

2026 NATIONAL 4-H CONGRESS

DELEGATE HANDBOOK



4-H, The Youth Development Program of the Cooperative Extension System, prohibits discrimination in all its programs and activities on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, religion, age, disability, political beliefs, sexual orientation, or marital or family status.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Welcome to National 4-H Congress 4
Preparing for your Experience 5
Dress Code 7-8
Safety and Health Precautions 9
Engagement 12
Thank You Letters 14-15
Marta Train and Streetcar Map 16
Atlanta Hartsfield-Jackson Airport Map 17

2026 NATIONAL 4-H CONGRESS DESIGN TEAM

Taylor Bryant, Kansas, Youth Design Team Member
Kaden Gordillo, Texas, Youth Design Team Member
Galyce Ham, North Carolina, Youth Design Team Member
Takota Moore, Tennessee, Youth Design Team Member
Ayla Mundinger-Adsay, Montana, Youth Design Team Member
Edith (Edy) Solet, Ohio, Youth Design Team Member
Kade Suddath, West Virginia, Youth Design Team Member
Hannah Williams, Maryland, Youth Design Team Member
Dr. Kevin Carey, Illinois, Headquarters Chair
Marla Lowder, Alaska, Headquarters Co-Chair
Jamie Harris, Tennessee, Design Team Program Chair
Jessica Jens, Wisconsin, Design Team Program Co-Chair
Andrew Samuelson, Massachusetts, Operations Chair
Jade Haston, Georgia, Operations Co-Chair
Ged Matthews, S Stewart C Associates
Brett Schomer, Montana, Facilities Chair
Michael Withrow, West Virginia, Facilities Co-Chair
Dr. Susan Stewart, S Stewart Associates

WELCOME TO NATIONAL 4-H CONGRESS

Congratulations on being chosen to represent your state at this year's National 4-H Congress. On Thanksgiving weekend, hundreds of delegates from throughout the United States and its territories will join you in Atlanta to participate in National 4-H Congress. The program is a mix of educational, service, and recreational opportunities. The City of Atlanta and the Hyatt Regency Atlanta will roll out the red carpet to make your stay exceptional. Located in the heart of the Old South, Atlanta combines traditional Southern Hospitality with the energy of a world-class international city. It has a culturally diverse history. Atlanta has through the years been the home to a variety of celebrities and states people. Included in this list, you will find President Jimmy Carter, Martin Luther King Jr., Andrew Young, Margaret Mitchell, Ted Turner, and Chris Tucker. A transportation and communication center, it is home for businesses as diverse as The Coca-Cola Company, the Turner Broadcasting Network, UPS, and Delta Airlines.

The Congress program will provide opportunities for you to explore a variety of Atlanta.

- ☐ Atlanta Heros
- ☐ Mercedez Benz Stadium
- ☐ World of Coca-Cola
- ☐ The Atlanta Zoo
- ☐ Atlanta History Center
- ☐ Georgia Aquarium

Your schedule will include:

- ☐ Workshops designed to develop and enhance your leadership skills.
- ☐ General Sessions with outstanding speakers and entertainers
- ☐ A Service-Learning Experience to participate in hands-on service projects.
- ☐ Tours and recreational opportunities throughout the city

Featured Speakers for National 4-H Congress: Dr. Laymon Hicks, Tommy Salisbury, Dan Clark

National 4-H Congress, a 4-H tradition for 104 years, was originally designed to recognize state and national winners. As the 4-H program has changed to meet the needs of youth today, so has National 4- H Congress. This year's event, like the ones that preceded it, will not only recognize excellence, but also provide an outstanding, educational opportunity for 4-H youth.

The 4-H organization differs in each state. As you make new friends, we hope that you will explore the variety of ways in which states conduct their 4-H programs. You are sure to go home with new ideas on how you can improve your state's program. You will find that each state selects National 4-H Congress delegates differently. The Design Team hopes that you will use your time in Atlanta to make new friends and gather new ideas.

PREPARING FOR YOUR EXPERIENCE

ATLANTA WEATHER

The weather in Atlanta in November is very unpredictable. It could be as warm as the mid-70s or as chilly as the 30s. Bring clothes that you can easily layer. Be sure to pack an umbrella and jacket.

BOOKMARK THE HOMEPAGE

Go to: National4-HCongress.com. When you access the site for the first time on your phone you will get a little pop-up suggesting you "add to home screen." This will add an icon on your phone just like an app. It will work and function just like an app without having to download anything.

PIN EXCHANGE SWAP MEET

A fun National 4-H Congress tradition is to trade state pins or other items that represent your state. Delegates may bring pins and stickers from their home states to exchange with those from around the country. It is a great way to make new friends and go home with a souvenir from other states. You may want to bring a scarf or lanyard on which to collect and display the pins. If you place pins on your name tag, be sure they do not cover your name. The Pin Exchange will begin on Friday and continue throughout the week as you make new friends and learn more about their states. Delegates are strongly encouraged to wash hands before and after participating in any pin exchange.

There is a designated time to exchange pins on Friday, but you are encouraged to carry them with you throughout your stay and exchange them at your discretion. Please do not bring any pins made of food, such as peanuts, due to allergies

SPENDING MONEY

All meals during the conference are included in your registration fee except for dinner on Friday night and lunch on Saturday, Sunday, and Monday. You will want to bring money for the following: snacks, souvenirs, shopping, and tips. You will need money for meals while you are traveling and three lunches. It is recommended that you bring a minimum of $200. Most stores and vendors are card only. Please note that the Atlanta History Center **will be** accepting cash during our visit.

LIGHT BREAKFAST

For the four mornings that you are at Congress, a light breakfast will be provided. It will include such items as cereal, doughnuts, fruit, juice, and milk. This is designed to be a light meal. If you want to start the day with a large, hot breakfast, plan time to visit the hotel restaurant where you may purchase a hot meal from a menu with a wide variety of choices. There is a food court in the mall next to the hotel that offers a variety of fast-food restaurants.

Note: The food served is donated. Those with dietary restrictions may want to seek other options.

TIPPING

Tipping is traditional when interacting with those who help make your travel experience more enjoyable. It is your way of saying "thank you" for the service provided. You should tip waiters, bell staff, door attendants if they summon a taxi for you, and your taxi/limo driver.

Suggested amounts are as follows:

Waiters/Waitresses:	18% to 20% of the total bill.	**Door Attendant:**	Minimum of $1 to $2 if they hail a cab for you.
Bell Staff:	$1.00 to $2.00 per bag.	**Taxi Driver/Ride Shares:**	A 15% to 20% tip is what you should be looking to add.
Room Attendants (Maids) at end of stay:	$2 per day per guest	**Skycap:**	$1 per bag.

DRESS CODE

National 4-H Congress is a working, professional development conference. As in professional environments, where guidelines related to dress and grooming are maintained, National 4-H Congress has developed its own. Essentially, proper dress and grooming for an occasion is a matter of exercising good judgment. Dressing well for professional occasions is a skill that delegates should gain knowledge of and value its significance. It is expected that adult chaperones, delegation coordinators and on-site chaperones will encourage this important lesson.

All clothing should be neat, clean, and should be worn within the bounds of good taste as appropriate for 4-H events. Prohibited items include excessively tight clothing, bare feet, hats, and caps (indoors), clothing that expose bare midriffs, undergarments that are transparent (see-through), articles of clothing that display profanity, products or slogans that promote tobacco, alcohol, drugs, sex or in any other way suggestive or distracting. Adult chaperones and/ or the National 4-H Congress Design Team members may ask any individual to modify their clothing selection if standards of decency in appearance are not met.

	CASUAL	BUSINESS CASUAL	BUSINESS FORMAL
Appropriate Attire	Jeans, Khakis, T-Shirts, Tennis Shoes, Athletic Wear for Active Workshops.	Slacks, Skirts, Button Downs, Blouses or Polo hirts dress/career shoes, boots.	Black, navy or grey are the most acceptable suit colors (jackets, tie, slacks). Dresses from knee to floor length or pants suit appropriate for a prom or similar activity.
Inappropriate Attire	Pajamas, jeans or pants that are cut off and/or worn with holes. Shoes with holes.	Athletic clothing or leggings, tennis shoes or flip flops, ripped or distressed jeans	Denim or athletic/tennis shoes or flip flops.

Delegates will be asked to wear National 4-H Congress **T-shirts and closed-toed shoes** during the Community Service activity on Monday. Delegates are asked to bring outdoor weather gear and work gloves. We will participate rain or shine unless there is severe weather.

Attire for Events

Casual Attire	Business Casual Attire	Business Formal Attire
Friday: Assembly C Get Acquainted **Saturday**: Opening Event **Sunday**: Team Building C Workshops **Monday Morning**: Service Learning **Tuesday**: Closing Assembly/Travel	**Saturday**: International Event **Sunday**: Assembly C Inspirational Service **Sunday Evening:** Evening of Culture	**Monday Evening**: Congress Gala (outfit can be changed to CASUAL for Dance)

SAFETY AND HEALTH PRECAUTIONS

The National 4-H Congress staff go to extraordinary means to ensure adequate plans are made for the safety of delegates. The following suggestions have been developed with help from local police and security at Congress venues.

PHOTO IDENTIFICATIONS

Be sure to keep your photo identification in a secure place as it is necessary for flight identification. Be sure it is not packed in your luggage. If you are flying, please ensure you have a REAL ID or other acceptable identification (either a U.S. passport or passport card) to be in accordance with federal TSA regulations.

SECURING LUGGAGE

Do not allow strangers to handle your luggage. Remember to pack only what you can carry. Please go to tsa.gov to see the latest airport regulations for luggage and carry-on items. Be sure every piece of luggage has your name and state on it in two places. It must be accurate and easy to read. Pack as economically as possible. Bring clothes that mix and match well. Your state will tell you if there is a limit to the number of bags that you can bring.

Never leave your suitcase unattended. Bags have a way of walking away when not attended. Always keep your valuables with you; do not pack them in your suitcase.

Check with your airline for luggage fee, size, and weight limitations for your luggage as airlines differ. If your luggage is oversized, you will have an additional charge for checking it. Ask your state coordinator if luggage fees are to be paid by individual delegates or states.

AIRPORT SECURITY

Pack everything possible into the luggage that you will check at the airport. Bags that you attempt to carry-on will be scrutinized thoroughly. Items that have sharp points will be confiscated by airport security. This includes things as small as pocketknives. Do not embarrass yourself or your delegation by attempting to bring those with you through airport security. Any metal object that you wear will slow the process down. You may want to put items such as big metal belt buckles in the suitcase that you check. Your positive, helpful attitude will make a positive impression on those you encounter and will make the job of security officers easier.

STREET SAFETY

The Atlanta City Police and the Atlanta Downtown Ambassadors patrol the area around the hotel. The Ambassadors are there to answer your questions. They are easily identifiable. They wear red and navy uniforms. They are your safest and most reliable source of information.

NAME TAGS

Please ensure that you are always wearing your name tag while at the event in the hotel. You can keep your schedule and dietary restriction cards (if needed) in that are worn at Congress function must be removed when outside the hotel on sidewalks, restaurants, retail stores, etc.

STREET AND CITY SAFETY

As in any big city, you will encounter individuals asking for money or other assistance. They can be very direct and persistent at times. Be courteous, but it is suggested that you politely turn down their requests. Delegates are only allowed to leave the hotel in groups of four or more. Adult chaperones must be made aware when you leave, where you are going, and when you plan to return. If you have a cell phone, give the adult chaperones your number or that of a member of your group.

HOTEL SAFETY

Doors to sleeping rooms must always be locked. Doors that are propped open make an easy target for unwanted people. Even for short trips to adjoining rooms or to the closest ice machine, delegates must lock doors securely. Valuables must never be left in open view in your room. Each room has a safe for use. The hotel does have limited safety deposit boxes that can be secured at the front desk. Use the peep hole in the door to see who is there before opening it.

The National 4-H Congress Board of Advisors and Design Team is committed to the safety and health of all youth and adults during this year's event. Youth and adult participants are expected to be responsible for their own health. Anyone not feeling well or displaying signs of illness within 72 hours of departure should not attend National 4-H Congress. Anyone not feeling well or displaying signs of illness during the event should consider segregating themselves from others in order to not spread any potential illness.

MINOR EMERGENCIES

- Locate and contact your state chaperone immediately.
- Ask their help in coming up with the best solution.

MAJOR EMERGENCIES

- Use the closest phone to call for help.
- In the hotel dial 55 or 0, outside the hotel dial 911.
- Call your state coordinator or ask someone to call you.
- Call Congress Headquarters located in the Chicago Room at the hotel. Phone: 404-577-1234

MAJOR CATASTROPHES

In case of a major catastrophe, all Congress delegates will meet at a designated gathering point. These gathering points are specified in the National 4-H Congress Program. The state delegation coordinator will take roll to ensure that the entire delegation is present. The group will then be escorted to a designated safe location. Parents will be briefed by their delegation's state 4-H office.

- **Alabama – Hawaii** will meet at the corner of Peachtree and Baker Streets
- **Idaho – Montana** will meet at the corner of Peachtree and Harris Streets
- **Nebraska - Pennsylvania** will meet at the corner of Peachtree Center and Baker Streets
- **Puerto Rico – Wyoming** will meet at the corner of Peachtree Center and Harris Streets



ENGAGEMENT

Times for state meetings and curfews will be listed in your official Congress program. If you are out of your room after that curfew, you must have an adult with you. Hotel security helps enforce curfews.

APPROPRIATE CONDUCT

Delegates must be considerate of other guests in the hotel during Congress. Noise in the halls and rooms must be kept at a minimum. Please limit talking to quiet conversational levels. Other guests may be trying to sleep. This is especially critical as you go back to your rooms each evening after your state meeting. Groups that make too much noise will be asked to move to another hotel. Running in the halls and standing on both internal and external balconies are strictly prohibited resulting in being sent home. Delegates are **not** to be in another delegate's hotel room without chaperone's permission. Visiting must be done in lobbies and other common gathering areas. Remember that all delegates have signed a code of conduct that must be followed. Delegates cannot go out on hotel balconies/overhangs. No texting or use of cell phones during any workshop or main session.

HOTEL ROOM TIPS

- Due to staffing, hotel rooms may not be cleaned by housekeeping during the event.
- It will be the responsibility of all participants to maintain a clean and neat room.
- Housekeeping will provide linens for the duration of the event along with plastic trash bags. If additional linens are needed during the event, participants can trade used linens into the front desk for fresh linens.
- The bottled water found in your hotel room is not complimentary. Do not use it unless you expect to pay for it. The same applies for in-room movies. You are welcome to bring your own water bottle.
- Do NOT use the in-room sprinklers for hanging items.

CONGRESS PHOTOS

Photos commemorating this year's Congress will be provided to all delegates digitally after the event.

DONOR GIFT BASKETS

Each state is asked to bring at least 15 items (not necessarily the same) representing their state to be placed in gift baskets delivered throughout the Atlanta area to donors and sponsors of National 4-H Congress. The items should be tasteful and representative of both the state and the 4-H program. No alcohol, tobacco, or pharmaceuticals (drugs) are allowed. All items need to be turned in by Saturday at 12 PM at the National 4-H Congress Headquarters or earlier. Check with your State 4-H office to find out if you need to bring these items.

EXPRESSIONS OF APPRECIATION

Delegates are well known for the excellent way in which they express appreciation to all who help make Congress happen. The list includes donors, presenters, volunteers, parents, and Extension professionals. While you are at National 4-H Congress, you will receive a list of donors and supporters to whom you need to express your thanks. We will gather all delegate thank you letters at Congress and have them bound in book form to be presented to donors. You will receive stationery for your notes when you arrive in Atlanta. Letters should be hand-written legibly and free of grammatical errors. You will be given some suggestions to help you. Letters must be submitted to National 4-H Congress Headquarters by 12:00 PM on Monday, December 2. Please take these letters seriously, returning them without wrinkles or food spots.

When you get back home, remember to thank your local Extension staff and parents/guardians for their support and encouragement. Some states may request that you also write thank you notes to state trip donors. While in the hotel, please remember to let those who serve you know that you appreciate their hard work.

THANK YOU LETTER

KEY TIPS

Why should you write a thank you letter?

- Show appreciation
- Acknowledge a gift, donation, or service
- Recognize a good deed

Your letter should:

- Be neatly written in blue or black ink
- Fill the page
- Be personal and meaningful

How to write a thank you letter:

Start with a greeting ("Dear"...)

Compose the body of your letter to

- Express Your Gratitude
- Add Specific Details
- Share the Impact

Close with gratitude ("Sincerely"...)

OUTLINE

Dear [sponsor - one person],

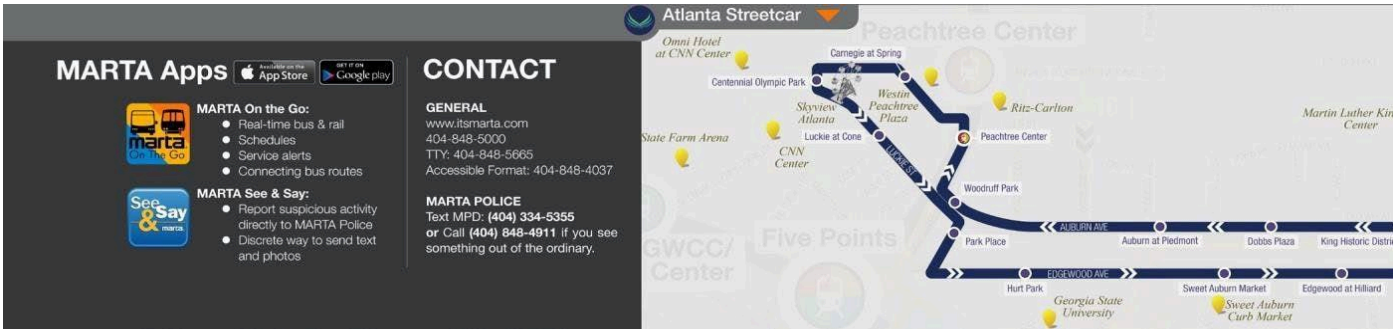
Include the following things in the body of the letter:

1. Specifically thank the sponsor/donor for their contribution.
2. Note the impact National 4-H Congress had on you. Examples:
    - Share a sentence about something you heard that made you reflect.
    - Talk about a new friend you made.
    - Share about an event you attended thus far in the evening that was part of your social experience.
3. Share about your 4-H experience/background back home.

With Thanks [or other closing],
Your Name
Your State

MARTA TRAIN AND STREETCAR MAP





https://itsmarta.com/interactive-system-map.aspx

ATLANTA HARTS FIELD-JACKSON AIRPORT MAP

