



K-STATE
Research and Extension

Sedgwick County

4-H UPDATE

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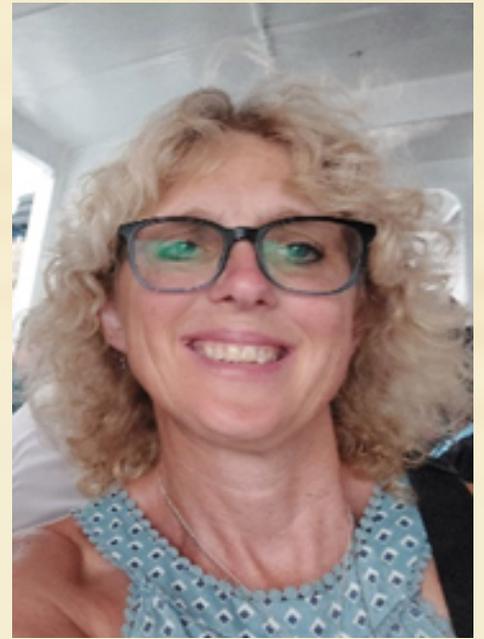
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UPCOMING EVENTS

February 15-16, 2026	Citizenship in Action, Topeka
February 21-22, 2026	4-H Horse Panorama, Rock Springs Ranch
March 7, 2026	Formal Dinner, Western Theme, 13-18 year olds
March 7, 2026	Junior Beef Producer Day Saturday, March 7, Bilbery Family Events Center, Manhattan.
March 14, 2026	Beef Weigh-in and tagging, Heartland Vet
March 15, 2026	County Scholarship Applications Due to office
March 21, 2026	Dairy Cow Clinic, Fairgrounds
March 22, 2026	Regional 4-H Day, Mulvane
April 15, 2026	Owned by date for small animals
April 25-26, 2026	Spring Livestock Show and small animal tagging



From the Desk of..... Stephanie Hays



Hello Sedgwick County Families:

Whether you are brand new to 4-H or have been part of our program for years, I want to start by saying welcome. We are so glad you are here. 4-H is more than projects and events, it's a place where youth belong, grow, try new things, and discover what they are capable of becoming.

As we move into a new year, there is so much to look forward to! This season is full of opportunities for learning, fun, and connection, and I hope you'll jump in and take advantage of all the 4-H has to offer.

Upcoming Events to Mark on Your Calendar:

- **4-H Day** - A great chance for youth to build confidence, practice communication skills, and share what they've learned in a supportive environment.
- **Wildcat Basketball Day** - One of our favorite traditions! This is a fun opportunity to celebrate 4-H spirit and spend time together outside our regular projects.
- **Livestock Weigh-ins** - An important step for our livestock families as we begin preparing for the year ahead. Please be watching for details so you're ready and confident when the time comes.

The start of a new year is also a perfect time to set goals, try a new project, step into leadership, or simply say yes to something new. Whether your youth loves animals, STEM, cooking, arts, leadership, or community service, there is a place for them in 4-H, and often more possibilities than you might expect.

To our new families: please know you don't have to have everything figured out. Ask questions, lean on your club leaders, and reach out to me anytime. We are here to walk alongside you.

To our returning families: thank you for being the heart of Sedgwick County 4-H. Your involvement, encouragement, and willingness to support others make this program thrive.

I am so excited for what this year will bring and can't wait to see our youth grow, shine, and succeed--together.

Here's to a year full of learning, laughter, and making the best better.

With gratitude and excitement,
Steph





4-H Calendar of Events



2026

- February 7** 4-H Day, 8:30 am, Stone Creek Elementary, Derby
- February 15-16** 4-H Citizenship in Action, Topeka
- February 21-22** 4-H Horse Panorama, Rock Springs Ranch
-
- March 7** Junior Beef Producer Day Saturday, March 7, Bilbery Family Events Center, Manhattan, Registration deadline: TBA
- March 7** Formal Dinner
- March 14** Beef Weigh-in, Heartland Vet, 9:00-11:00 am
- March 15** County Scholarship Applications Due to office
- March 21** Dairy Cow Day, Cheney Fairgrounds
- March 22** Regional 4-H Day, Mulvane
-
- April TBD** Shutterbug Event
- April TBD** National 4-H Conference
- April 11** Junior Sheep Producer Day Saturday, April 11, Bilbery Family Events Center, Manhattan
Registration deadline: TBA
- April 18** Spring State Shooting Sports Match - BB, Air Rifle, Air Pistol, at Great Bend
- April 25** Spring into Volunteering
- April 25-26** Spring Livestock show, Cheney Fairgrounds, Small animals will be tagged on these dates: 25th – Beef and Swine and the 26th – Goats and Sheep
- April 28-29** Youth Entrepreneurship Contest (YEC) Manhattan
-
- May 1** Horse I.D. papers due to the 4-H office
- May 3** Dairy Goat Clinic and Practice Show, Cheney Fairgrounds
-
- June 3-5** Discover Days, Manhattan
- June 12** Style Revue, Pet Judging, Creative Tables entries must be pre-entered
- June 12-14** State 4-H Geology Field Trip (TBA)
- June 19-20** Insect Spectacular, Yates Center
- June 25** Style Revue judging -8:30 am and Public Style Revue -7:30 pm
- June/July** 4-H Camp. Rock Springs Ranch

Calendar of Events Continued.....

- July 7-11** Sedgwick County Fair
July 7 Static Judging, Fairgrounds
July 8 4-H Horse Show, Fairgrounds
July 8-11 See Fair Book for schedules for livestock entry and judging times and auction details
- August 1** State 4-H Horse Show Entries due
August 1 State Fair static entries due to 4-H office
August 4 4-H Wheat Expo, El Dorado
August 15 State Horticulture Judging Contest
August 22-23 (tentative) 4-H Livestock Sweepstakes, Manhattan
- September 5** State 4-H Dog Show
September 11-20 Kansas State Fair
September 26 State Archery Match
- October 3** State Small Bore/Muzzle Loading Match
October 11 State Hunting Skills Match
October 17-18 4-H Dog Conference
October 18 State Shotgun Match
- November 21-22** Kansas Youth Leadership Forum, Rock Springs Ranch
November 21-22 Kansas Association of 4-H Volunteers Forum, Rock Springs Ranch

. HAPPY .
Valentine's
Day

A graphic for Valentine's Day featuring the word "Valentine's" in a large, black, cursive font and "Day" in a smaller, black, cursive font below it. The word "Valentine's" has a small red heart above the "i". The word "Day" has two red hearts, one above the "a" and one to the left of the "y". Above the word "Valentine's" is the word "HAPPY" in a red, sans-serif font, flanked by two red dots.

Sedgwick County 4-H Shooting Sports



4-H ARCHERY DISCIPLINE



4-H SHOTGUN DISCIPLINE

Summer is right around the corner. With that brings the shooting sports projects of Archery and Shotgun. To participate in these projects, you must fill out this form by February 20th and be enrolled in 4-H online in the corresponding projects:

<https://forms.gle/TDxSEovhbbzj1LeUA>

For more information, including fees, practice times and requirements, click here: [Archery Season Information](#). For more information on the shotgun project, click here: [2026 Shotgun Information](#). If you have any questions, please contact Susie Klausmeyer at susieklausmeyer@gmail.com.

Youth Livestock Program

2026 Calendar & Important Deadlines

March 7: K-State Junior Beef Producer Day

April 11: K-State Junior Sheep Producer Day

April 15: KASLA Application Deadline (tentative)

April 20: Last Day to Order Market Beef DNA
Envelopes for Nominations

May 1: Market Beef Nominations Due

June 5: Last Day to Order Small Livestock DNA
Envelopes for Nominations

June 15: Commercial Heifer, Swine, Sheep, & Meat
Goat Nominations Due

July 10-11: Dr. Bob Hines Kansas Swine Classic

August 22-23 (tentative): State 4-H Livestock
Sweepstakes

September 11-13: Kansas State Fair

October 2 -4: Kansas Junior Livestock Show



YQCA CERTIFICATE IS MANDATORY FOR SEDGWICK COUNTY YOUTH TO SHOW AT SEDGWICK COUNTY FAIR

Youth for the Quality Care of Animals (YQCA) is a national multi-species quality assurance program for youth ages 8 to 21. The program is designed to provide a minimum 60 minutes of education each year.

YQCA is the result of a collaborative effort between states that have previously offered multi-species youth livestock quality assurance programs, the National Pork Board's Youth PQA Plus program and representatives from other national livestock groups.

- Food Safety

YQCA is designed as an annual education and certification program focused on food safety, animal well-being and character awareness for youth ages 8 to 21 producing and/or showing pigs, beef cattle, dairy cattle, sheep, goats, rabbits, and poultry.

- Animal Well Being

The program has been designed by extension specialists and national livestock program managers to ensure it is accurate, current and relevant to the needs of the animal industry and shows and is appropriate for youth.

- Character Development

YQCA is accepted at a number of shows across the United States.

I am offering 5 teacher led courses for any individual who would like to participate in person. Dates below to sign up go to this link. <https://yqcaprogram.org/> choose your age group and instructor led.\$3.00 a youth

** Remember to enroll and take the pre-test before coming to class.

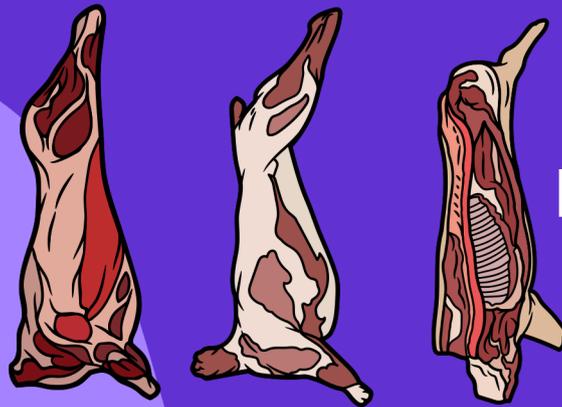
If you want to take the Online version go the same site. <https://yqcaprogram.org> choose your age group and online version. \$12.00 a youth.

Please go to their help section for any questions for enrollment.

<https://yqcaprogram.org/local/help-desk.php>

Meeting Dates: February 12, March 12, April 9, and May 7. All meetings will begin at 7:00 pm here at the Extension Office.

REGISTER
NOW!!



REGISTRATION
LINK BELOW!!

KANSAS STATE UNIVERSITY

YOUTH MEAT JUDGING CONTEST

MARCH 1, 2026

**REGISTRATION ON
JUDGINGCARD.COM- CLICK
SYMBOL OR LINK BELOW!
QUESTIONS TO ERIN BEYER
ERBEYER@KSU.EDU**

- AT LEAST 6 CLASSES, 40 RETAIL ID, AND QUESTIONS
- MEAT LAB AT WEBER HALL
- REGISTRATION OPENS AT 7:00AM
- CONTEST BEGINS AT 8:00AM
- AWARDS FOR TOP 10 AND HIGH TEAM
- YOUTH OF ALL AGES ARE WELCOME



<https://www.judgingcard.com/Registration/Info.aspx?ID=24341>



2026 Sedgwick County 4-H Dairy Cow Showmanship Clinic



Saturday March 21, 2026

Time: 10:00-2:00

At the Sedgwick County Fair Grounds

Open to all 4-H exhibitors

Lunch Provided by Sedgwick County Farm Bureau



Clipping Demonstration

**Why and when to clip dairy cattle
Proper equipment and blade use**

Nutrition Lesson

**Basics of dairy cow nutrition
Feeding for growth, bloom, and body condition**

Showmanship Lesson

**What judges look for in showmanship
Proper attire and ring etiquette**

Hands-On Showmanship Practice

**Guided practice with live animals
One-on-one coaching and feedback
Mock showmanship run-through**



This institution is committed to providing equal opportunity for participation in all programs, services, and activities. Program information may be available in languages other than English. Language access requests and reasonable accommodations for persons with disabilities, including alternative means of communication (e.g., Braille, large print, and American Sign Language), may be requested by contacting the event contact Stephanie Hays four weeks prior to the start of the event at 316-660-0112 or sahayseksu.edu. Requests received after this date will be honored when it is feasible to do so. Language access services, such as interpretation or translation of vital information, will be provided free of charge to limited English proficient individuals upon request.

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Sedwick County 4-H



Dairy Goat Clinic and Practic Show



May 3, 2026



9:00-2:00



**Sedgwick County Fair Grounds
204 S Main Street Cheney, KS**



Clinic Highlights:

- ✓ Clipping Demonstration
- ✓ Nutritional Information
- ✓ Hoof Shearing Demo
- ✓ Showmanship Clinic

Show Highlights

Judge--Alicia Bigelow

- ✓ Showmanship Class
- ✓ Breed Class-You may bring up to two goats to practice with.

All Kansas 4-H youth are invited to attend

Please bring a goat or two.

Parents are welcome to participate.



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TEEN COUNCIL ACTIVITIES

For more information contact:

Lori Holt

316-660-0111

llholt@ksu.edu



Sedgwick County Extension Office

**Sedgwick County
4-H invites you to**

.....
**JOIN THE 4-H
TEEN COUNCIL**

*Meeting Times
4th Monday night of every
month
7:00 p.m.
Extension Office*

Open to any Sedgwick County 4-H Youth ages 13 and over.

Sedgwick County 4-H Teen Council provides an opportunity to work within your community with younger 4-Hers, participate in community service projects, get to know 4-H Teens from other county clubs and participate in leadership conferences and workshops.

An online meeting was held for Teen Council on Monday, January 26, 2026. The meeting was held online due to the extreme weather conditions and school being cancelled for most of the county. If it is too cold to attend school and too dangerous to be on the roads then it is too dangerous to travel for a 4-H meeting being held in the evening.

During our meeting we discussed the upcoming big event, Formal Dinner being held on the 7th of March at the Tallgrass Golf Club out east. This dinner is a big deal to all 4-H teens 13-18 years of age because they get to dress up, hang with their 4-H buddies, enjoy a delicious meal and learn about dinner etiquette at the same time.

There were several decisions made at the meeting such as the dinner theme, food options and entertainment. The theme will be "western" with the meal option being a meal prepared for the southern palate which tends to be more western. Options are fried chicken, country fried steak, fried catfish, and ribs. The committee will determine which meal option is best for our group at the next meeting. The entertainment will be dancing. One of our 4-H families found a swing dance instructor to come to our dinner to teach everyone swing dancing. The decision was made to bring in that instructor for that evening. The instructor will not be at the dance the entire time, but how exciting! So, the group needs song suggestions for the dance. These suggestions need to be sent to Knox or Brenden Crouch and their information is on the Constant Contact site. Thanks to Knox and Brenden! At the dinner there will be a lesson on table and dinner etiquette presented by, none other than, Mrs. Jennifer Brantley, our former extension director. She is now our regional director. Go, Mrs. Brantley! Registration for the formal dinner is at Constant Contact. The url is listed below. The cost for attending will be \$35 per individual. The payment can be made electronically, cash or by check which will need to be delivered or mailed to the office by the 5th of March.

<https://lp.constantcontactpages.com/ev/reg/6njpycv/lp/4bf2e5f3-9436-4b83-8ed1-6e59c9b06052>

If you have questions, please reach out to Lori Holt at 316-660-0111 or llholt@ksu.edu.





4-H and Youth Mental Health: How Participation Supports Well-Being

Written By Stephanie Hays, Sedgwick County 4-H Youth Development Agent

Young people today face increasing pressures, from academic expectations and social challenges to rising rates of anxiety and stress. In this context, programs like 4-H play a vital role not just in building life skills but also in supporting youth mental health. Participation in 4-H activities offers structured support, opportunities for meaningful engagement, and connection with nature, all factors linked with improved psychological well-being.

4-H and Youth Mental Health: The Impact by the Numbers

Youth mental health challenges are increasing nationwide, making supportive, research-based programs more important than ever. Participation in 4-H offers protective benefits for young people by providing structured activities, positive relationships, leadership opportunities, and meaningful connections to nature, all of which are linked to improved mental well-being.

The Current State of Youth Mental Health

Research indicates that mental health concerns among youth are widespread:

- An estimated 10–20% of children and adolescents worldwide experience mental health disorders, including anxiety and depression (Vella et al., 2022).
- In the United States, 7 out of 10 teens report struggling with mental health challenges, with 55% experiencing anxiety and 45% reporting high levels of stress (4-H, 2020).
- Additionally, 81% of youth believe mental health is a significant issue facing their generation (4-H, 2020).

These statistics highlight the urgent need for programs that foster emotional resilience and positive development.

How Organized Youth Programs Like 4-H Help

A comprehensive umbrella review examining organized youth activities, including 4-H clubs and community programs, found consistent links between participation and improved mental health outcomes (Vella et al., 2022). While effect sizes were generally small, findings were meaningful and consistent across studies.

Key findings include:

- Approximately 40% of children and adolescents globally participate in organized extracurricular activities, placing a large portion of youth in environments shown to support well-being (Vella et al., 2022).
- Youth involved in organized activities report higher self-esteem, greater emotional regulation, and stronger social connections compared to nonparticipants (Vella et al., 2022).
- Supportive adult mentorship and peer relationships, core components of 4-H, are identified as critical mechanisms for positive mental health outcomes.

4-H's positive youth development framework directly aligns with these protective factors by emphasizing belonging, skill-building, and purpose.

The Mental Health Benefits of Nature-Based 4-H Experiences

Many 4-H projects include outdoor and nature-based learning, which further enhances mental well-being. According to national 4-H research, regular exposure to natural environments is associated with:

- Lower stress and anxiety levels
- Reduced symptoms of sadness
- Improved mood and emotional balance (4-H, 2023)

Scientific research supports these findings, showing that time spent in nature can reduce cortisol (stress hormone) levels and promote psychological restoration in children and adolescents (Vella et al., 2022).

From gardening and livestock projects to environmental stewardship and outdoor recreation, 4-H naturally integrates these mental health benefits into everyday learning.

Long-Term Benefits Beyond the Program Year

Beyond immediate emotional support, 4-H helps youth develop lifelong skills that protect mental health:

- Youth who engage in structured community programs and service are 66% more likely to be considered “flourishing” and 35% less likely to experience behavioral challenges compared to peers who do not volunteer (Ballard et al., 2023).
- These skills, resilience, confidence, problem-solving, and social connection, serve as long-term buffers against stress and adversity.

Why 4-H Matters

In a time when youth mental health needs are growing, 4-H provides more than enrichment activities — it offers a research-supported environment that nurtures emotional well-being. Through structured engagement, trusted relationships, and nature-based learning, 4-H plays a vital role in helping young people thrive.

References

- 4-H. (2020). Teens' perspectives on mental health. National 4-H Council. <https://4-h.org/about/research/teen-perspectives/4%E2%80%91youth-mental-health-survey/>
- 4-H. (2023). Nature's path to improved youth mental health. National 4-H Council. <https://4-h.org/about/blog/natures-path-to-improved-youth-mental-health/>
- Ballard, P. J., Hoyt, L. T., & Pachucki, M. C. (2023). Impacts of adolescent volunteering on mental health and well-being. Time Magazine. <https://time.com/6283458/volunteering-good-for-kids-health/>
- Vella, S. A., Swann, C., Allen, M. S., Schweickle, M. J., & Magee, C. A. (2022). Impact of organized activities on mental health in children and adolescents: An umbrella review. PLOS ONE, 17(1), e0261413. <https://pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC8800068/>



**Beyond
Ready**



NEED PROJECT HELP?

Kansas 4-H Projects



Animal Science

Beef
Dairy Cattle
Dairy Goats
Dog
Horse
Meat Goats
Pets
Poultry
Rabbits
Sheep
Swine
Veterinary Science

Communication & Expressive Arts

Communications
Interior Design & Architecture
Performing Arts
Photography
Visual Arts

Engineering & Technology

Aerospace/Rocketry
Ag Mechanics Welding
Astronomy
Building Block Engineering
Computer Science
Electric & Renewable Energy
Robotics
Small Engines
Uncrewed Aircraft Systems
Woodworking

Family & Consumer Sciences

Family Studies
Fiber Arts (includes 9 projects)
Foods & Nutrition
Health & Wellness
Sewing & Textile Design
Shopping in Style

Leadership & Personal Development

Civic Engagement
Entrepreneurship
Leadership
Reading Adventures
Self-Determined

Natural Resources

Environmental Science
Geology
Shooting Sports (includes 10 projects)
Wildlife

Plant Sciences

Agronomy
Entomology
Forestry
Horticulture & Landscape Design

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Our Sedgwick County 4-H Curriculum library is packed with engaging, research-based project resources designed to make leading a 4-H project easier and more impactful. These materials provide ready-to-use lesson plans, hands-on activities, discussion guides, and project ideas that help bring 4-H projects to life. Checking out curriculum allows you to confidently teach new skills, spark youth curiosity, and enhance learning without having to start from scratch.

Leader-Friendly Checkout Statement

By checking out these 4-H curriculum materials, I acknowledge that they are the property of the Sedgwick County 4-H Program and agree to use them for 4-H educational purposes. I understand that I am responsible for returning all materials in good condition by the designated return date.

Follow this link for available project materials for checkout.

<https://www.sedgwick.k-state.edu/4-h-youth/forms-recordkeeping/4-H%20Curriculum%20for%20website.docx>

Why Starting 4-H Record Books Early Matters

One of the most important and often misunderstood part of the 4-H experience is the 4-H project record book. Record books are not meant to be busy work. They are a way for youth to reflect on what they have learned, recognize their growth, and tell the story of their 4-H year.

Our County-wide goal

Our goal in Sedgwick County is for every 4-H member to complete at least one record book each year. That record book does not have to be for every project a youth takes. Instead, we encourage youth to choose the project they worked the hardest on, enjoyed the most, or learned the most from, and focus their record keeping on that one project.

By starting with just one record book, youth can:

- Build confidence and success with the record book process
- Practice reflection and goal setting without feeling overwhelmed
- See record books as a tool for growth, not a burden



Why starting early makes a difference

When record books are started early and updated throughout the year, they become much easier and much more meaningful. Starting early:

- Reduces stress at the end of the year
- Helps youth remember important details and learning moments
- Encourages consistent skill-building and personal reflection
- Makes record books manageable and achievable for all ages

Record books are also an important foundation for future opportunities, including scholarships, awards, leadership roles, and even job or college applications. The skills learned through record keeping carry far beyond 4-H.

Support to help you succeed

To support youth and families, I have created step-by-step record book videos that explain how to complete each section and offer helpful tips along the way.

Record Book How-To Videos:

[How to complete Static Record Project Books](#)

[How to complete Livestock Record Project Books](#)

These videos are designed to be easy to follow and can be watched at home, during club meetings, or as a part of a project workshop.

YOU don't have to do this alone.

I want record books to feel approachable and doable for every family.

- I am happy to visit clubs to walk youth through record books and answer questions.
- I am also available to meet individually with youth or families who would like extra support or guidance.

Record books do not need to be perfect--they simply need to reflect effort, learning, and growth. Starting with one record book is a strong step toward building lifelong skills and confidence.

Let's work together to make record books a positive and successful part of every member's 4-H experience.

Steph



Kansas 4-H Day *with* K-State Women's Basketball



**K-State Wildcats Vs.
Iowa State**
WILL BE TELEVISED



Step 1: Pick a Package:

\$28 Package Includes:

- Ticket
- \$10 Concession Voucher
- T-Shirt

\$18 Package Includes:

- Ticket
- \$10 Concession Voucher

Step 2: Register to get Tickets:

Use the QR Code or the link to register



<https://tinyurl.com/5x84fp33>



Pick up ticket packages on game day 10:00 am - 12:30 pm
Location TBA closer to event.



Doors open for the general public at 12:00 pm



Tip-off at 1:00 pm

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<https://www.apa.org/topics/resilience>

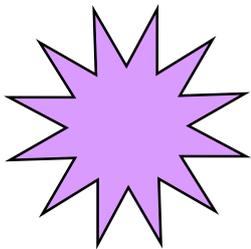
Online registration for this event will be due February 8, 2026. No paper registrations will be accepted.

Sunday, March 1, @ 1:00 PM



COUNTY SCHOLARSHIPS

Scholarships



Advisory Council
Scholarship

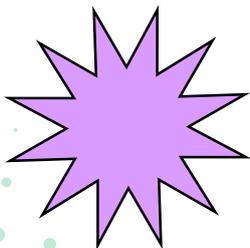
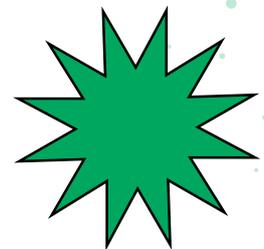
Application Form

**MARCH 15
DEADLINE**

Teen Council
Scholarship

Application Form

**MARCH 15
DEADLINE**



Livestock Scholarship

Application Form

**MARCH 15
DEADLINE**



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