



State 4-H Congress is Georgia 4-H's capstone event that recognizes youth achievement and shares the Georgia 4-H story with a wide group of friends and supporters. It is the final competition for youth in our Project Achievement program. We appreciate that you will be judging these 4-H'ers' portfolios and leading portfolio discussions at State 4-H Congress. We hope you find this short training module helpful as you prepare for this very important role.

First, let's investigate the layout of the portfolio. Expect to find a sheet with all the 4-H'er's information, a cover letter, two pages of accomplishments. and two pages of supporting materials.

Let's take a closer look at the cover letter. The cover letter is a one-page tool of introduction. It should provide an overview of the 4-H'er's project work and accomplishments. While there are no rules to its contents, the letter may address any information or time frame- including, but not limited to, future goals or previous experiences outside the current 4-H year. It is appropriate to address the letter "Dear Project Judge," and the letter should be signed by the 4-H'er.

The two pages of accomplishments present the 4-H'ers work over the last calendar year of January 1-December 31<sup>st</sup>. These pages should highlight the work and achievements of the 4-H'er. Pages should be neat, organized and legible. Bulleted or paragraph format are appropriate but neither are required.

The two pages of supporting materials include evidence of the project year's highlights. The submissions should show support for the project year. Artwork, pictures, and clip art are only allowed on the supporting materials pages.

The portfolio should be handwritten or typed in black ink on white paper. (Color ink is not permitted.) Computer generated bullets may be used to highlight information but should not be distracting.

Next, let's consider the scoring process...

Project Work, Leadership and Citizenship Activities, Other Activities, and the Reliability and Layout of the portfolio are all considered with the score. At Georgia 4-H State Congress interview skills are also scored. Specifically the portfolio score is comprised of:

- Main Project Work- 25 points
- Sharing and Helping Experiences in Main Project- 25 points,
- Other Leadership and Teen Leadership Activities- 15 points,
- Other Community Service and Citizenship Activities - 15 points,
- Other Activities, including second projects, 10 points,
- Supporting materials – 5 points,
- Reliability and layout of the total work – 5 points, and
- 15 points are awarded for Interview Skills displayed at State 4-H Congress.

The Main Project Work is the area where youth show what they did and what they may have learned. Comprised of 25 points, this section includes activities in the project area of the portfolio. Examples may include: articles made or prepared, animals cared for, acres tended, and the size of the project.

Next, Sharing and Helping Experiences also include 25 points. This category includes documentation of the 4-H'er sharing information learned or helping someone else in their main project area. Leading a project club, presenting a mini-booth, giving a presentation, or sharing an article are examples of this work, as long as it relates to their main project area.

At 15 points, the Other Leadership and Teen Leadership Activities section presents experiences of the 4-H'er that are not related to the main project. Examples include: coordinating a Leadership In Action Project, serving as a club officer, or guiding youth at a school career fair.

4-H'ers are often engaged in the betterment of their communities. Providing a service or a project for the community fits in the Citizenship and Community Service category, counting 15 points. Individual or collaborative projects are acceptable and examples include: volunteering at the local food bank, making cards for seniors at the nursing home, serving in a school garden, and/or assisting a civic club with a patriotic parade.

Other Activities comprise 10 points and may contain any additional experiences that have not previously been included in the former components. Activities not related to the main project work, and awards and recognition, may be included in this section. Examples include: participation in county, district, regional, or state events; judging event participation; honor roll recipient; 4-H Day at UGA participation; and any other extracurricular activities.

Effective in 2021 competitions, Supporting Materials will count 5 points in the score. These points can be allocated for the two pages of visual documentation of their achievements. The pages may include pictures, news articles, letters, cropped screenshots, and/or other pieces of information that support what has been reported in the portfolio. Items may overlap but must lay flat on the pages. The contents of these may include color. This section should be no more than two pages.

Reliability and Layout counts for 5 points. When scoring, make sure all sections of the portfolio are present, including the cover letter, project work, helping and sharing experiences, leadership, citizenship, other activities, and supporting materials. The cover letter is also judged in this category of the scoring rubric. The cover letter should be used as a tool of introduction and may include any information about the youth and project. Correctness of spelling and grammar is considered for the cover letter, as well as the entire portfolio, within these five points.

At State Congress, the portfolio will be evaluated in a discussion session with judges. All of us have been interviewed at some point in our lives. For many of the 4-H'ers you will lead their first interview experience. You can imagine a variety of emotions - some will be nervous and some will be extremely comfortable. The main purpose of this discussion is to provide an opportunity for both the youth and judge to clarify details of the written work and information cited and focus on accomplishments in the project year. Knowledge of the subject or content

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expertise is not a part of the interview score. Up to 15 points will be awarded for Interview Skills displayed during the 4-H'ers discussion with you. Please consider the young person's eye contact, posture, diction, confidence, clarity of answers and general appearance.

Judges are responsible for leading the portfolio discussion. Please limit your questions to the work accomplished and submitted in the portfolio. Tips and sample interview questions can help facilitate this process.

First, a few tips –

1. Please introduce yourself and help them feel at ease. One way is to commend them for making it to this level.
2. It is important to study portfolios prior to the competition and prepare questions related to what you read.
3. Questions should only be based on the information provided in the written portfolio. It is a good idea to prepare 5 questions – one related to each of the main categories of their portfolio to clarify information.

Some points to guide you in determining project work, level of engagement, and the outcome of the project include:

- “Tell us more about \_\_\_\_\_.” ...You may ask about specific details from their Main Project Work.

Or, you could ask about Sharing and Helping experiences by asking –

- “What was your role in \_\_\_\_\_?”  
(and insert the specific Sharing and Helping activity from the book).

Inquire of the quality and impact of leadership and service projects by asking questions such as:

- “How many people were involved in your leadership project?” And/or
- “What were the results from your community service activity?”

Or, you may simply ask – “Will you tell us more about \_\_\_\_ project?” (to determine the level of engagement of a project listed in the portfolio.)

Other sample questions to assist you are:

- What was the most difficult challenge you encountered in your project or leadership activities this year?,
- How did you adapt or overcome the challenges?,
- What did you enjoy most in your project work? And why?, and
- How did sharing what you know with others help you grow?

Finally, remember that we are limited to 14 minutes total for each youngster. Some 4-H'ers give brief answers and some are more talkative. You will be judging with another judge. If both of you are well prepared, the session will move along well. You should end the questions at approximately 10 minutes and save 3-4 minutes for making final scoring marks or notes before inviting the next 4-H'er to the portfolio discussion.

Positive youth development happens in our Project Achievement program! In fact, many 4-H alumni relate how this process has been instrumental in their lives and careers. All youth will

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interview for some role at some point in their lives. Your role facilitating portfolio discussions during State 4-H Congress is key! Thank you for preparing and serving as a volunteer portfolio judge this year. Your service is crucial to our total Project Achievement program.

We look forward to seeing you at State 4-H Congress!

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Credits: Keri Hobbs, Craven Hudson, Al Parker

Reviewed by Jason Estep

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