

4-H Still Exhibit Project Policy and Guidelines 2026

Registration Deadline: June 30, 2026, 11:59 p.m.

For questions, please contact your county MSU Extension 4-H program Coordinator.

Michigan State University Extension programs and materials are open to all without regard to race, color, national origin, gender, gender identity, religion, age, height, weight, disability, political beliefs, sexual orientation, marital status, family status, or veteran status.

4-H Youth Still Exhibits – Tanner Building

To participate with-in the 4-H Still Exhibit Projects youth must follow posted 4-H guidelines and procedures.

- Entries in 4-H Still Exhibit Projects are open to currently enrolled participating Northwest Michigan 4-H Youth Only (Antrim, Benzie, Grand Traverse, Kalkaska, Leelanau counties)
- Exhibitor Age is determined by a youth's 4-H Age - youth age on January 1, 2026.
- 4-H Cloverbuds (ages 5-7) are a non-competitive age division and will receive Cloverbud recognition ribbons.
- 4-H Cloverbuds are ineligible for participation in the Still Exhibit Auction.
- To participate within 4-H still project judged contests, youth must attain the age of eight (8) or older by January 1st of that calendar year and be registered with 4-H Online.
- Eligible youth may enter one (1) project per department, as many departments as they wish, however only one (1) project total will be judged.
- Youth must declare which project from which department they would like to be judged at the time of registration in Fair Entry. The remaining entries in remaining departments will be participation ONLY projects (not judged).
- While 4-H staff will attempt to accommodate a wide range of project sizes and formats, excessively large, heavy, or complex projects require prior approval due to space, safety, or display constraints.
- All projects must be fully completed products.
- All 4-H Still Exhibit Projects must be completed within the last fair year. The fair year is defined here as the period between the conclusion of the previous year's fair and the start of the current fair unless otherwise specified by 4-H staff.
- Youth must choose to include a written **Artist Statement or participate in a Verbal Judging Interview** that:
 - Describes how the project was made and explains what the youth learned.

- Must connect the project with a 4-H life skill. Please see here: https://www.canr.msu.edu/life_skills/uploads/files/MI-4-HLifeSkills-ALL.pdf
 - **IF written Artist Statement** is chosen by the youth, it must be age appropriate AND displayed with the project.
 - **If Verbal Judging Interview is chosen by the youth**, responses must be age appropriate and uncoached by adults.
- Written Artist Statements and Verbal Judging responses should be age-appropriate in length and detail. As general guidance, younger exhibitors may submit shorter statements, while older youth are encouraged to provide more detailed explanations of their process and learning.
 - Projects that are missing an Artist Statement (who indicated a written statement was the youth's preference at the time of registration) may still be displayed at the discretion of 4-H staff and judges; however, they will receive reduced consideration during judging or may be ineligible for placement.
 - For projects utilizing artificial intelligence (AI), in **any** capacity, youth must clearly describe its role in the creative, design, or writing process and how the technology was used to support, not replace, learning within the Artist Statement.
 - 4-H Still Exhibit Projects must follow the project guidelines available here as applicable: https://www.canr.msu.edu/leelanau/leelanau_county_4_h/northwestern-michigan-fair-still-exhibits.

Check In Day – Saturday (Move In Day)

1. Projects must be checked in with 4-H staff or designated volunteers **from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.** on Saturday of move in day at the Tanner Building.
2. Any project arriving after 2 p.m. may be refused.
3. For safety reasons, 4-H staff reserve the right to deny, remove, modify, or restrict display of any projects deemed unsafe, unstable, hazardous, or inappropriate for a public exhibition setting.

Check Out Day

1. Projects may be removed following the Still Exhibit Project Auction on Saturday before the end of the fair but must be completely removed by 12:00p.m on the final Sunday of Fair.
2. **ALL 4-H Still Exhibit Projects CHECKING IN OR OUT MUST BE CHECKED BY 4-H STAFF OR A DESIGNATED VOLUNTEER.**
3. **It is the responsibility of the youth to get projects to their buyers if sold.**

JUDGING DAY – Sunday After Move In

Judging will begin at 8:00 am on Sunday morning, the day after check in.

Judges will evaluate projects based on overall quality of the project as well as age-appropriate expectations, with consideration given to information provided in the written Artist Statement and/or Verbal Judging Interview.

Judged projects will first be placed within their specific project class.

First and second place projects within a class will then be judged against other first and second place projects within the project division, for the Overall Division.

The structure of class, division, and department is indicated below.

4-H Still Exhibit Project Auction

There will be a 4-H Still Exhibit Project Auction; only judged projects will be eligible for entry for the auction.

When registering and declaring your judged project, youth must also declare whether they would like to enter their judged project into the Still Exhibit Auction. **The 4-H Still Exhibit Project Auction will be separate from any 4-H livestock auction; participation in one does not exclude participation in the other.**

4-H Cloverbuds (ages 5-7) are ineligible to participate in the 4-H Still Exhibit Project Auction.

4-H Still Exhibit Projects will be auctioned via in-person auction on the final (2nd) Saturday of fair week.

Lineup will be determined by project placement, with Overall Division and Overall Reserve Division Still Exhibit Projects selling first, followed by each project placing in the order of project type listed below:

2026 Still Exhibit Project Sale Order

Follow Department List (top-down placing)

Overall Division Placings First

The 4-H Still Exhibit Project Auction will assess a 10% commission on all sales.

Commission funds will first be used to cover any expenses occurred by Grand Traverse 4-H Leaders Association to put on the auction and then will be distributed to county 4-H advisory boards at the discretion of each county's 4-H Program Coordinator. Commission funds will be allocated by county based on youth participation, such that 10% of the total sale profit from projects entered by youth enrolled in a given county's 4-H clubs will be

directed to that county's 4-H advisory organization. Commission is raised for the benefit of the auction and the 4-H education efforts of the counties participating.

EXAMPLE:

If 10 youth from Leelanau 4-H Clubs sell projects in the Still Exhibit Auction, the auction will assess 10% on the sale of the projects. The sum profit of the assessed commission funds on the 10 checks (i.e. the 10% commission assessed on each check minus any incurred expense of running the auction on a per youth basis) will be issued to The Leelanau County 4-H Youth Association.

The Grand Traverse 4-H Leaders Association will act as the fiduciary agent for the 4-H Still Exhibit Project Auction and will do so in collaboration with the participating county 4-H advisory boards, coordinating the receipt, management, and distribution of auction proceeds in accordance with established 4-H policies and county allocation guidelines.

Department 1: Educational Posters (Not Considered for Auction)

Project consists of posters made to demonstrate a topic or skill a youth has learned. Poster must be constructed by the youth and demonstrate details that are age appropriate, and consider the following:

- How & why did you choose this topic and/or skill?
- What did you need to do to start this project?
- What was your intended project goal?
- In completing this project, what three (3) things did you learn that you did not know before?
- Did you accomplish your intended goal, or did you meet an unexpected goal?

1.1 Education poster

Department 2: Animal Products

No meat products will be accepted under this or any category.

2.1 Animal Fiber

Fiber must be clean and appropriately prepared. Projects should demonstrate understanding of fiber quality and handling. Fiber should be in ONE piece and sealed in a clear plastic bag.

2.11 Sheep wool

2.12 Llama wool

2.13 Alpaca wool

2.14 Angora Wool

2.15 Cashmere

2.16 Mohair

2.2 Honey

Project consists of honey and bees wax items produced by bees managed or studied by the youth. Honey must be properly sealed and labeled and follow food safety guidelines.

2.21 Honey – Ineligible for Auction

2.22 Bees wax candles

2.3 Eggs – Ineligible for Auction

Eggs must be clean, uniform, and displayed in carton. Refrigeration requirements must be followed, and eggs must be produced within food safety guidelines.

2.31 Chicken Eggs (1 doz)

2.32 Duck Eggs (1 doz)

2.33 Goose Eggs (1 doz)

2.34 Quail Eggs

(1 doz)

Department 3: Plant Science

3.1 Flowers

- *All live plant material must have been grown in Michigan by the exhibitor.*
- *Cut flower and rose entries must be in a clear plastic container with no labels, except for arrangements which can be in any appropriate watertight container.*
- *Container grown plant must have been in the current container for a minimum of three (3) months.*

3.11 Cut annuals

3.12 Cut perennials

3.13 Potted annuals

3.14 Potted perennials

3.15 Silk/Artificial flower, self-crafted

3.2 Vegetables

- *All entries must have been grown in Michigan by the exhibitor.*
- *Entries should be displayed on a paper plate or in a box, except when impractical or otherwise indicated.*
- *Individual vegetables must be labeled. Use plate or box appropriate in size to the number of vegetables. Sturdy, clean boxes ONLY!*
- *Judging criteria includes representation of variety, conformity, maturity, color, freedom from pest and disease injury, cleanliness and adherence to class description.*

3.21 Sunflowers

3.22 Cucumbers

3.23 Zucchini

3.24 Squash

3.25 Gourds

3.26 Pumpkins

3.27 Watermelon

3.28 Melons

3.29 Corn

3.211 Potatoes

3.212 Other root crops

3.3 Fruits

- *All entries must have been grown in Michigan by the exhibitor.*
- *Entries should be displayed on a paper plate or in a box, except when impractical or otherwise indicated.*

- *Individual fruits must be labeled. Use plate or box appropriate in size to the number of fruits. Sturdy, clean boxes ONLY!*
- *Judging criteria includes representation of variety, conformity, maturity, color, freedom from pest and disease injury, cleanliness and adherence to class description.*

3.31 Apples

3.32 Pears

3.33 Peaches

3.34 Cherries

3.35 Apricot

3.36 Raspberries

3.37 Black Berries

3.38 Strawberries

3.39 Fruit bush or tree

3.4 Herbs

- All entries must have been grown in Michigan by the exhibitor.
- Entries for Fresh Herbs should be displayed in a small potted container, preferably plastic, and properly labeled.
- Entries for Dried Herbs should be displayed in a clear plastic container and properly labeled.

3.41 Fresh Herbs

3.42 Dried Herbs

3.5 Flower Arrangement

- Arrangements must be arranged by the exhibitor.
- Flowers used in this section need not be grown by the exhibitor.
- Entries will be judged on design, color, conformity, originality, conditions and mechanics.

3.51 Flower Arrangements

3.16 Silk/Artificial Flower Arrangements

Department 4: Textiles

- *Please display entry on a plastic or felt clothes hanger.*

4.1 Needlework

- 4.11 Sewed clothes
- 4.12 Sewed toys
- 4.13 Woven rugs
- 4.14 Wall hung quilt
- 4.15 Embroidered clothes
- 4.16 Embroidered pillows
- 4.17 Candle wicking
- 4.18 Cross stitched clothes
- 4.19 Other cross stitched items
- 4.111 Other sewed items
- 4.112 Quilted potholder
- 4.113 Quilted table runner
- 4.114 Quilted pillow
- 4.115 Doll quilt
- 4.116 Twin sized quilt
- 4.117 Crocheted scarf
- 4.118 Crocheted clothes
- 4.119 Other crocheted items
- 4.1111 Knitted Items

Department 5: Creative Arts and Crafts

- *Entries in this Department are preferred to be of original composition.*
- *Entries created from kits will be judged as participation and not eligible for awards or Auction.*

5.1 Basket Making - Baskets must be structurally sound.

5.11 Baskets

5.2 Beading - *Must be securely assembled.*

5.21 Beaded Jewelry

5.22 Beaded Decorations

5.3 Ceramics - *Must be safely finished. Small or unstable entries **MUST BE SECURED** to base, pedestal, or shadowbox.*

5.31 Clay sculptures

5.32 Pottery hand thrown

5.33 Pottery wheel thrown

5.4 Jewelry - *Must be safe and wearable.*

5.41 Non-beaded jewelry

5.5 Leatherwork

5.51 Leather crafts

5.52 Leather tooling/carving

5.6 Mosaic - *Art created from assembled pieces, of original composition by the exhibitor. Small or unstable entries **MUST BE SECURED** to base, pedestal, or shadowbox.*

5.61 Glass mosaic items

5.62 Stone mosaic items

5.63 Metal Mosaic items

5.7 Stained Glass - *Must be safely edged and framed.*

5.71 Stained glass items

5.8 Yard Art - *Outdoor decorative items. Art must be weather-appropriate and safe.*

5.81 Yard art items

5.9 Paper Craft - *Projects created primarily from paper. Must demonstrate technique beyond simple assembly.*

5.91 Scrapbooks

5.92 Cards

5.93 Decoupage

5.94 Origami

5.95 Other paper crafts

5.96 Calligraphy

5.97 Stenciling

5.A Upcycled / Recycled Items - *Items created from reused materials. Original transformation required.*

5.A1 Upcycled/recycled items

Department 6: Expressive Arts

6.1 Photography - *Must be 8 or more prints, mounted on mat board or displayed in album. Central theme/title must be evident and visible. 4x6 minimum size.*

6.11 Black and white prints

6.12 Color prints

6.2 Drawing – *All Exhibits **MUST** be framed and/or matted and equipped for hanging. **No Glass in Frames.***

6.21 Chalk drawing

6.22 Charcoal drawing

6.23 Ink drawing

6.24 Pencil drawing

6.25 Color pencil drawing

6.26 Other medium drawing

6.27 Pastel drawing

6.3 Painting – *All Exhibits **MUST** be framed and/or matted and equipped for hanging. **No Glass in Frames.***

6.31 Acrylic painting

6.32 Oil painting

6.33 Water color painting

6.4 Sculpture - *Three-dimensional art. Small or unstable entries **MUST BE SECURED** to base, pedestal, or shadowbox.*

6.41 Metal sculpture (Welded)

6.42 Other non-ceramic sculpture

6.5 Digital Arts - Digitally created designs. AI use must be disclosed in artist statement/verbal interview judging. **All Exhibits MUST be framed and/or matted and equipped for hanging. No Glass in Frames.**

6.51 Graphic art

6.52 AI art - Artwork created using AI tools.

6.6 Writing - *Original written work. For work longer than 3 pages, please submit to 4-H Program Coordinators for content review 2 weeks prior to fair.*

6.61 Poem

6.62 Short story

6.63 Novel

Department 7: Science and Inventions

Projects that are operational: must be capable of being safely displayed in a public setting. Power sources, moving parts, or electrical components may be limited and/or restricted by 4-H staff.

7.1 Music and Sound Technology - *Projects involving sound or music technology.*

7.11 Music and sound technology

7.2 Computer Technology - *Digital or hardware-based projects.*

7.21 Computer technology

7.3 Robotics - *Robotic builds or programming projects.*

7.31 Robotics

7.4 Automotive - *Automotive-related projects.*

7.41 Automotive technology

7.5 Engines

7.51 Model engine

7.6 Agriculture - *Agricultural machinery-related projects.*

7.61 Tractor models

7.62 Other agricultural technology

7.7 Health Technology - *Health-related technical projects.*

7.71 Fitness technology

7.72 Medical technology

7.8 General Inventions - *Must be clearly explained within display or artist statement.*

7.81 Original inventions.

Department 8: Food and Nutrition

- *Canned Goods **MUST** be labeled – including processing method.*
- ***MUST** attach recipe on 3x5 card. Typed preferred, if handwritten – MUST be legible*
- *For baked goods, no commercial mixes are allowed. Must be made from scratch.*
- *Dried Veg/Fruits **MUST** be in a sealed, transparent display for protection.*
- ***Use current USDA Guidelines. Call your local MSU Extension Office for info.***
- ***No items in this Department are eligible for Auction.***

8.1 Food Preservation

8.11 Canned fruit

8.12 Jam

8.13 Jelly

8.14 Pickles

8.15 Relish

8.16 Sauces

8.17 Canned vegetables

8.18 Butter

8.19 Dried fruit and vegetables

8.2 Baked Items

8.21 Cake

8.22 Other decorated deserts

8.23 Bread

8.24 Cookies

8.25 Pies

8.3 Candy and Confections

8.31 Fudge

8.32 Hard Candy

8.33 Other Candy

Department 9: Woodworking

- *Entries in this department are preferred to be of original composition.*
- *Entries created from kits will be judged as participation and not eligible for awards or Auction.*
- *Projects must be safely created.*

9.1 Wood Projects

9.11 Wood carving

9.12 Wood burnings

9.13 Wood Crafts

9.14 Other wood projects