



Dallas County 4-H Photography Contest

2025-2026 Rules and Guidelines

Last Revised: October 2025

PURPOSE

The Dallas County 4-H Photography Contest encourages self-expression and allows youth to demonstrate skills learned in the area of photography, including the use of photographic equipment and processing of photographs.

OBJECTIVES

- To develop skills in composition, light, story line, posing, and awareness.
- To gain knowledge about cameras, camera settings, photography dimension and resolution.
- To encourage 4-H members to use photography as a meaningful communication tool in their lives.
- To provide a photography project showcase opportunity for senior 4-H members.
- To continue to share the message of 4-H.
- To utilize photographs which can promote and strengthen the 4-H program.

<https://bit.ly/44wV9NS>

Scan or click
QR to register



RULES AND PROCEDURES

Participation Grades	Clover Buds K-2 Junior: grades 3-5; Intermediate: grades 6-8; Senior: grades 9-12 All ages of September 1, 2025
Photo Eligibility	All photos must be taken with a digital camera (smartphone cameras are included). Photo must be taken by participants between the dates of January 1, 2025 and the time of entry. Photos may be submitted only one time and in only one category.
Photo Format	Must be .jpeg, .jpg, Contestants may use any file naming structure. No RAW files or .png allowed. (updated; removed .png *Please remember to save each photo entry as "category_lastname_firstname.jpeg, or jpg.")
Qualifying from County	Each member may enter only one entry per category for a total of 18 entries. Dallas County will determine which photo will advance in the 18 categories. (Senior Members Only)
Entry Fee	There are no entry fees. However, this year we require that all photos be printed and mounted for display. The only cost involved will be for printing and mounting the images.
Photo Entry Method	Digital Submission: Members will submit digital photos through the Google form in using this link Matted photos: For display must be turned into the Dallas 4-H Office by deadline.
Deadlines & Entry Period	Submissions of the digital on Google Form opens January 5, 2026 and close on February 2, 2026, at 11:59pm. Mounted photos are due in our Dallas County Office, no later than 4:00 PM on February 16, 2026. **No late submissions will be accepted**

The members of Texas A&M AgriLife will provide equal opportunities in programs and activities, education, and employment to all persons regardless of race, color, sex, religion, national origin, age, disability, genetic information, veteran status, sexual orientation or gender identity and will strive to achieve full and equal employment opportunity throughout Texas A&M AgriLife.

Event Name	2025-2026 Dallas County 4-H Photography Contest
Ratio and Size	<p>Size Ratio: any size ratio, except for panoramic, is acceptable. For this contest, panoramic is defined as a photo with an aspect ratio of 3:1 or 1:3 or wider/taller. File Size: Photo must be a minimum of 1 MB (1,000 KB) and a maximum of 20 MB.</p> <p>*Seniors who qualify for State are responsible to submit photos with a maximum of 20MB.</p> <p>Tips: Upload the highest resolution possible. Review your photo at 100% size before uploading. Check your photo's file properties and/or metadata to ensure it meets the file size requirements. 1 MB (megabyte) is equivalent to 1,000 KB (kilobytes). Photos that are less than 1,000 KB do not meet the minimum file size requirement.</p>
Alterations	Color and Black & White photos are allowed in all categories. Although slight computer enhancements are allowed, such as cropping, minor adjustment of lighting, and red eye reduction; substantially altered photography, such as applying design styles, or using computer graphics will disqualify an entry. Any other alteration, manipulation, or edits to a photo would require the photo to be entered into the Enhanced category.
Text on Photographs	Photographs must not contain camera or user placed text. This includes such things as date stamps, comments, watermarks, or titles. Text or wording that is part of the original photograph (i.e. photo of a street sign, etc.) is acceptable.
Copyright/ Original Work of 4-H member	The entry must be the original photographic work of the 4-H member and not a photo taken by family members, other 4-H members, or secured from any other printed/electronic source. Any photo proven to be found as not original work will result in disqualification of ALL the 4-H member's entries into the Photography Contest. Additionally, actions may be taken against the 4-H member in regards to the Consequences of Misbehavior and Code of Conduct signed by the 4-H member.
AWARDS, DISPLAY AND JUDGING	
Awards and Recognition	<p>Quality Awards: Blue, Red, White, and Green (Participation ribbon) quality awards will be given based on the total score value. Score ranges for each award are outlined on the attached score sheet.</p> <p>Best of Category Awards: A Best of Category Ribbon will be awarded to the highest-scoring blue ribbon photo entry in each age division and category.</p> <p>*Senior level best of category photos will qualify to State Competition, member is responsible to submit to State by deadline.</p> <p>Best of Age Division: A Best of Age Division Rosette will be awarded.</p>
Judging and Results	For Quality Awards, each photograph will be judged against a set of judging criteria, and not against photographs of peers. Based on total points awarded for each photograph, the participant will be awarded either a blue, red, white, or a participation ribbon (outlined on the attached score sheet). The Best of Categories is a competitive process whereby judges will select the best photo within a given category. Volunteer judges will make those determinations and all decisions are final. Results will be available on the Dallas County 4-H Website after Judging is complete.

Roundup Display and Participation	<p>Print size: 8x10 inches. Mounting board: mounted photo to matboard (similar to this link), or mat cut flush to edge of photo without framing, no overhang or frame. Mat Color: Color of board does not matter as there is no frame or edge shown. Participant's name, club name (if applicable) category and age division must be labeled on the back. The mounted photos will first be displayed at Roundup. Another possible display location will be announced soon.</p> <p><u>Note: Participating in Roundup is optional for photography contestants; it's not a requirement.</u></p>
RELEASES	
Content	Photos that are deemed obscene, vulgar, sexually-oriented, hateful, threatening, or otherwise violate any decency standards or laws are strictly prohibited. The Texas 4-H Youth Development Program reserves the right to determine and refuse inappropriate or unsuitable entries.
Display and Future Usage Rights	By entry, the participant grants permission to the Texas 4-H Youth Development Program, Texas A&M AgriLife Extension, and any other public or private agency authorized by the Texas 4-H Youth Development Program, the use, and rights associated to the use of the photographic likeness, in promotional publications, and other media, without compensation. Certain photos may be used for 4-H program and marketing uses.
Model and Property Releases	It is required that each participant have sufficient permission granted to both the photographer and the Texas 4-H Youth Development Program to publish and use, as needed, any photo showing any recognizable locations or people photographed. Documentation should be retained by the participant and be available upon request from the Texas 4-H Youth Development Program.
Possible Reasons to Disqualify	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Broken content rule. This includes inappropriate or unsuitable content. • Broken copyright rule. Photo is not the original work of the 4-H member. This action is considered theft, which is a major offense in the Texas 4-H Rules & Guidelines. • Broken display and future rights usage rule. • Broken model and property release rule. • Category: Does not meet category criteria, rules or guidelines. (see category descriptions) • Category: Multiple county entries into a category. • Category: Same photo entered into multiple categories. County did not select/certify photograph to represent county by the deadline. • Entry fee not paid or only partial fee paid. • Extremely poor quality and/or low resolution causing the subject matter to be unrecognizable. • Manipulation of photo beyond what is allowed. <p>Disqualification for any reason will forfeit all entry fees. No refunds will be given.</p>
Appropriateness of Category	It is extremely important that participants, project leaders, parents or guardians, and/or County Extension Agents review the descriptions of each category very carefully. Do not enter photographs into categories that are duplicates from other categories or ones that do not clearly meet the category description. Photographs that do not meet the description of the category may be disqualified (judge's discretion).

Dallas County 4-H PHOTOGRAPHY CONTEST

2025-2026 CATEGORIES (all descriptions have been revised/simplified)

CATEGORY	DESCRIPTION	NOT ALLOWED
Animals – Domestic	Photos of domesticated animals adapted for human environments. Examples: dogs, cats, horses, pigs, chickens.	Wildlife, all waterfowl, zoo animals, or animals not under human care.
Animals – Wildlife	Photos of undomesticated animals in natural or zoo-like environments. Examples: deer, ducks, birds, snakes, whales.	Domesticated animals, livestock, or pets.
Catch-All	Photos that do not fit in any other category.	Duplicate entry of a photo already submitted in another category. Photo that belongs in another category.
Details & Macro	Close-up photos highlighting fine details or making small objects appear larger than life. Examples: insect eyes, veins on a leaf, water droplets.	Standard close-ups that don't emphasize fine details; digitally created "macro look" (heavily cropped to simulate a close-up)
Dominant Color	Photos where one specific color is the primary visual element. Examples: a bowl of lemons in strong yellow light.	Black & white, sepia, duotone, or multiple equally dominant colors.
Elements of Design	Photos emphasizing line, shape, pattern, form, texture, or perspective. Examples: repeating tile patterns, ripples in water showing repeating patterns, a spiral staircase showing perspective, textured bark on a tree, etc.	Digitally created or computer-generated designs (Photoshop, Illustrator, etc.).
Enhanced	Photos significantly manipulated or created using editing techniques. Examples: composites, stitched panoramas, artistic filters.	Use of stock, AI-generated, or non-original images.
Food	Still-life style photos highlighting food for artistic or commercial effect. Examples: meals, cakes, fruits, table settings.	Alcoholic beverages or photos where food is not the main subject.
Landscape & Nature (Non-Animal)	Photos of outdoor scenics and natural settings without animals as the main focus. Examples: gardens, seascapes, cityscapes.	People, man-made structures, or animals as the main subject.
Leading Line	Photos using lines to guide the viewer's eye toward the subject. Example: a river leading to a bridge.	Weak or implied lines that do not clearly guide the eye.
Long Exposure	Photos using extended shutter speeds to capture motion effects or low-light scenes. Examples: fireworks, night skies, light trails, waterfalls.	Images with artificial blur or digital effects simulating long exposure.
Motion/Action	Photos that capture and freeze movement. Examples: sports, running animals, spinning rides.	Images of objects that are typically stationary or slow-moving. Blurry or poorly focused photos unless intentionally artistic.
People	Photos of individuals or groups across all ages and activities. Examples: families, children, portraits, fashion, sports.	Photos without model consent; animals or objects as main subject.
Plant/Flora	Photos of a single flower, tree, bush, or plant as the primary subject. Examples: a rose, a tree's canopy. <i>(Large landscapes with multiple plants belong in Landscape & Nature.)</i>	Large landscapes where a single plant is not the central focus.
Reflections	Photos capturing mirrored images in water, glass, metal, or other reflective surfaces. Examples: lakes, puddles, water droplet, building facades.	Images where the reflection is not the primary subject.
Shadow/Silhouette	Photos where a shadow or silhouette is the primary subject against a brighter background. Examples: shadows of people, animals, or structures.	Images where the shadow or silhouette is not the primary subject.
Transportation	Photos showcasing vehicles or modes of travel. Examples: bustling urban streets, cars, buses, trains, boats, bicycles, airplanes, and rockets.	Images where transportation is background only, not the subject.
Theme – Volunteers in Action (New)	Celebrate the heart of Texas 4-H by capturing volunteers in meaningful moments of service. From mentoring youth and leading workshops to organizing events and supporting communities, showcasing the dedication, passion, and behind-the-scenes efforts of 4-H volunteers who make a difference every day.	Posed portraits without volunteer activity shown; photos where the subject is not a 4-H volunteer.

Dallas County 4-H Photography Contest Score Sheet



Name: _____ County: _____

Category: _____

You are competing against standards of excellence outlined below, not against your peers. Before preparing your entry for submission please carefully review the judging criteria. Based on total points awarded for each photograph, the participant will be awarded either a blue, red, white, or a participation ribbon.

JUDGES, PLEASE INDICATE POINTS AWARDED IN FAR-RIGHT COLUMN:

CATEGORY	JUDGING ELEMENT	POINT RANGE	POINTS AWARDED
Impact (Max Points: 15)	Impact is the sense one gets upon viewing an image for the first time. Compelling images evoke laughter, sadness, anger, pride, wonder or another intense emotion. There can be impact in any of the judging elements.	0-15	
Creativity (Max Points: 15)	Creativity is the original, fresh, and external expression of the imagination of the maker by using the medium to convey an idea, message or thought.	0-15	
Technical (Max Points: 20)	Technical is the quality of the image itself as it is presented for viewing, which includes the following aspects: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> allowable amounts of retouching and adjustments (removal of red eye, cropping, minor straightening) sharpness and correct color balance. lighting, which includes the use and control of light. The use of lighting whether natural or man-made and its proper use to enhance the image. posing and capturing of the image. 	0-20	
Difficulty (Max Points: 5)	Difficulty is the level of challenge in capturing the image. It takes into account factors such as lighting conditions, subject movement, timing, and setting. Higher scores reflect images where the photographer successfully managed more complex or demanding conditions.	0-5	
Composition (Max Points: 20)	Composition is important to the design of an image, bringing all of the visual elements together in concert to express the purpose of the image. Proper composition holds the viewer in the image and prompts the viewer to look where the creator intends. Effective composition can be pleasing or disturbing, depending on the intent of the image maker.	0-20	
Subject Matter (Max Points: 15)	Subject Matter should always be appropriate to the story being told (i.e. category the photo is entered into) in an image. Subject matter also includes the center of interest for the photograph or where the maker wants the viewer to stop and they view the image.	0-15	
Story Telling (Max Points: 10)	Story Telling refers to the image's ability to evoke imagination. One beautiful thing about art is that each viewer might collect his own message or read her own story in an image.	0-10	
TOTAL POINTS AWARDED			

AWARD (circle one)	Blue Award (100 points to 81 pts)	Red Award (80 to 51 pts)	White Award (50 to 31 pts)	Participant Award (30 to 0 pots)
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JUDGES COMMENTS: