Illinois 4-H Foundation offers two new club grants
Do you have teens who need a new challenge? Two new grant opportunities are available through the Illinois 4-H Foundation to help teens to make positive change in their communities as 4-H advocates and 4-H mentors.

The 4-H Teen Advocacy Grant helps teen leader programs aimed at making a positive change in their communities as 4-H advocates. What is advocating? Youth will engage with local leaders and government officials to improve their neighborhood, while gaining skills in research, analytics, critical thinking, communication and teamwork skills. They will be prepared to identify important community issues and work with their peers and an adult mentor to make positive change. Learn more online @ http://4hfoundation.illinois.edu/grants/TeenAdvocacy.

The Mentoring Grant In this 4-H teen leader role, youth are engaged as mentors to younger youth or their peers. They teach important life skills, providing opportunities to try new things and have fun. As a positive and supportive role model, teens build their own leadership and responsibility skills as they help others. They engage with their peers and a caring adult who guides them in the development of mentoring and coaching skills. Learn more online @ http://4hfoundation.illinois.edu/grants/TeenMentoring.

Illinois 4-H State Robotics Competition is Olympic
WHO: Competition is open to 4-H club teams of three youth or more
WHEN: Saturday, May 2
WHERE: Activities and Recreation Center at U of I in Champaign
WHAT’S IT ALL ABOUT: All the work; all the planning; all the building comes down to one amazing day … you might even say an Olympic day! The challenge has an Olympic theme this year. Teams of youth will program their team of robots to compete in events such as track, basketball, gymnastics, figure skating, hockey, ski jumping, volleyball and archery.
HOW TO GET INVOLVED: All the rules are now posted online @ http://web.extension.illinois.edu/state4h/events/event.cfm?e=66808.
COMMUNITY CLUB OFFER: May we make a suggestion? The State Robotics Competition is a great FIELD TRIP for local community clubs or county groups. You can see what robotics is all about, tour the amazing U of I campus, and meet lots of new people. Several departments on campus will have hands-on displays throughout the event.

Illinois State Fair Junior Horse Show dates set
The State Fair has announced the Junior Horse Show will be held July 21-26 at the state fairgrounds in Springfield.

Wait until you see what’s in store at the State Fair
4-H members have more ways to show judges what they’ve learned at this year’s Illinois State Fair. Look for the complete rules for each project online after Feb. 15 @ http://web.extension.illinois.edu/4hstatefair.

SOME EXHIBIT CLASSES have been expanded to allow for creative expressions of learning beyond posters/tri-folds. Check to see if your project is one of them … for the expanded classes, the new rule reads something like this:

“The exhibit may include, but isn’t limited to, original works, objects, demonstrations, digital presentations, programs, websites, games, apps, performances, or posters which you have made. Choose whatever method best shows what you’ve learned. You must furnish any equipment you need for your exhibit. Internet service will not be provided for the exhibit. All exhibits must include something visual, such as a printed copy of a digital presentation, which will remain on display during the exhibition.”

Remember, this isn’t for EVERY class, so you must check your local show book or online for complete rules.

DUCT TAPE ARTISTRY is now allowed in the Visual Arts Fiber class at the Illinois State Fair.

CROPS EXHIBITS should also include a Crops record of some type—4-H, FFA, or any other method your members have used to track their production records.

PHOTOGRAPHERS now have more freedom in their exhibits, but you must still show how your photo relates to a skill you learned in your project manual.

SEWING 1, 2 & 3 now each include a non-garment exhibit option.
Community Improvement Grants help 4-H members make a difference where they live

Clubs can earn up to $250 to assist their members in being POSITIVE CHANGE AGENTS by making their local communities better places to live. Check to see which grant is offered in your county. Do it quickly; the first deadline is February 27!

Farm Credit Illinois Community Improvement Grants


1st Farm Credit Services Community Improvement Grants


Can your club help tell our 4-H story at state fair

Face it; you always wanted to do it, but you just weren’t sure. Maybe this is your year to prepare one of the 10 windows available for the promotion of Illinois 4-H at the State Fair. The windows are located in the Illinois Building on the fairgrounds.

Windows should relate to one of the following themes:

Robotics, Healthy Living, Leadership Opportunities, 4-H Citizen Scientists, Latino 4-H, Military 4-H, 4-H Club Experiences, Metro 4-H, 4-H Feeding and Growing Our Communities, 4-H History, 4-H Project Mastery, or Workforce Preparation.

Applications are available from the local Extension office, and the deadline is April 1, 2015. Windows which are coordinated by a volunteer may be eligible for a $200 premium from the Illinois State Fair (pending available funds). Window set up is Saturday, Aug. 1, and take down is Saturday, Aug. 29.

Gone, but not forgotten

The following projects will no longer be exhibited at the 4-H Show of the Illinois State Fair: Outdoor Meals, Meat & Protein Sources, Exploring Your Environment, Virtual Robotics. You will still have an exhibit opportunities at your local county 4-H show/fair for each of these projects.

Upcoming Dates

February

7 Speaking For Illinois 4-H Training @ Stephenson County in Freeport. http://web.extension.illinois.edu/state4h/members/leadership_sfi4h.cfm

28 Junior Leadership Conference @ Decatur. Continues through March 1. http://web.extension.illinois.edu/state4h/events/juniorleadership2015.cfm

March

7 State 4-H Meats Judging Contest @ U of I Meat Science Lab, Champaign

7 State 4-H Dairy Quiz Bowl Contest in Bloomington

14 Northeast Regional Horse Bowl & Hippology. Contact: Cindy Sarkady @ 847-223-8627 & Janine Heidtke @ 815-338-3737

Northern Region Horse Bowl & Hippology. Contact: Jodi Baumgartner @ 815-732-2191 & Jodi Baumgartner @ 815-732-2191


Southern Region Horse Bowl & Hippology. Contact: Elizabeth Miller @ 618-548-1446

Central Region Horse Bowl & Hippology. Contact: Dana Homann @ 217-345-7034 & Yolanda Nation 217-774-9546

April

18 State 4-H Horse Speaking Contest, Horse Bowl & Hippology Contests @ U of I Champaign. http://livestocktrail.illinois.edu/horsenet/