2026-2027 District IV 4-H Photography Contest

PURPOSE

The District IV 4-H Photography Contest encourages self-expression and allows youth to demonstrate skills learned in the area of photography, including the use of photographic equipment and processing of photographs.

OBJECTIVES

- To develop skills in composition, light, story line, posing and awareness.
- To gain knowledge about cameras, camera settings, photography dimension, and resolution.
- To encourage 4-H members to use photography as a meaningful communication tool in their lives.
- To provide a photography project showcase opportunity for 4-Her's.
- To continue to share the message of 4-H.
- To utilize photographs which can promote and strengthen the 4-H program on all levels.

RULES AND PROCEDURES

PARTICIPANT ELIGIBILITY: Current enrolled member of the District IV 4-H Program in 3rd grade through 12th grade.

AGE DIVISIONS: Junior - 3rd, 4th, 5th grades; Intermediate - 6th, 7th, 8th grades; Senior - 9th, 10th, 11th, 12th grades as of September 1, 2026.

PHOTO ELIGIBILITY: Photo MUST be taken by PARTICIPANT (individual entering the photo) between the dates of January 1, 2026 and the time of entry. Photos may be submitted ONLY one (1) time and in ONLY one (1) category.

PHOTO FORMAT: MUST be a .jpeg, .jpg, .png format. Participants may use any file naming structure they choose.

RATIO AND SIZE:

- Participants may use any size ratio EXCEPT panoramic (for this contest, panoramic is defined as a photo with an aspect ration of 3:1 or 3:1 or wider / taller).
- Photo MUST be a minimum of 1 MB with a maximum of 20 MB.
- TIP: Upload the highest resolution possible. Review your photo at 100% before uploading. Check your photo's file properties and/or metadate to ensure it meets the file size requirements.

NUMBER OF ENTRIES: Participants may enter ONLY one (1) photo per category for a total of 10 photos.

EVENT REGISTRATION: Registration opens on TX4H https://tx4h.tamu.edu/ AND Submittable on November 2, 2026 and closes on both sites on November 13, 2026. Entries MUST be completed on both sites to qualify. NO REFUNDS!

ENTRY FEE: $20.00 for the first photo and $2.00 for each photo after that.

ENTRY METHOD: Participants will upload photos in Submittable. **Submittable Link** texas4-hyouthdevelopment.submittable.com/submit/889ad89c-bc8e-47d6-bd68-f88d5a884efb/2025-2026-district-iv-4-h-photography-contest

ALTERATIONS: Color photos AND black and white photos are allowed in all categories and will be judged together. Although slight computer alterations are allowed, such as cropping (but NO cut-out), minor adjustment of lighting, or brightness and red-eye reduction; NO blurring or smudging; substantial alterations to photos such as applying design styles or using computer graphics are NOT allowed and will be disqualified.

TEXT ON PHOTOGRAPHS: Photographs may NOT contain camera or user place text. This includes such things as date stamps, comments, watermarks, or titles. Text or wording that is part of the original photograph (i.e. photo of a street sign, etc.) is acceptable.

ORIGINAL WORK OF 4-H MEMBER: The entry MUST be the original photographic work of the 4-H member and NOT taken by family members, other 4-H members, or secured from any other printed or electronic source. Any photo proven to be found as not the participants original work will result in a disqualification of ALL of the participants entries in the District IV 4-H Photography Contest. Actions may be taken against the 4-H member in regard to the Consequences of Misbehavior and Code of Conduct signed by the 4-H member participant.

REASONS FOR DISQUALIFICATION: ***DQ for any reason will forfeit all entry fees - NO refunds given.***

- Broken content rule - this includes inappropriate or unsuitable content.
- Broken copyright rule - photo is NOT the work of the 4-H member participant.
- Broken display and future rights usage rule.
- Broken model and property release rule.
- Category - does NOT meet the category criteria, rules or guidelines (**see category descriptions).**
- Category - multiple entries in a category.
- Category - same photo entered in multiple categories.
- Entry fee NOT paid or only partial fee paid.
- Extremely poor quality and/or low resolution.
- Manipulation of photo beyond what is allowed.
- If the photo submission does not open in Submittable.

RELEASES

CONTENT: Photos that are deemed obscene, vulgar, sexually oriented, hateful, threatening, or otherwise violate any decency standards or laws are strictly prohibited. Photos may NOT contain alcohol or tobacco or their logos. The Texas 4-H Youth Development Program reserves the right to determine and refuse inappropriate or unsuitable entries.

MODEL & PROPERTY RELEASES: It is REQUIRED that each participant have sufficient permission granted to both the photographer and the Texas 4-H Youth Development Program to publish and use as needed any recognizable locations or people photographed. This includes photos taken of entertainers. A written release should be obtained by the participant AND be submitted to the District 4-H Specialist.

COPYRIGHT: The Texas 4-H Youth Development Program respects rights related to copyright laws and intellectual property. ALL photos MUST be the participants own original work. Use of photos from other sources/ people is NOT allowed. Photos may be subjected to reverse image searches on the Internet.

DISPLAY & FUTURE USAGE RIGHTS: By submitting your photo entry, the participant grants permission to the Texas 4-H Youth Development Program, Texas A&M AgriLife Extension, and any other public or private agency authorized by

the Texas 4-H Youth Development Program, the use and rights associated to the use of the photographic likeness, in promotional publications and other media without compensation. Certain photos may be used for 4-H program and marketing uses.

LIABILITY RELEASE: The Texas 4-H Youth Development Program, Texas A&M AgriLife Extension and/or its employees/ agents involved in the contest will NOT be held liable for non-displayed photographs.

JUDGING AND AWARDS

JUDGING: For quality awards, each photograph will be judged against a set of judging criteria (see below) and NOT against photographs of peers. Based on those criteria, a photo will be awarded either a blue, red, white, or participation ribbon depending on the total score. The Best of Category award will be given to the highest score out of the blue ribbon winners in each category in each division. The Best of Age Division award is a competitive process whereby judges will select from the ten Best of Category photos within each age division. The Best of Show award is a competitive process whereby judges will select from the three Best of Age Division photos to select the best photo of the show.

AWARDS:

- Quality Awards - Photos will receive a blue, red, white, or participation ribbon based on judges' scores using the Elements of Judging below.
- Best of Category Awards - Photos selected as Best of Category will receive a rosette.
- Best of Age Division Award - Photos selected as Best of Age Division will receive an extra-large rosette.
- Best of Show Award - Will receive a banner.

ELEMENTS OF JUDGING

- **IMPACT:** Is the sense one gets upon viewing an image for the first time; compelling images evoke laughter, sadness, anger, pride, wonder, or another intense emotion.

- **CREATIVITY:** Is the original, fresh, and external expressions of the imagination of the maker by using the medium to convey an idea, message, or thought.

- **TECHNICAL:** Is the quality of the image itself as it is presented for viewing, which includes the following aspects allowable amounts of retouching and adjustments; (see ALTERATIONS under Rules & Procedures) sharpness and correct color balance lighting, which includes the use and control of light; the use of lighting whether natural or man-made and its proper use to enhance the image posing and capturing of the image.

- **COMPOSITION:** It is important to the design of an image, bringing all the visual elements together in concert to express the purpose of the image; proper composition holds the viewer in the image, and prompts the viewer to look where the creator intends; effective composition can be pleasing or disturbing depending on the intent of the image maker.

- **SUBJECT MATTER:** Should always be appropriate to the story being told (i.e. category the photo is being entered) in an image; subject matter also includes the center of interest for the photograph or where it makes the viewer stop and view the image.

- **STORY TELLING:** Refers to the images ability to evoke imagination or emotion; one beautiful thing about art is that each viewer might collect his/her own message or read their own story in an image.

It is extremely important that 4-H member participants, project leaders, parents, and County Extension Agents review the descriptions of each category very carefully. Do NOT enter photographs into categories that are duplicate from other categories or ones that do NOT clearly meet the category description. Photographs that do NOT meet the description of the category will be disqualified. NO REFUNDS.

1. **ANIMALS - DOMESTIC:** Focus is on the various animals that have been domesticated and made fit for human environment; to be considered domesticated, the animal MUST have their behavior/life cycle altered as a result of being under human control for many generations. EXAMPLES OF ANIMALS - DOMESTIC: cows, dogs, cats, hamsters, horses, pigs, sheep, goats, etc. NOT ALLOWED: birds, reptiles.

2. **ANIMALS - WILDLIFE:** Focus is on animals NOT typically domesticated or tamed and commonly found in the wilderness or bodies of water throughout the country and world; photos can be of wildlife in nature, zoos and/or petting zoos. EXAMPLES OF ANIMALS—WILDLIFE: deer, elephants, dolphins, whales, etc. NOT ALLOWED: birds, reptiles.

3. **ARCHITECTURE:** Focus is on the exterior or interior buildings, structures, bridges showing the architectural design of the subject or a portion of the subject. EXAMPLES OF ARCHITECTURE: cathedral, ornate bridge, capitol dome (inside or outside), cityscape with streets/highway/flyovers.

4. **BIRDS:** Focus of this category is a bird or flock of birds (common or rare) (domestic or wild). EXAMPLES OF BIRDS: pet birds, Eagles, ducks, birds in the wild, or in a zoo/petting zoo.

5. **FOOD:** A still life specialization of photography aimed at producing attractive photographs of food for use in such items of advertisements, packaging, menus and/or cookbooks. EXAMPLES OF FOOD: cakes/pies, Easter eggs, fruits, place settings with food, ingredients, sandwiches, etc. NOT ALLOWED: alcoholic beverages or tobacco logos.

6. **LANDSCAPE & NATURE (non-animal):** Focus of this category includes landscapes, outdoor scenic, nature images, sunsets, urban landscapes, seascapes, cityscapes and farms; images focus on the beauty of the outdoors. EXAMPLES OF LANDSCAPE & NATURE (non-animal): gardens, landscapes, outdoors, scenic, etc. NOT ALLOWED: primary subject is a person, animal or single plant/flower/flora.

7. **PEOPLE:** Focus is from all walks of life, parenting and family, children, babies, models/fashion, sports; ALL individuals in the photo MUST have provided consent and permission as a subject (parents/guardians may sign form for minors). *Documentation may be requested by Texas A&M 4-H Youth Development Program*.

8. **PLANT / FLORA:** Photos of interesting, unique and beautiful flowers, and flora; photo may be outdoors or indoors; subject MUST be that of a single flower, plant, bush, tree, etc. Large collections of plant/flowers/flora should be entered in Landscape and Nature category. EXAMPLES OF PLANT/FLORA: a single rose, upward shot of a tree.

9. **THEME - America 250 & Beyond —** Photos showcasing American patriotism, including flags, patriotic symbols, community celebrations and recognitions, historic places, or activities commemorating America's 250th anniversary.

10. **REPTILES:** Focus of this category is a reptile (common or rare) (domestic or wild) EXAMPLES OF REPTILES: pet lizards, snakes, frogs, etc. in the wild or in a zoo/petting zoo.