creative Aging at Virginia Tech, this workshop offers you a hands-on opportunity to explore and learn about the aging process. Participants will engage in interactive activities designed to deepen their understanding of aging and its various aspects.</p>
<p>Teaching fido to sniff things out: Scent detection basics for dogs and their humans</p>	<p>Scent detection with dogs is an important (and fun) job for many dogs, such as search and rescue dogs, conservation dogs, medical alert dogs, and police dogs. It is also a fun sport for people to partner with their dogs. In this workshop, we will highlight how participants can train their dogs in scent detection, including identifying their dog's preference for reinforcers, pairing the scent with the reinforcer, training a communicative response, and setting up hides. Participants will get to conduct preference assessments, pairing the scent and reinforcer, and setting up hides for the dogs to detect. Participants will also get to act as "the dog" and see how well they can use their nose!</p>
<p>Learning about food science and sensory through pizza</p>	<p>Get ready for a fun and interactive pizza-making workshop! Students will start by making their own dough from scratch. While waiting for the dough to rise, enjoy a sensory demo that will engage your senses and enhance your culinary experience. This workshop promises a delicious and educational adventure in the art of pizza making.</p>

<p>Cute Clothes, Clean Conscience: How Fast Fashion Affects the Environment</p>	<p>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. The fast fashion industry is responsible for high carbon emissions, microplastics in the water, and is the second highest consumer of water globally.</p> <p>Youth can hold a high amount of their self-worth in how they look. In this workshop, youth will learn about self-worth, how to make sustainable fashion choices, do a hands-on activity to practice fashion sustainability, and be empowered to make fashion choices that they feel more comfortable in.</p>
<p>Water Safety</p>	<p>Several of our Virginia communities do not have access to safe swimming. If your community is one of these locations or maybe you have never had the opportunity to learn how to swim, join us for some time in the pool to explore water safety, the benefits of swimming and increase your comfort level in the water. This will be a challenge by choice and we will meet you where you are at with your comfort level in the water.</p>
<p>Making an Impression with Tree/Plant ID (Native &amp; Nonnative)</p>	<p>Dive into the world of tree and plant identification with this interactive and immersive workshop! Participants will embark on guided fieldwork to learn how to identify local trees and plants through hands-on activities. To make the experience even more memorable, students will create custom black/green bleached crew necks or shirts using leaves collected during their exploration. This workshop combines education and creativity for a fun and engaging learning adventure.</p>

<p>4-H is a World of Opportunity!</p>	<p>You know the 4-H pledge. It ends with the words, "for my club, my community, my country, and my WORLD". Learn more about the World of Opportunity through 4-H international exchange programs! Would you like to learn more about the culture of Japan, South Korea, Taiwan, Costa Rica, Argentina, or Norway? This is your opportunity to step out of your comfort zone and explore another country for 4 weeks in the summer of 2026. Not sure if you are ready to be a globe trotter, there are also opportunities to host a delegate from Japan for two weeks during the summer too! Learn all about the States' 4-H International Exchange programs!</p> <p>Wait, that is not all! As a bonus you will learn about Virginia's service learning project in the Dominican Republic too!</p> <p>As a result of participating in these programs, you will</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>*build cultural competency</li> <li>*foster respect for diversity</li> <li>*experience personal growth</li> <li>*improve communication skills</li> </ul> <p>Please join us!</p>
<p>I'm a Maker: 3D Printing in 4-H</p>	<p>Discover the exciting world of 3D printing in this comprehensive workshop! Participants will learn the basics of 3D printing, from design to production. This hands-on session will cover essential concepts, tools, and techniques, providing a solid foundation for anyone interested in exploring the potential of 3D printing technology. Perfect for beginners and enthusiasts alike, this workshop will ignite your creativity and technical skills.</p>
<p>Exploring the Agricultural Technology Program at Virginia Tech</p>	<p>Discover Virginia Tech's unique 2-Year program, Agricultural Technology!</p> <p>Hey future Hokies! Are you ready to dive into the world of agriculture, landscaping, or turfgrass and make a real impact? Join us at our exciting session to explore what makes Virginia Tech's only 2-year program so special! Learn about our interest areas of agribusiness, crop production, landscape management, livestock production, and turfgrass management. Experience our classes firsthand with fun, interactive activities including propagating your very own plant to take home and show off! Plus, we'll guide you through the application process and answer all your questions. Don't miss out on this awesome opportunity to kickstart your future in agriculture! See you there!</p>



<p>The Road to College Equestrian and the Judge's Eye</p>	<p>Explore the exciting world of college equestrian programs in this engaging workshop for teens! The presentation will cover various options available for students interested in participating in college equestrian teams. Learn what judges look for in competitions and participate in a hands-on activity focused on selecting the right riding apparel. This workshop is perfect for aspiring equestrians looking to take their passion to the next level.</p>
<p>Hokie Highlights Tour</p>	<p>Led by Southwest District Cabinet Ambassadors and 4-H Alumni, this 90-minute walking tour will provide insights into the university's history, traditions, and student life. You'll visit key landmarks like Moss Arts Center, Lane Stadium, Newman Library, Burruss Hall, the War Memorial Chapel and many others.</p>



## **CHARACTER COUNTS!® at Congress**

**TRUSTWORTHINESS, RESPECT, RESPONSIBILITY, FAIRNESS, CARING, AND CITIZENSHIP** — these six core ethical values, which the CHARACTER COUNTS!® program calls "Pillars of Character,"

provides the basis for what Virginia 4-H stands for and what each member, leader and staff member should strive to practice.

These six Pillars should guide all Congress participants' thoughts and conduct. These core beliefs help us to distinguish right from wrong. Additionally, the principles represented by these six pillars act as filters to make decisions. So, being trustworthy is not enough — we must also be caring. Adhering to the letter of the law is not enough — we must accept responsibility for our actions. In holding others to be accountable - we must not forget to be compassionate.

Character really does count! In personal relationships, at school, at the workplace, at 4-H Congress – in life – who you are makes a difference. Character is neither hereditary nor develops automatically; you must consciously develop it.

So, while you are at the State 4-H Congress and even after you leave, put your head, heart, hands, and health into living by the Six Pillars of Character® and the principles they represent.

• **Trustworthiness**

- Be honest
- Keep promises
- Be loyal

• **Caring**

- Be kind
- Express gratitude
- Forgive others

• **Respect**

- Follow the Golden Rule
- Be tolerant of differences
- Deal peacefully with anger, insults, and disagreements

• **Fairness**

- Play by the rules
- Take turns and share
- Be open-minded

• **Citizenship**

- Obey laws and rules
- Respect authority
- Protect the environment

• **Responsibility**

- Do what you are supposed to do
- Pursue excellence
- Be self-disciplined

**CHARACTER COUNTS!® is a service mark of the CHARACTER COUNTS!® Coalition, a project of The Robert D. and Billie Ray Center at Drake University.**

# VIRGINIA 4-H CONGRESS CODE OF CONDUCT

## PURPOSE

The purpose of the 4-H program is the positive development of youth. We believe in creating a safe learning environment that encourages the four-fold development of a young person (i.e., Head, Heart, Hands, and Health). We expect all persons involved in 4-H (youth members, parents, teen/adult volunteers) to practice behaviors that foster the total development of youth. Each 4-H member and associated individuals participating in 4-H activities must accept the responsibility of creating a positive image that reflects 4-H ideals. Furthermore, the Virginia 4-H program recognizes that "CHARACTER COUNTS!"<sup>®</sup> All 4-H participants should always strive to uphold the 6 Pillars of Character as described on the previous page. In seeking uniformity in the conduct expected at 4-H programs/events, the following code of conduct has been developed to provide a clear understanding of expectations.

## CODE OF CONDUCT

1. For the safety and wellness of all participants, a completed and signed 4-H Health History Report Form is required for participation in 4-H events. Any medication used by delegates and/or adults must comply with the [\*Medication Protocol\*](#) below for Congress.
2. Participants should attend and be actively involved in all scheduled activities as part of this 4-H program/event (unless under the supervision of a medical staff person.) Curfew is to be followed as specified in the schedule for overnight events. Failure to be in assigned locations may lead to dismissal from the 4-H event. Some areas are off-limits to participants (ex: swimming pool; bodies of water such as lakes and rivers; challenge course, etc.) unless under appropriate instructor supervision. **(For Congress, teen and adult delegates are required to attend all scheduled programs, events, and activities. In addition, Congress delegates must be present for each evening's unit meeting in the dormitory with the supervising agent/volunteer by the time specified in the Congress program.)**
3. Visitors to a 4-H program/event must check in with Congress Headquarters upon arrival.
4. Participants are expected to remain at Congress through its scheduled conclusion. In the event that a delegate must leave early, they may not leave until released through Congress Headquarters according to its procedures. Delegate's chaperones and Congress Headquarters must always be involved when a delegate leaves or returns to Congress. Participants may only be picked up from a 4-H program/event by the person designated on the 4-H Health History form. Identification may be requested at the time of pick-up.
5. Participants are expected to follow the directions of 4-H volunteers and paid staff. All 4-H'ers are under the supervision of the Extension Agent, Program Director, or other adult 4-H leader responsible for the 4-H program/event.
6. Participants should respect the property of others and be responsible for themselves. Deliberate destruction or removal of facilities or equipment is not permitted. Financial responsibility for any damages caused by deliberate destruction will be assumed by the participant and/or parents/guardians. The same applies to the property and personal items of other participants.
7. Participants should treat all others and themselves with respect. Aggressive, abusive, vulgar, or violent language and behavior towards others (ex: fighting, threats, insults, cursing, discrimination, etc.) are not permitted.

8. Participants should respect the privacy of others. Girls are not permitted in boys' lodging rooms nor are boys permitted in girls' lodging rooms. **(For Congress, females are not allowed to visit male sleeping rooms or areas designated for male occupancy, and males are not allowed in female sleeping rooms or areas designated for female occupancy.)**
9. Possession, distribution, or use of fireworks, weapons, knives, or other items that can be used as a weapon are not permitted at 4-H programs/events, except under adult supervision in scheduled instructional activities (ex: shooting education class supervised by a certified instructor, etc.).
10. Possession, distribution, or use of alcoholic beverages, marijuana, illegal drugs, tobacco products, and unauthorized prescription drugs are not allowed at any 4-H sponsored program/event and must be reported to law enforcement. The Virginia 4-H program reserves the right to conduct a search of a participant's outer clothing, luggage, personal belongings, lodging rooms, and furniture being used by a participant(s) if there is "reasonable suspicion" that the participant has drugs, alcohol, or weapons. **As an official 4-H event, the use of any of these products by youth or adults at Congress is strictly prohibited.**
11. Animals and pets are not allowed at 4-H programs/events unless needed to accommodate a disability or as part of an organized program, or through specific authorization from Extension Agent, Program Director, or other adult in charge of the 4-H program/event. Animals that are used as part of a 4-H program/event should always be provided with proper care.
12. Electronic and mechanical devices (ex: walkie-talkies, video games, radios, TV's, laptop computers, etc.) are not allowed at 4-H programs/events unless they are needed as part of an organized 4-H program/event, or with authorization from the Extension Agent, Program Director, or other adult in charge of the 4-H program/event. Without authorization, these items will be confiscated and returned to the participant (or the participants' parents/guardians) at the end of the program/event. During State 4-H Congress, youth may be permitted to carry their cellular phones with them, but they must be turned off and not in use during any group sessions.
13. During Congress, teens are not allowed to drive their personal vehicles. All vehicles are to be parked in parking lot(s).
14. Suggestive dancing is NOT appropriate at 4-H Congress

## **DRESS CODE**

Participants are expected to dress appropriately based upon the **Virginia 4-H Congress Dress Code** as outlined below: All delegates will dress neatly and appropriately for the scheduled activities.

### **Dress Code Examples**

- **Sport** - shorts and tee-shirts
- **Casual** – polo shirts, t-shirts, casual shirts, slacks, nice jeans or shorts or skirts.
- **Professional** – shirt and tie, dressy top, khaki or dress pant, skirts, suits, dresses.
- **Semi-formal** – suit or jacket/nice pants, shirt and tie, party dress (long or short), dressy top with dress pants or skirt.

### **Additional Dress and Appearance Guidelines**

- Clothing with negative, indecent language or symbols is prohibited.
- Clothing should not be excessively tight or short. As a guide, mid-thigh length clothing is appropriate.
- Clothing with holes, tears or slashes on the torso area should not be worn (lower pant legs is O.K.)
- All tops must have at minimum 2-inch straps and cover the full torso.
- See through clothing is prohibited.
- Any adornment that could be perceived as or used as a weapon will not be allowed.
- Religious head coverings are the only headwear allowed indoors.

## **CONSEQUENCES**

Unacceptable behavior during a 4-H program/event (as defined within this Code of Conduct or through a review process by 4-H staff/volunteer) will result in consequences to the participant. Consequences may include:

1. Early release from this 4-H program/event without refund, (for Congress, teens and adults who choose not to abide by the 4-H Code of Conduct will be subject to early release from Congress and will be required to return any scholarship money awarded to them),
2. Restitution or repayment of damages,
3. Denial of future participation in the 4-H program/event at the local, district, state and national levels for one or more years (as determined by the unit staff in charge of, or responsible for, the 4-H program/event),
4. Forfeiture of financial support for a 4-H program/event
5. Removal from 4-H offices held (if applicable), and
6. Releasing the youth to the appropriate law enforcement agency and/or the proper authorities.

***NOTE:*** Any conduct not specifically covered by this Code of Conduct, but deemed inappropriate by those responsible for the 4-H program/event will be viewed as a violation and appropriate action will be taken by the Congress Dean. If an infraction occurs, the person in

*charge of the 4-H program/event will provide appropriate communication to parents/guardians.*

**Medication Protocol**

- Each delegate is responsible for his/her own prescription medications. Prior to attending congress, discuss any medication needs with your 4-H Agent.
- Should delegates need assistance with medication while at Congress, contact the medical staff.
- Over-the-counter medications (acetaminophen, Ibuprofen, etc.) are available at the Medical Station and therefore, not necessary to bring with you. Refrigeration is available at Congress Headquarters for medications (insulin, etc.).