

Guide to Montana 4-H Congress

Montana 4-H Congress is what you make it. We encourage you to fully engage in the experience—participate, ask questions, build connections, and take advantage of every opportunity. The more you invest, the more you will gain.

Take time to reflect, capture ideas, and think about how you can share your experience when you return home. Whether through your club, community, or local media, your insights and stories can inspire others and extend the impact of Congress.

Congress provides opportunities to:

- Exchange ideas with peers from around the state
- Make new friends
- See and learn about the Montana State University
- Learn more about selected subject matter
- Grow in self confidence
- Gain ideas for use on a local and county level
- Recognize 4-H members for work in project and competitive events

Safety First!

Attendance at all sessions, meals and workshops is mandatory for the ultimate Congress experience. Sitting in dorm rooms or not participating in activities will NOT be tolerated. We want you to have an enjoyable time while you are at State 4-H Congress; we cannot, however, permit damage to equipment or property, or any other irresponsible behavior. Youth are expected to exercise good judgment at all times for the welfare of yourself and others.

Communication While at Congress

Anyone needing to receive **mail** should have it sent to the following address:

Delegate's Name and County
Montana 4-H Congress
Po Box 173580
Bozeman, MT 59717-3580

Best practice is for all parents and guardian to have a cell phone number for their youth's designated chaperone. This is the quickest and most efficient way to stay in contact while

youth are attending congress events. However, if a delegate needs to be contacted by **phone** while in the dorm, the caller should dial 994-3131 to reach the 24 hour service desk in North Hedges. For daytime calls the Montana 4-H Center for Youth Development will have all calls forwarded to the Congress Headquarters.(406) 994-3501. A message will be put outside headquarters. If there is an emergency at home please try to contact your county chaperone first. We cannot ensure that messages will be delivered quickly.

Dress Code

Showcasing the excellence of 4-H is reflected in our individual and group appearances. Choice of clothing will represent the best in 4-H as well as the best in each individual. The dress code is designed to assure that each 4-H member wears the appropriate attire to represent themselves and the group. Any youth attending 4-H events are expected to adhere to standards of dress and appearance that are compatible with an effective learning environment. Presenting an appearance or wearing clothing which is disruptive, provocative, revealing, profane, vulgar, offensive or obscene, or which endangers the health and safety of the youth or others is prohibited.

To represent yourself and 4-H in a positive and respectful way, please ensure:

- Tops and bottoms provide **appropriate coverage** (midriff, chest, and seat should be covered).
- Shirts, dresses, and skirts are **not excessively low-cut or short**.
- Straps and tops are designed for **outerwear** (spaghetti straps are best reserved for semi-formal attire).
- **Undergarments are not visible.**
- Clothing is **in good condition** (no excessive holes, cut-offs, or un-hemmed items).
- Clothing does **not include offensive language, graphics, or imagery.**
- **Hats and caps are removed while indoors** as a sign of respect for the event and those around you.

Casual Attire

Most Congress events allow casual dress. Acceptable attire includes jeans, shorts, t-shirts, and tank tops.

- Tank tops and sleeveless shirts are acceptable as long as they provide appropriate coverage and are designed for regular wear (not undergarments).
- Shorts should provide full coverage and be of a length that remains appropriate during sitting, standing, and movement.

- Clothing should be in good condition. Avoid cut-offs or clothing with excessive holes.

Participants should be prepared with comfortable shoes, sunscreen, and water bottle.

Business Casual / Professional Attire

This type of attire will be required for those competing in a contest, appearing on stage as presenter or recipients of awards.

Participants should choose clothing that is neat, polished, and appropriate for a professional setting. Acceptable options include:

- Dress pants, khakis, or dark jeans without holes
- Collared shirts, blouses, or dressy tops
- Dresses or skirts of an appropriate length
- Optional items such as blazers, sweaters, or ties

Clothing should be clean, well-fitting, and represent both the individual and the 4-H program in a positive and professional way.

Semi-Formal Attire

Banquet on Thursday evening will be semi-formal attire.

Participants are encouraged to dress in attire that is slightly more formal than professional. Acceptable options include:

- Dress pants or slacks with a collared shirt or dressy top
- Dresses or skirts
- Optional items such as ties, jackets, or dress shoes

Outfits should remain appropriate for a youth event while allowing participants to express their personal style in a respectful and polished way.

Knowing what to wear is always a challenge, if you have questions about what to pack contact your chaperone or county Extension Agent for more detailed information and help.

This dress code applies to all congress events . If you do not bring appropriate clothing with you, items will be provided for you.

Workshops

Participants will NOT sign up for workshops during registration. Workshops tickets will be distributed/chosen during the activities following the Opening Session Tuesday evening. There will be plenty of workshops to interest everyone. Topics include video production, healthy living and wellness, wildlife, agriculture and much more.

What to Bring

all bedding (sheets, pillow and pillowcase) will be provided. However, only one blanket is provided.

Some items to remember:

- Towel, bathrobe and toiletry items. *Please wear cloths when moving from your room to the bathroom.*
- Alarm Clock/Device
- charger
- Rain coat/umbrella/ other clothing for inclement weather conditions
- Good Walking Shoes
- Casual and appropriate clothing
- Sun screen
- Water bottle. There are water fill stations around campus.
- A small fan. A limited amount are available in the dorm to check out.
- Banquet attire: Semi Formal
- Clothing and supplies appropriate for the contest you have chosen
- Fan, **the dorm will only have a limited number to check out. DO NOT COUNT ON THE DORM HAVING FANS TO CHECKOUT!!!!**

Congress Rules

- Lights out time and quiet hours will be printed in the Congress You are expected to observe them, no exceptions.

- You are expected to maintain your own room, there is no maid service.
- Furniture, bedding and other furnishings are to remain in their original location.
- Boys and girls are not permitted to visit each other in dorm rooms at any time.
Follow signage for gender-specific areas, and use common areas to gather.
- In the event of an emergency please contact your adult chaperone.
- Please be sure to wear clothing in the hallways, even to and from the bathrooms. Do not walk down the hall in a towel or without pants or a shirt. Pajamas are ok.
- Property damages will be billed to counties and/or to individuals causing the damage.
- No illicit substances
- Don't Drive or leave campus without a chaperone.
- Be on time
- No inappropriate behavior between participants, including Personal Displays of Affection (PDA), as it is distracting and inappropriate for this setting.
- Dress neatly and appropriately for the occasion, and know the event dress code
- Delegates are accountable to all chaperones and staff while attending Congress. Respect of all adults giving of their time is a must.

Please review the Family/Member Code of Conduct that is signed each year during enrollment. Both members and adult chaperones will be held to these expectations.

The 4-H Center & Montana State University Extension wants your participation in 4-H programs, events and activities to be filled with exciting experiences, new friendships and fun. To ensure a positive experience for all participants, it is expected that all 4-H'ers and their families be considerate of others, participate fully in the programming and observe the following expectations. If a situation or question arises which is not clearly covered by this list, ask an Extension Faculty/Staff member, volunteer leader, or chaperone before acting.

[>> Read the Full Code of Conduct](#)

Guidelines for Social Activities

As a Positive Youth Development organization, the **Montana 4-H Center** has developed the following guidelines for social activities, including dances at state level 4-H events.

We believe that 4-H social activities are designed to provide a safe, fun environment that promotes positive interactions, celebrates diversity, and respects individual differences. 4-H youth, adults, and faculty should respect themselves and others, be self-responsible, and be kind and courteous.

Participants are expected to demonstrate respectful, appropriate behavior for a public event always.

- **Inappropriate physical contact is not permitted.** This includes touching that is overly close or makes others uncomfortable.

- **Public displays of affection (such as kissing, prolonged hugging, or similar behaviors) are not permitted.** All physical interaction should remain respectful and appropriate for a public, youth event.
- **Dancing should be appropriate for a public, youth event.** Movements that could make others feel uncomfortable or appear suggestive are not allowed.
- **All interactions must be mutual and respectful.** Any dancing or physical interaction that is unwanted, unwelcome, or not reciprocated by another person is not permitted.

What is considered inappropriate may vary from person to person, however youth should respect adults that ask them to discontinue behavior that is outlined above. Adults should approach youth in a respectful way as not to embarrass or humiliate. While no youth should be asked to leave the dance building without their chaperone, youth may be asked to refrain from participating in the dance for an amount of time.

All efforts will be made to ensure that the music played is the radio edited version and that song selection and rotation appeals to diverse musical tastes.

It is the ultimate responsibility of program participants to follow these guidelines.

Meals

All meals, EXCEPT Friday breakfast, are included in the Congress registration fee. Every effort is made to provide ample healthy and varied meal choices for all participants.

Meals can be purchased directly at Rendezvous for Friday (breakfast \$11) directly from the cashier at the entrance to the dining hall. If your delegates plan to purchase breakfast Friday please let us know so we can inform the staff of numbers.

Special Meals and Food Allergies

MSU Catering and Residence Life offer a variety of meal options to support participants with food allergies, intolerances, and special dietary needs. Because these accommodations require advance planning, **all dietary needs must be clearly indicated during registration.**

"MSU Culinary Services recognizes the top 9 food allergens as defined by: wheat, egg, milk, soy, sesame, peanuts, tree nuts, fish, and shellfish. We understand that eating away from home with dietary restrictions can be stressful and challenging." We will make every effort to choose food options that are inclusive and safe for all participants. **We encourage 4-H Congress participants with food allergies to visit the [MSU Nutrition & Special Dietary Needs](#) webpage.**

While every effort is made to accommodate requests, we cannot guarantee that dietary needs shared after registration or on-site can be accommodated. If you have specific questions or concerns, please contact us in advance so we can assist you.

MSU Disclaimer

While Montana State University Culinary Services makes every attempt to accommodate students' individualized dietary needs, please be aware that all MSU Culinary Services' locations prepare items containing egg, fish, milk, peanuts, shellfish, soy, tree nuts, and wheat. Every effort is made to safely prepare and serve foods but there is always a risk of cross contamination of allergens or gluten. In addition, there is always a possibility of cross-contact and suppliers and manufacturers may substitute or modify products at any time, without notifying us. Individuals with food-related dietary concerns should be aware of these risks. Questions about ingredients should be directed to a Culinary Services Manager. It is the responsibility of the individuals with food allergies or dietary concerns to make the final judgement about whether a food item is appropriate for them.

Housing

On Campus

Rooms will be assigned based on the gender indicated during 4-H enrollment. Registration for on campus housing is included with Congress registration. All delegates and chaperones will be housed in North Hedges. Campus maps will be available to locate all Congress event locations.

Registration

Blocks of rooms will be pre-assigned to each county based on the number of paid reservations received. For safety reasons the exact housing location of each delegate and chaperone must be registered with the 4-H Center.

County Blocks

Counties providing their own chaperones will be housed in consecutive rooms. County chaperones will be placed on the same floor as delegates. **No youth can room with an adult chaperone unless an accommodation is approved by county extension office and the 4-H center.**

Mixed Blocks

Delegates who have designated a chaperone from another county to be responsible during dorm hours will be housed together in a block of rooms with the designated chaperone placed on the same floor.

Room Assignments

Chaperones will receive the rooms assigned to their blocks at check in. Chaperones are responsible for issuing room assignments and distributing keys. Youth are not to change rooms!

Off Campus

Counties have the option of arranging their own off campus housing. A list of local accommodations is available by calling the 4-H Center. Counties must register off campus locations with the 4-H Center upon arrival at check in.

Partial Attendance

Registration fees include all activity and meal fees and are not prorated. Registration for partial attendance at Congress is permitted. However, full registration fees still apply. In these cases appropriate arrangements must be made for travel to and from the event.

Medical Care

Delegates attending Congress have submitted a signed copy of the Medical Form to the 4-H Center with registration. **A signed form must be kept by the county chaperone(s) to, from, and during Congress.** It is extremely important to have access to the printed authorization form in the event of a medical emergency. The authorization is a release for treatment by the minor child's parent or guardian to their chaperone. These can be downloaded and printed from Zsuite Profile by the MSU Extension office.

Congress Headquarters

The 4-H Congress headquarters will be manned during all of Congress by members of the 4-H Center staff. Questions about registration, meals, behavior, etc. can be answered here. Headquarters will be in the Exit Gallery in the SUB across from the Entrance to Ballroom B.

Other Information

Contest Policies to Note when Registering

4-H members must register under the county they are currently enrolled in. Delegates cannot be registered in one county and represent and/or judge for another.

At this time, 4-H members may compete in only one contest at Congress. Please note contest participation as a part of the online registration process. Contest guidelines and scoring information can be found [here](#).

Contest times and locations are listed in the master schedule. Specific platform or start times for individual contests will be given to the county chaperone at registration and posted on the schedule on Tuesday at the start of the event.

Cancellation Policy

Cancellations received by the 4-H Center before June 23rd will receive a refund for half of the registration fees. Cancellations after June 23rd will receive no refund. However, each individual situation is at the discretion of the 4-H Center.

Attendance

It is the expectation that each delegate has made a commitment to participate in the entire Congress experience. Full attendance at all workshops and sessions communicates each 4-Her's commitment of excellence to our speakers and peers. All activities are designed to accommodate maximum attendance. Sleeping or sitting around dorm rooms and other campus facilities will not be tolerated. Chaperones are also expected to meet the same standard of excellence and set a positive example for youth participants.

Chaperone Job Description

State 4-H Congress is a 4-H youth development activity sponsored by MSU Extension. As such, Congress is an "extension" of the 4-H program. Chaperones have volunteered to help make 4-H Congress the most educational and meaningful experience possible for your delegation. Likewise, we would like to help make it enjoyable and an educational opportunity for you, as well. Each county must arrange for one or two full time adult chaperones as indicated in the chaperone policies. These adults must attend full time and may be county staff or 4-H volunteers (age 21 or older).

Chaperoning During 4-H Congress

- Pick up county packets in the lobby of dormitory where check-in is conducted. (see schedule)
- Review contents of packet with your delegates.
- Other information stations will be set up to distribute shirts give information on workshops, and opportunities to help and all other Congress
- Use "Check in/Check out" lists provided to check delegates' rooms for damages. Counties and/or individual delegates will be held responsible for damage to rooms or other property during State 4- H
- Participate in chaperone orientation session on Tuesday night (see schedule for time and location).
- Understand that Montana 4-H Congress is a statewide event with almost all Montana counties participating. Policies may differ from those in your county.
- Arrange times and locations for daily county delegation meeting. We recommend having at least one if not two meetings per day with your group. The first could be before, at or after breakfast to point out important program features or workshop events. Another meeting should be held in the evening before lights out.
- It is the chaperone's responsibility to make sure delegates participate in Congress events and activities.

- Help each delegate get maximum benefit from the State 4-H Congress experience (i.e., knowledge gained, assuming self-responsibility, decision making, leadership development, social skills,)
- Help delegates identify ways to use new ideas back home in their
- *Supervision and advising of county delegation and any needed disciplinary action are the responsibility of county chaperones. State 4-H Congress salaried and volunteer staff will assist the chaperones, but primary responsibility rests with the county chaperones who are acting on behalf of the County Extension program.*

Evening Dormitory Procedures

- County chaperones are responsible for their entire delegation during all Congress events.
- Evening dormitory chaperoning requires same gender chaperone.
- A hired chaperone or chaperone appointed from another county is only responsible between lights out and Hired chaperones will be introduced at the chaperone meeting on Tuesday. Communication between the hired and county chaperone is the responsibility of the county chaperone.
- Chaperones **MUST** do a room check at lights out and MUST visually see that all delegates are in their assigned Delegates must remain there until morning.

To provide a positive experience for ALL youth participants it is extremely important that all county chaperones understand their roles and responsibilities prior to attending Congress. If chaperones have any questions about their role please reach out to the county extension agent or state 4-H office.

Agents Attending Congress

- If attending as a county chaperone, agents should assume that role completely and refer to described chaperone responsibilities, including evening dormitory responsibilities.
- Agents attending Congress, but not as an official county chaperone should plan to assist their counties designated chaperons as needed. Agents can also sign up to assist with contests and workshops.

[Please review the state event policies with all chaperones before attending.](#)