

Beyond Ready

Young Alumni Advisory Committee

Information Packet 2026

About the Program

National 4-H Council

National 4-H Council's mission is to expand opportunities for all of America's youth through increased investment and participation in 4-H positive youth development.

National 4-H Council is the private sector, non-profit partner of our nation's Cooperative Extension System and the National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA) within the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA). National 4-H Council supports state and local 4-H programs with a focus on fundraising, brand management, communications, and legal and fiduciary services.

National 4-H Council's work is driven by a core belief in the power of young people. We see young people as individuals who have unique strengths and real influence to improve the world around us. In keeping with that belief, National 4-H Council established a Young Alumni Advisory Committee to serve as a bridge to the alumni community – helping to strengthen the relationship between the 4-H system and its former participants and ensuring youth voice is incorporated in the planning and decisions of National 4-H Council and its Board of Trustees.

Young Alumni Advisory Committee (YAAC)

The Young Alumni Advisory Committee (YAAC) is comprised of eleven young 4-H alumni, between the ages of 18-22 at the time of election, who work to support National 4-H Council and advise the Board of Trustees. The role of the YAAC member includes the following:

1. **Youth Voice:** Members will offer their perspective and insight as young 4-H alumni to National 4-H Council, the Board of Trustees, Cooperative Extension and other friends of 4-H through regular and ad hoc meetings and conference calls.

2. **Ambassadorship:** Members will act as spokespeople for the 4-H brand through public appearances, including but not limited to Board of Trustees recruitment & engagement, meetings with current & potential partners, and speaking engagements at a variety of events, meetings and conferences. Additionally, members will serve as brand ambassadors through digital/social media and potential media interviews.

3. **Professional Development** is a significant benefit for members of the Young Alumni Advisory Committee. Members will be equipped for their service through training and hands-on development opportunities throughout their term of service for both their role as Committee members and for future professional endeavors. Training opportunities may include: networking, storytelling, personal branding, serving as a spokesperson, and more.

YAAC Expectations

YAAC members will be elected by National 4-H Council's Board of Trustees and expected to meet the following **requirements for service:**

- Be between the ages of 18-22 as of July 1, 2026
- Have a minimum of 3 years of past involvement in 4-H
- Have demonstrated 4-H leadership at the county and/or state level
- Be able to commit to a three-year term as a committee member
- Be willing to represent 4-H as a spokesperson through personal and Council owned digital/social channels, external media and/or speaking opportunities
- Be willing to abide by National 4-H Council's Code of Conduct. A copy of the Code of Conduct is included in this packet for your reference.

Annual Time Commitment

During their tenure, YAAC members should expect the following **time commitment each year of service:**

- **Official YAAC Meetings:** Members should participate in a minimum of four out of six scheduled Committee meetings during the YAAC year. Two in-person meetings (in March and September) are required except in extenuating circumstances (ex: study abroad). Four of the scheduled meetings will be via teleconference. Virtual meetings are expected to take place during July, November, January, & May.

- **Ad-Hoc Meetings:** As advisors to National 4-H Council and its Board of Trustees, additional meetings may be scheduled. These additional meetings are encouraged but are not required.

- **Ambassadorship:** Throughout the year, opportunities may arise to serve as a 4-H ambassador in various capacities around the country. There is not a set number of ambassador opportunities each member is expected to meet, but we do request that, as possible, members make a concerted effort to be available to travel for ambassador roles. On average, members can expect to receive 1-2 offers to serve as an ambassador outside of regularly scheduled meetings. Typically, this will include an overnight stay. National 4-H Council can provide an excuse note to your university or employer.

Travel Requirements

All travel costs for in-person meetings and ambassador opportunities will be paid and reimbursed by National 4-H Council.

Selection Process

National 4-H Council will collaborate with Cooperative Extension to promote the YAAC opportunity to 4-H professionals and young alumni nationwide. After a thorough, Council-led application and review process, YAAC members will be nominated for election by the Board of Trustees' Board Governance Committee. After election by the full Board of Trustees, members will serve a three-year term. The YAAC member selection process is as follows:

STEP 1: Nomination & Invitation to Apply

4-H young alumni who would like to be considered for election must be nominated by a 4-H professional or volunteer to receive an invitation to apply online. 4-H professionals and volunteers may nominate a 4-H alumnus for the Young Alumni Advisory Committee here until **February 5, 2026**.

STEP 2: Online Application

Upon receiving the invitation to apply, candidates must complete and submit an online application. All applications must be submitted no later than **March 5, 2026**. All materials must be submitted by the deadline. Incomplete applications will not be reviewed. The application process includes:

- **Online form**, including short answer questions and contact information for at least two references.
- **A one-page resume** showcasing the applicant's most relevant leadership positions, volunteer activities and/or employment history
- **A 2-minute video** responding to this prompt: As you think about the future of 4-H, what do you see as most important for its growth and its capacity to meet the needs of today's – and tomorrow's – youth, either within your state or nationally? How could you use your personal skills and experiences to address the issue and influence others to support the change?
- **A headshot**

STEP 3: Virtual Interview

After reviewing applications, National 4-H Council will select finalists. These finalists will be required to participate in a 15-minute, 1:1 virtual interview with an official Council representative during the week of **April 1-3, 2026.**

Candidate Assessment

Candidates will be assessed based on the following **evaluation criteria:**

- Personal 4-H Impact Story – Passion for 4-H
- Public Speaking Ability & Experience
- Peer Influence Ability & Experience
- Leadership Qualities & Experience
- Critical Thinking & Vision

The YAAC selection committee will review all finalists and submit a slate of recommended members to Council's Board of Trustees' Board Governance Committee for election by the full Board of Trustees. This cohort of the Young Alumni Advisory Committee will be considered for election in June 2026.

2026 YAAC Selection Timeline and Key Dates

April 1-3, 2026	Finalist interview
May 11, 2026	Recommended members notified and submitted to the Board of Trustees' Board Governance Committee
June 2026	Board of Trustees reviews & elects new members
July 2026	New YAAC term begins
Fall 2026	First in-person meeting
March 2027	Ignite by 4-H

Questions regarding the Young Alumni Advisory Committee?
Contact us at YAACApplications@4-H.org.

Beyond Ready

655 15th St NW, Suite 220
Washington, DC 20005
www.4-H.org

Youth Spokesperson Code of Conduct

Introduction

Role Description

4-H youth or young alumni serving as spokespeople on behalf of National 4-H Council and their state and local 4-H program serve as role models and spokespeople for America's 4-H youth. As a spokesperson, youth and/or young alumni educate others about the 4-H program and act as thought leaders for many important issues facing today's youth. Youth spokespeople represent the 4-H program at various local, state, national and international events, and connect with fellow youth, alumni, members of the media, and political, corporate and community leaders.

Purpose of Code of Conduct

National 4-H Council is committed to providing a safe environment for all youth participating in engagements offered by and through National 4-H Council. Serving as a youth spokesperson is a highly visible and influential role; it is also a privilege. What youth spokespeople say and do matters. All youth are expected to read and sign National 4-H Council's Code of Conduct before becoming a National 4-H Council spokesperson. Continued participation as a spokesperson is based on individuals meeting the requirements of the program and National 4-H Council's Code of Conduct.

Adults attending, participating in, or chaperoning 4-H youth spokesperson activities are expected to conduct themselves according to the Code of Conduct, the Adult Behavior Standards guide and to support youth adherence to the Code of Conduct.

This National 4-H Council Code of Conduct will be in effect as follows:

- At all times during the year of service for youth who agree to represent National 4-H Council's 4-H Youth in Action Winners.
- At all times during the year(s) of service for youth who agree to serve as Ambassadors for National 4-H Council programs.
- At all times during the three years of service for 4-H members who agree to represent National 4-H Council as Young Alumni Advisory Committee members.
- While participating in or attending a National 4-H Council sponsored program.
- While representing National 4-H Council as a youth spokesperson in any other capacity.

Code of Conduct

Youth spokespeople commit to the following:

- **Trustworthiness:** Youth are worthy of trust, honor and confidence, modeling integrity under all circumstances. Youth are honest in all activities and keep commitments by attending and being punctual for sessions of a planned event.

- **Respectfulness:** Youth treat all people (including themselves, their peers, adults, and authorities) with respect, courtesy, and consideration, with an appreciation for diversity in gender, ethnicity, interests and ability. Youth accept differences, peacefully resolve conflicts, and treat property with respect. Youth speak respectfully about all people and all 4-H organizations in written and verbal communication, including social media. Because 4-H is a non-partisan, non-political organization, 4-H'ers will refrain from wearing or displaying items/apparel of a political nature while participating in a 4-H event.
- **Responsibility:** Youth are responsible, accountable, and self-disciplined, planning ahead for events, activities, and responsibilities. Youth are on time for program events, due dates, and communications. Youth are held to high
  expectations to fulfill the role and responsibilities assigned and accept responsibility for personal choices and actions. Youth are responsible for any consequences of damage or misconduct that occurs during their participation.
- **Fairness:** Youth treat all people with fairness and approach others with an open mind. Youth follow all rules, do not take advantage of others, nor ask for special favors. Spokespeople accurately depict their personal stories, roles, and projects and avoid misrepresenting their work or experiences.
- **Caring:** Youth are kind, caring and compassionate toward others, treating others as they want to be treated. Youth show appreciation to others and aim to provide an inclusive experience for all. Youth show empathy and behave charitably.
- **Citizenship:** Youth spokespeople are law-abiding citizens, contributing to the greater good.

Youth spokespeople commit to the following practices for using social media & electronic communications:

- Include or copy at least two adults on all electronic communications (if under 18). Two adults may include, for example, a National 4-H Council employee and a parent or 4-H leader.
- Use social media in a manner that is respectful, courteous and considerate of all people and all 4-H organizations.
- Refrain from the inappropriate or disparaging use of photography, video, audio, and/or digital devices.
- Only record images, video or audio in public/common areas and not in areas where privacy is expected.

The following are not permitted throughout term of service as a spokesperson for National 4-H Council:

Some items are specific to 4-H-related travel/events; non-specified items apply at all times throughout the term of service.

- Possession and/or consumption of alcohol or tobacco products if underage.
- Distribution of alcohol or tobacco products.
- Possession, consumption or distribution of illegal drugs.
- Violence, including sexual abuse; sexual harassment; physical, verbal, emotional or mental abuse of another person
- Sexual misconduct
- Being found in someone else's lodging room or lodging area during 4-H travel/events without adults being present.
- Cheating, plagiarizing or misrepresenting work
- Theft, destruction or abuse of property
- Violation of an established curfew at a 4-H event
- Unauthorized absence from 4-H program site
- Bullying of any kind including verbal, physical and cyber bullying (social media, texting, snapchat, etc.)
- Unethical or inhumane treatment of animals

- Possession or use of a firearm during 4-H travel/events (Does not refer to use in authorized shooting sports.)
- Possession or use of a harmful object with the intent to hurt or intimidate others
- Reckless behavior
- Other conduct deemed inappropriate for the youth development program by a program coordinator, event chair, or other National 4-H Council associate, or 4-H volunteer

The 4-H name and emblem should always be used appropriately to promote 4-H and is not permitted for use for personal gain.

Consequences for Infractions:

Infractions to the National 4-H Council Code of Conduct will be addressed and may result in consequences. Because 4-H is a safe place for youth and adults to learn, minor disruptive or inappropriate behavior will first be addressed through redirection and coaching. When the nature of the offense is more severe or there is a pattern of disruptive or inappropriate behavior, violations of the Code of Conduct and Behavior Standards will result in more serious consequences. Consequences may range from the loss of privileges (e.g., participation at the event or future events, forfeiture of awards or other forms of recognition, forfeiture of positions of leadership, limitation on responsibilities) to full removal from the event and ineligibility to participate in future activities of this sort at the local, state, or national levels. Youth will assume financial responsibility for any damages caused. Youth removed from the event may be sent home early and will be responsible for paying any costs incurred for this transportation and may also be asked to return all funds expended on their behalf for their involvement in this event.

If youth are found in violation of local or federal laws, appropriate law enforcement or other legal authorities may be notified and may lead the review and consequences related to the incident.

Breaches of the National 4-H Code of Conduct will be communicated with the 4-H'er's state & local 4-H leadership as well as the parent/guardian (if youth is a minor).

Code of Conduct Agreement

My parent/guardian (if applicable) and I have read and discussed the entire National 4-H Council Youth Spokesperson Code of Conduct. I understand that the expectations apply throughout the term specified in the enforcement period based on my role with National 4-H Council. I understand that infractions to this Code of Conduct will result in consequences and that these consequences apply throughout National 4-H Council and may carry consequences within my state 4-H program. I will accept the consequences determined by National 4-H Council and my state 4-H program.

YOUTH SIGNATURE: _____ **DATE:** _____

PARENT/GUARDIAN SIGNATURE: _____ **DATE:** _____
(IF YOUTH IS A MINOR)

EXTENSION REPRESENTATIVE SIGNATURE: _____ **DATE:** _____