2010-2011 Unit & State 4-H Award Policies

(These policies are in effect from September 1, 2010 until August 31, 2011. While they will affect the Fall, 2010 county award selections and January, 2011 state award selection, they may be revised prior to the Fall, 2011 county selection process. Any policy revisions will be announced in the 2011-2012 Illinois 4-H Awards Program Guide for Units in June 2011.)

Illinois 4-H Policies are established to maintain uniform implementation of the 4-H program. As Extension workers, it is our responsibility to carry out these policies in accordance with the mission and educational goals of 4-H. Local Extension units and 4-H club/groups cannot establish local policies, guidelines, practices or procedures which would supersede or invalidate these 4-H policies.

All 4-H members or participants, regardless of race, color, religion, gender, national origin, ancestry, marital status, familial status, sexual orientation, or disability may compete in county and state 4-H award programs providing they meet the eligibility requirements. This includes all 4-H youth enrolled in community clubs, special interest groups, EFNEP groups, school enrichment programs, etc.

Unit Award Policies
1. Units may determine selection criteria, policies and procedures for local awards as long as those procedures and policies do not violate Illinois 4-H policy.

2. Candidates may receive a state-provided award medal only once in a specific award category. Continued success in any curriculum area may allow the member to be presented a County Blue Award Certificate.

3. To eliminate any potential conflict of interest or appearance of impropriety, all unit 4-H Award Selection Committees should be comprised of individuals who have no personal ties* to any of the award applicants.

State 4-H Award Policies
1. Candidates for state award consideration must be between 15 and 18 (inclusive) years of age at time of their enrollment (September 1, 2010). (The member must be 15 – 18 on September 1, 2010.)

2. Candidates must have completed a minimum of one year in the 4-H program, including the current 4-H year.

3. Candidates must be currently enrolled in 4-H at the time an application is submitted for state recognition (January, 2011). If award applications are being submitted in a specific award area, the member must be currently enrolled in a project or activity area in that award area. Members may attend National 4-H Congress at age 19 or 20, even though they may be 4-H alumni at the time of the event.
4. **National 4-H Dairy Conference** applicants **MUST BE NO MORE THAN 18 YEARS OF AGE** as of January 1, 2011.

5. The applicant must complete the *Illinois 4-H Award Application* (90221) and submit it to their local Extension office for review. The application must be reviewed and verified by an Extension staff member (salaried or designated volunteer) in the unit making the nomination and submitted by the Extension staff for nomination to the State 4-H Award Selection Committee. **The signatures on the application indicate verification that the application is the member's "own work" and contains truthful information regarding the member's 4-H experiences.**

6. Candidates for State 4-H Awards must adhere to instructions provided in each of those applications, including maximum number of pages, size of type, etc.

7. Members may use one *Illinois 4-H Award Application* to compete in several different award areas; however, a different 4-H Story is needed for each different area in which the member competes.

8. A 4-H member may attend *National 4-H Congress* or *National 4-H Dairy Conference* only once; however, a member may accept both award trips during the same year.

9. **Once selected as a State 4-H Award Winner (in any area except Dairy), a member has the opportunity to attend National 4-H Congress. Should the member decline attending the national event the year they are named a state winner, they will retain the State 4-H Award Winner title, but will not be eligible to compete for future State 4-H Winner titles or attend that national event in the future.** If they decline the State 4-H Winner title, they will be eligible to reapply for the title and trip in the future, providing they meet eligibility requirements.

10. State Blue Award Winners who have not previously attended *National 4-H Congress* may attend the event at their own expense (registration, travel, meals and hotel). Youth interested in this option must meet all state and national deadlines for registration. They will be a part of the Illinois 4-H delegation and therefore will be subject to the same requirements, conduct codes, etc.

11. Any 4-H member who has attended *National 4-H Congress* or *National 4-H Dairy Conference* (as a state winner or at their expense) is not eligible to apply for the same trip again. However, they are eligible to apply for State Blue Award Winner status by marking the appropriate box on the Illinois 4-H Award Application and submitting an updated Summary of Accomplishment. **The member may submit the application and be named a Blue Award Winner ONLY in the area in which they previously won the trip; they are not eligible to be named a Blue Award Winner in other areas.**
12. As a means of ensuring individual rights to participate and/or resolve irregularities in the selection process, the Assistant Dean and Director of 4-H and his/her designee reserve the right to submit a candidate’s award application directly to the State 4-H Award Selection Committee in an “at-large” category.

13. To eliminate any potential conflicts of interest or appearance of impropriety, members of the State 4-H Award Selection Committee must not have any personal ties* to any of the award applicants.

* Personal Ties are defined as immediate family members as determined by blood, marriage, or step-relationship (step-parent, guardian, sibling, aunt/uncle, grand-parent, etc.) A leader of the award candidate’s 4-H club/group or independent study mentor would also be defined as a personal tie.

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