

By-Laws of the Arkansas 4-H Council

Preamble

We, the 4-H members of Arkansas, in order to provide opportunities for positive youth development, create supportive environments utilizing experiential learning techniques, and to function as an unbiased educational tool of the University of Arkansas System Division of Agriculture 4-H Youth Development Program, do hereby establish these By-Laws for the 4-H Council.

Article I

Name, Scope, Emblem, and Colors

Section 1 – Name & Scope

The name of this organization shall be the Arkansas 4-H Council, an assembly of elected and appointed representatives who meet, discuss, plan, and help expedite the Arkansas 4-H program in the interest of its members. All uses of the 4-H name shall be consistent with the educational purposes, character-building objectives and dignity of the 4-H organization.

Section 2 – Emblem

A. The four-leaf clover with the letter “H” in each of the leaflets representing equal training of the Head, Heart, Hands, and Health shall be the official emblem of the Arkansas 4-H Council.

Section 3 – Colors

The 4-H colors are green and white. The green represents nature’s most common color and is emblematic of youth, life, and growth. The white background symbolizes purity.

Section 4 – Motto

The Arkansas 4-H Motto shall be “To Make the Best Better.”

Article II Objectives

To provide additional opportunities for personal leadership and promote the 4-H program throughout Arkansas, the objectives of this Council shall be to:

Section 1

Serve as a conduit for programming and ensure alignment with statewide goals and priorities.

Section 2

Provide visible leadership models for 4-H members and serve as a means for improving and projecting a positive image of 4-H.

Section 3

Serve as an example of member involvement in planning and carrying out programs.

Section 4

Operate in compliance and maintain the core values of the University of Arkansas System Division of Agriculture Research and Extension 4-H Youth Development program. Policy interpretations are made by state 4-H Youth Development Program staff and faculty, who are authorized under federal and state statutes for organizing and administering the 4-H youth development program in the state of Arkansas.

Article III

Meeting, Quorum, and Suffrage

Section 1.

The University of Arkansas System Division of Agriculture offers all its Extension and Research programs and services without regard to race, color, sex, gender identity, sexual orientation, national origin, religion, age, disability, marital or veteran status, genetic information, or any other legally protected status, and is an Affirmative Action/Equal Opportunity Employer.

Section 2.

Special meetings of the Council may be called by the President with the approval of the state advisor.

Section 3.

Two-thirds of the officially seated delegates shall constitute a quorum for the transaction of business of the Council, provided at least one-half of the counties with organized 4-H programs are represented.

Section 4.

Each county shall be represented by two officially seated voting delegates who may vote on each proceeding.

Section 5.

The state Council advisor(s) shall serve in an advisory capacity only at meetings of the Arkansas 4-H Council and shall not have voting privileges at any assemblies of the Council.

Article IV

Section 1. Officer Positions.

The Council shall consist of: a President, First Vice-President, Secretary, Reporter, Ouachita District Vice-President, Delta District Vice-President, and Ozark District Vice-President, and two voting delegates from each county selected by their county agents each year. After election, the candidate with the second most votes will be assigned as First Vice-President. The Secretary, and Reporter offices will be decided as a team. The District Vice-Presidents will be assigned the duties of Historian, Parliamentarian, and Sergeant of Arms after election.

- a. The elected officers shall continue to fulfill their duties, statewide in nature, as directed in this Constitution, for one year or until such time as their successors are designated.
- b. If the office of President is permanently vacated, the First Vice-president shall become the President.
- c. If any elected office other than the Presidency is vacated, a committee composed of the remaining elected officers and the state council advisor(s), shall be given the option to appoint a 4-H state ambassador who has served for more than one year to fill the vacated position.
- d. There is no limit to the number of 4-H'ers that apply for state 4-H office from one county.

State 4-H Constitution and Bylaws will be ratified and subsequently voted upon if changes arise during the annual business meeting (officers & voting delegates) at Arkansas State 4-H O-Rama.

Article V

Membership & Role of State Officer Team

Section 1. Membership.

Officer candidates must:

- Be at least 16 years of age but not more than 18 years of age during the current calendar year and be an active member in a local 4-H program.
- Reside in Arkansas during the entire year while serving as state officer.
- Be an Arkansas 4-H ambassador for at least one year prior to the date of election and have met the re-certification requirements for the current year.
- Follow all procedures for submission of their application for state officer. Voting delegates:
- County agents choose two voting delegates from their county who will attend the annual business meeting at State 4-H O-Rama (150 delegates total). Each county voting delegate shall be at least 14 years of age by January 1 of the current year.

Voting delegates are not required to be 4-H Ambassadors. Voting delegates are required to be registered full-time for O-Rama.

Section 2. Role of State Officers

The objectives for the State 4-H Officers include:

- Serve as a role model, representative and spokesperson for the Arkansas 4-H youth development program.
- Uphold the high ideals, values and moral standards of the Arkansas 4-H program.
- Travel within the district and state to fulfill responsibilities.
- Serve as a “Youth Advisory Committee” to the state 4-H program.
- Serve as an active and contributing member of state activity and events committees.
- Plan, conduct, and evaluate Council-led state events.
- Seek opportunities to expand and diversify audiences and programs of the Arkansas 4-H youth development program.

Section 3. Uniform

1. **Official Dress** shall be provided pending availability of funding and shall include Kelly green blazers, black or navy dresses, skirts, tie and slacks, and a dress shirt in the appropriate color. Name tags will be provided and should be worn unless specified otherwise. Shoes shall be no higher than 2 inches and have closed toes.
2. **Business Casual Uniform** shall consist of a casual shirt, pullover, and jacket with the 4-H emblem. Pants should be neatly pressed. Shoes should be appropriate for the event and be clean and free from excessive wear.
3. Whenever official and/or casual uniforms are worn, the 4-H Code of Conduct should be upheld. The uniform should never be worn in a location that would bring into question the integrity of the 4-H youth development program.
4. Official Dress should be worn for “official” 4-H functions or out of respect to 4-H alumni, volunteers, extension/university personnel or local, county or state government officials.
5. At no time should any part of the uniform be worn to promote any cause other than 4-H.

Section 4. Duties of State Officers

- a. The President shall preside over all meetings of the Council; appoint all standing, advisory, and special committee chairpersons and members; make special appointments as provided in the Constitution and Bylaws, serve as an ex-officio member of all committees; and perform other duties as provided by the Constitution.
- b. The Vice-President shall serve in the absence of the President, and shall perform other duties as provided by this Constitution and as required by the work of the

Council. With cooperation of committee chair, coordinates committee work and reporting. Keeps the officers informed of the committee progress and needs.

- c. The Secretary shall keep the minutes of the meetings and will type and submit within two weeks of each meeting. They shall preserve the minutes of the previous year, call roll, record all activities of the meetings, attend to the correspondence of the officers, and perform other duties as provided by this Constitution and as required by the work of the Council.
- d. The Reporter shall be responsible for promotional efforts to appropriate media outlets. He or she shall also perform other duties as provided by this Constitution and as by the work of the Council.
- e. A District Vice-President shall be assigned as the Sergeant at Arms and shall be responsible for the opening exercises at all meetings and shall also care for the 4-H effects of the Council and shall properly arrange for their display. He or she shall perform other duties as provided by this Constitution and the work of the Council.
- f. A District Vice-President shall be assigned as the Historian shall keep a virtual scrapbook record of all State 4-H events and of all Council meetings and activities, shall be responsible for submission of the year's scrapbook to the State Headquarters by the first district 4-H State O-Rama near the end of the officer's term. He or she shall perform other duties as provided by the Bylaws and/or Constitution and the work of the Council.
- g. A District Vice-President shall be assigned as the Parliamentarian and shall advise the President on Parliamentary Procedure and shall perform other duties as provided by this Constitution and the work of the Council.

Article VI Officer

Elections

Section 1. Filing

Applications and filing information will be posted on the Arkansas 4-H website and provided to county Extension offices. Candidates are required to complete the application packet by the designated date.

In the event no one files by the deadline for one of the positions, candidates who have filed will be given an opportunity to re-file for the open position prior to finalizing the ballot.

Section 2. Campaign and Election Rules

- a. State officer applications are due to the state 4-H office on or before March 15.
- b. The election of officers shall be by secret ballot vote of each delegate assembled.
- c. When there are more than two candidates running for an office and if one candidate does not receive a majority (50% plus 1) of the votes cast, a runoff election shall be conducted between the two candidates receiving the most votes.
- d. Candidates must submit their campaign speeches in writing to the State 4-H Office prior to the date of the election as specified by the state 4-H officer advisor.

Candidates are encouraged to work with their county agent to develop and edit their campaign speeches prior to submission to the State 4-H Office.

- e. Campaign speeches take place during opening assembly. Speeches are to be no more than 3 minutes in length and shall not include props or music. Candidates shall be professionally dressed. Candidates may carry their speech on stage as either an 8.5" x 11" piece of paper or on smaller note cards. Winners will give a one-minute acceptance speech during the closing assembly.
- f. Candidates may not promote their election campaign while participating in or emceeding programs during regional or state activities.
- g. Candidates running for office are held to the same standards as the current officer team. If candidates are found to be displaying inappropriate behavior in any form they will be asked to forfeit the race.
- h. All officer candidates will be interviewed, in person, by a state election board who will provide recommendations & feedback of the strengths and weaknesses of candidates and have final say of a candidate's eligibility.
- i. The state 4-H office will create identical flyers for candidates and their qualifications that will be posted at District & State O-Rama for voting delegates to review.
- j. Candidates may campaign with social media, speak to county groups or make phone calls before 4-H district and state O-Rama. Extension staff are not allowed to provide names, phone numbers and/or addresses of 4-H members in their county and may not send emails or write letters on a candidate's behalf.
- k. Violations in campaign rules will be brought to the attention of the candidate and the Election Board. Candidates who do not correct violations may be disqualified from being elected as a State 4-H Officer. The Election Board will document the violations and have the final authority to determine the penalty for violations. If a candidate is determined to be in violation of the campaign procedures, they may be assessed a 50 vote penalty to their final vote tally.

Section 4. Campaign Literature Materials

- l. Candidates will be provided a campaign table at State 4-H O-Rama for voting delegates to meet the candidates. Candidates may not make paraphernalia such as flyers/business cards/buttons. Candidates may create up to 10 posters. No tear-off materials, flyers or gifts may be attached to the posters.
 - a. No campaign material is to be displayed inside assembly or voting areas during District or State O-Rama.
 - b. Social media campaigning is permitted by the candidate as long as there is no negative campaigning or defamation of character reported. Social media add-ons that cost money are not allowed. Inappropriate messages are grounds for removing the candidate from the ballot. Candidates are responsible for the actions or messages of friends, colleagues and associates campaigning on their behalf.

Section 5. Officer Performance

A. Absences

- 1) **Excused** – Only by communicating with the state officer advisor in person, by e-mail or by telephone (excluding text messaging) can a Council member (not a parent, sibling or educator on their behalf) request an excused absence of a mandatory meeting. The request must be at least one week in advance of a planned mandatory meeting. No other form of communication will be acceptable. Excused absences will be defined as a justifiable/reasonable event that was unavoidable. A total of two excused absences will be allowed per year (O-Rama through O-Rama).
- 2) **Unexcused** – Unexcused absences will be defined as 1) poor time management on the part of the Council member and 2) not requesting an excused absence at least one week in advance of a mandatory event. Council members who accrue two unexcused absences in a single year will go before the election board to determine if they may continue their term of office.

B. Unsatisfactory Performance, Misconduct or Violation of Published Rules/Guidelines/Policies

1. **Unsatisfactory Performance:**
 - Disregarding the responsibility of or the refusal to make county visits, complete assignments, participate in committee work, and attend meetings and required activities and events.
 - Refusing to accept supervision or to cooperate with other members of the officer team, advisor/district/state staff, and/or county agent.
 - Showing lack of leadership, character and/or ethics through inappropriate, discourteous or unsportsmanlike behavior or language.
2. **Misconduct:** Physical or verbal abuse of youth or other adults, substance abuse, committing a criminal act, misuse of funds, irresponsible handling of animals, vehicles or machinery and any other items spelled out in the 4-H Code of Conduct or any other established rules or guidelines for sanctioned 4-H activities.
3. **Violation of Published Rules/Guidelines/Policies:** Any action conflicting with the Arkansas 4-H Code of Conduct, 4-H Volunteer Behavioral Guidelines or any other established guidelines for sanctioned 4-H activities is grounds for immediate dismissal. In some cases, a 4-H Officer may be suspended from duty until an investigation is completed. Decision on immediate removal or suspension will be made by the advisor in consultation with the state 4-H program director or 4-H department head until the alleged violation has been given due process.

Section 5. TERMINATION OF A STATE OFFICER

- A. State officers who fail to fulfill duties may be removed from office following the procedures described in Article VI.
If found to have executed unsatisfactory performance, accrued excessive absences, been involved in misconduct or a violation of published guidelines the state officer will be asked to forfeit his or her position.
- B. A Plan for Improvement (POI) may be created to allow the officer time to display improved behavior. If a POI cannot be reached, the officer may choose to resign from the position, or they will be suspended from all activities. Steps may be taken to terminate the officer through a review board.
- C. If a POI is reached, but significant effort is not put forth to accomplish the defined goals in the established timeline of a POI, the officer may choose to resign from the position. Otherwise, he or she will be suspended from all activities, and steps may be taken to terminate the officer through a review board.
- D. An officer who has been found in violation by a review board of the Arkansas 4-H Code of Conduct and any other published policies or rules governing 4-H-affiliated events will be asked to forfeit his or her office.
- E. **Review Board** - Voting members of the review board will include: a district director not from the respective district, a state 4-H specialist, the state 4-H department head, and two youth members. The officer's Extension agent may be present but will not have a vote.

ARTICLE VII

Parliamentary Authority

The rules contained in the current edition of *Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised* shall govern this organization in all cases to which they are applicable and in which they are not inconsistent with the bylaws and any special rules of order this organization may adopt.

Article VIII

Amendments

- A. These bylaws may be amended by a two-third vote at any official business meeting of the 4-H council with the support of the state staff, providing that said amendment(s) has been presented in writing to all members and advisors at least 30 days prior to its presentation to the Council for adoption.
- B. Proposed amendments may be made by an Arkansas 4-H Council delegate by bringing proposed amendments to the state 4-H program specialists or by the program specialists bringing proposed changes to the Arkansas 4-H Council.
- C. A current version of the State 4-H Council Bylaws will be posted on the state 4-H website.