

TEXAS 4-H YOUTH DEVELOPMENT

March 11, 2016

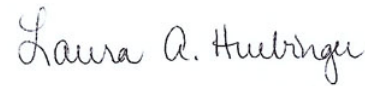
MEMORANDUM

TO: District 8 County Extension Agents

FROM: Donald W. Kelm  
District Extension Administrator



Laura A. Huebinger  
Extension Program Specialist  
4-H Youth Development



SUBJECT: 2016 TEXAS 4-H CONGRESS ANNOUNCEMENT

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## Overview

Congress is a four-day mock legislative experience for 4-H member who will be in 9th through 12th grade for the 2016-2017 school year. Also eligible to participate are 4-H youth who graduated high school in the spring of 2016. During this time, 4-H members assume the roles of senators, representatives, lobbyists, press corps, and special interest groups to gain a first-hand understanding of how the legislative process works. Bills that are written and sponsored by 4-H members focus on issues concerning Texas and Texas youth. These bills are assigned to the appropriate committee, debated in committee meetings, and then on the floor of the House or Senate. If a bill is successful in negotiation and the legislative debate in all three stages, it is delivered to the Governor of Texas 4-H Congress for his or her signature or veto. Copies of all the bills that are signed into law during Texas 4-H Congress are provided to the Office of the Governor for review.

## Age Eligibility

4-H members who will be in 9th through 12th grade for the 2016-2017 school year are eligible to participate in Texas 4-H Congress. Also eligible to participate are 4-H youth who graduated high school in the spring of 2016. This is a prestigious event reserved for older 4-H members. Because of the number of 4-H members allowed to attend, counties should make it a priority to select older 4-H members for the House and Senate that have never attended prior.

## Location

Headquarters for Texas 4-H Congress will be at the Sheraton Hotel, 707 East 11th Street, Austin, Texas 78701.

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## Calendar of Events

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October, 2015	Bill submission started
March 1, 2016	Lobbyist Application Opens
March 1, 2016	Press Corps Online Opens
March 31, 2016	Lobbyist Application closes
March 31, 2016	Press Corps Application closes
April 20, 2016	Press Corps and Lobbyist Notification
<b>April 22, 2016</b>	<b>Due: District 8 Prioritized List of Delegates</b>
By April 29, 2016	Release of District 8 Delegate List
May 1, 2016	Online 4-H Connect Registration opens
May 27, 2016	Bill submission closes
May 31, 2016	Online Registration closes
July, 2016	District Travel Letters
July, 2016	Bill Book posted online
July 15, 2016	Texas 4-H Council Arrive
July 15, 2016	Management Team Arrive
July 17, 2016	Adult and Youth Participants Arrive
July 20, 2016	All Participants Depart

## Participation Costs

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Registration costs include: hotel, meals & snacks, and registration fee. Other costs that delegates may have include transportation to and from Austin, meals in route to and from Austin, three (3) breakfast meals while in Austin, and incidental spending money.

House/Senate/Press Corps/Lobbyist	\$250.00
Texas 4-H Council	\$250.00
Technology Team Members	\$250.00
Chaperones	\$0.00

The registration cost of \$250.00 is due in part to the assistance of more than \$150,000.00 from the Houston Livestock Show and Rodeo, the Texas 4-H Foundation, Ed Rachal Foundation, and TransCanada. Without these gracious donors, the registration cost would be more than \$600.00 per person.

Chaperone expenses for hotel, Congress meals, and registration will be paid by Texas 4-H Congress for one male/one female chaperone from delegate fees. **No transportation, parking, mileage, toll fees, per diem or out-of-pocket expenses will be paid to chaperones by Texas 4-H Congress.** District funds will be used to pay for transportation and per diem to and from Texas 4-H Congress for the chaperones.


## Travel Information

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- Start Date:** **Sunday, July 17, 2016**  
District Capitol Tours are on Sunday afternoon. (More specific details will be sent to selected delegates prior to attendance.)  
Dinner starts at 6:00 p.m. followed by the Opening Session.
- End Date:** **Wednesday, July 20, 2016**  
All Participants must depart the hotel by 10:00 am
- Travel Costs:** Travel costs are not covered in the registration fees.
- Parking:** Parking is available at the hotel for \$16.00 per day for self-parking (estimated total of \$48.00 per vehicle). Districts/counties with large vans, pickups, or other vehicles that will not be able to park in the garage will need to communicate with Toby Lepley by May 1 to secure parking with the City of Austin along the streets.

## Submission of Legislative Bills

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 **CHANGE FOR 2016:** A requirement for a 4-H member to participate in Texas 4-H Congress is that they submit a COMPLETE bill for consideration. This includes Texas 4-H Council and Tech Team members. Any 4-H member can submit a bill regardless if they are attending Texas 4-H Congress or not in order for them to be engaged in the legislative process and the 4-H citizenship project. This will give all 4-H members the opportunity to participate in an exercise in civic engagement. To accomplish the writing and submission of legislative bills it is recommended that the County Extension Agent, or a volunteer, assist the youth in learning about what a quality bill is, how to write one, and then submitting the bill on-line. Refer to the Texas 4-H publication entitled "Understanding the Texas Legislative Process, A Guide for Participating in Texas 4-H Congress." This publication is located on the Texas 4-H website.

This information can be found at the following page on the Texas 4-H website:  
<http://texas4-h.tamu.edu/events/congress/>

## Participant Quotas

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The District 8 delegate quota will be 18 House/Senate members. Each county needs to submit the [2016 D8 4-H Texas 4-H Congress County Delegate Nomination Form](#) which is a prioritized list of delegates by **Friday, April 22, 2016** that would like to participate in Texas 4-H Congress.

If a 4-H member is selected to attend Texas 4-H Congress as a Lobbyist or Press Corps member (see additional information below), the state office should notify everyone by April 20. After counties submit the County Nomination Form on April 22, the District Office will make selections for the delegates to participate in Texas 4-H Congress (with an alternate list) prior to registration opening on 4-H Connect on May 1.

**2016 D8 4-H Texas 4-H Congress County Delegate Nomination Form** is a Google sheet at the following link:  
<http://tinyurl.com/2016D8Congress>

## Participant Communication, Dress and Forms

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All necessary forms for Texas 4-H Congress will be posted on the Texas 4-H Congress website, as well as sent electronically to each participant in the Texas 4-H Congress participant packet. Copies of all communications will be sent via e-mail to county and district offices.

Suggested attire for the event will also be emailed. Since this is such a prestigious event and the 4-H members will be on the floor of the Texas House of Representatives and Senate, a coat and tie are to be worn by all males and professional style dresses are to be worn by females at all official legislative events. Dress for the theme party must be in line with the theme and presented in a non-offensive manner.

## Theme Party

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**MONDAY NIGHT  
AT TEXAS 4-H  
CONGRESS**

# COUNTRY TAILGATE

Show your favorite school pride  
as you kick your heels up for some  
old fashion country tailgating and  
dancing at Texas 4-H Congress.

**Texas 4-H  
CONGRESS**

Boots, jeans and belts will be the attire for the night (no hats)

The graphic features a large green cowboy boot with a tan upper section decorated with green floral patterns. To the right, three t-shirts are displayed: a grey one with 'TEXAS A&M AGRICULTURE' in red and white, a white one with 'THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT AUSTIN' in red and black, and another grey one with 'TEXAS TECH' in red. The background is red with a large white star.

# Texas 4-H Congress Participant Roles

## House or Senate Members

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These roles are primarily for 4-H members that have never participated in Texas 4-H Congress. Members serving in the House or Senate should be prepared and able to speak about issues effecting Texas and Texas youth. The issues that the 4-H member will be speaking about may or may not be related to the subject matter of the bill they submitted. House and Senate members will be participating in a variety of professional settings such as committee meetings, chamber sessions, and may be lobbied or questioned on different issues by the Lobbyist group and/or the Press Corps. Assignments are made by the State 4-H Office.

*House and Senate members allotted to participate: 260*

## Lobbyists:

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The Lobbyist group is designed for 4-H members who have attended Texas 4-H Congress previously. The responsibility of the Lobbyist group is to identify certain bills and then lobby members of the House and Senate to either pass or defeat the bill. Lobbyists should be knowledgeable about Texas 4-H Congress and the schedule that it follows. Lobbyist members should be prepared to and have the ability to approach other 4-H members and persuade House and Senate members for support. The Lobbyist group will hold a private reception for certain House and Senate Members, along with Congress Leadership.

Applications to be considered for a Lobbyist position will be submitted online through 4-H CONNECT. Online application is open March 1 – 31. This time frame allows time for youth to complete the application and then be notified if they will serve in the Lobbyist role, or be considered for another role in Texas 4-H Congress.

*Lobbyist allotted to participate: up to 25*

## Press Corps:

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Texas 4-H Congress Press Corps members can be either first time or returning 4-H members. Individuals applying for the Press Corps should have strong skills in writing, word processing, interviewing, photography, and focused on making deadlines. The Press Corps is responsible for publishing a daily newspaper and helping maintain a web page/electronic communication. Press Corps members may not be able to attend certain events because of print deadlines. Two Texas 4-H Council members and up to 15 4-H members may serve on the Press Corps.

Applications to be considered for a Press Corps position will be submitted online through 4-H CONNECT. Online application is open March 1 – 31. This time frame allows time for youth to complete the application and then be notified if they will serve in a Press Corps role, or be considered for another role in Texas 4-H Congress.

*Press Corps members allotted to participate: up to 15*

## Technology Team:

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Up to four (4) members from the Texas 4-H Technology Team will be selected by the group's adult leadership to participate in Texas 4-H Congress. These individuals will be responsible for assisting with webpage publication, videotaping, streaming video, podcasting, and other technology based tasks.

*Technology Team members allotted to participate: 4*

### **Texas 4-H Council Member:**

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Texas 4-H Council Members will assume leadership positions throughout Texas 4-H Congress. All Texas 4-H Council members are required to arrive in Austin on the Friday before between 3:00 p.m. and 5:00 p.m. Texas 4-H Council members will be involved in training and planning the two days prior to 4-H Congress in order to be able to effectively conduct the necessary business. It is a requirement that ALL Texas 4-H Council members participate fully in Texas 4-H Congress in order to attend. (beginning on Friday and ending on Wednesday)

*Texas 4-H Council Members allotted to participate: 32*

### **Chaperones:**

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Two adult chaperones from each district and one from PVCEP will be serving in an official role at Texas 4-H Congress. These adults serve as advisors to the legislative committees, chaperone dances, assist with press corps or lobbyist (as assigned), assist with decorating for meals/banquets, and serve as security and transportation monitors. Chaperones are expected to chaperone ALL delegates during Texas 4-H Congress, but be the contact for their district members in case of an emergency or incident. Additional chaperones will not be accepted for this event.

### **Texas 4-H Congress Management Team:**

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This team consists of Texas 4-H Faculty, Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Adjunct faculty, and Volunteers. Each member of the management team has a certain area of responsibility during Texas 4-H Congress.