



# TEXAS 4-H CONGRESS

## 2024 District 2 Information



Texas 4-H Congress is a four-day mock legislative experience for 4-H members going into 9<sup>th</sup> grade – through those who just graduated 12<sup>th</sup> Grade (at the time of the event). During this time, 4-H members assume the roles of legislators, lobbyists, and press corps to gain a first-hand understanding of how the legislative process works. Bills that are written and sponsored by 4-H members focus on issues concerning Texas and Texas youth. These bills are assigned to the appropriate committee, debated in committee meetings, and then on the floor of the House or Senate. If a bill is successful in negotiation and the legislative debate in all three stages, it is delivered to the Governor of Texas 4-H Congress for his or her signature or veto. Copies of all the bills that are signed into law during Texas 4-H Congress are provided to the Office of the Governor for review.

### Age Eligibility

Official grades for Texas 4-H Congress are members going into 9<sup>th</sup> grade – through those who just graduated 12<sup>th</sup> Grade (at the time of the event). This is a prestigious event reserved for older 4-H members. **Graduating seniors will also be able to apply. All youth wanting to participate as a D2 delegate must submit this application to be considered** <https://forms.gle/Z3smZ1snJniggE2Y6> (those applying for press corps or lobbyist do not have to do this, however if they are not selected for those positions, they will probably want to come back and complete the District Delegate application).

### Location

Headquarters for Texas 4-H Congress will be at the Sheraton Austin Hotel at the Capitol, 707 East 11th Street, Austin, Texas 78701.

### Dates to Remember for Texas 4-H Congress Participation

- February 5, 2024 Bill submission opens
- February 15, 2024 Lobbyist application opens on 4HOnline
- February 15, 2024 Press Corps application opens on 4HOnline
- March 10, 2024 D2 Senator & Representative [Applications](#) DUE!**
- March 14, 2024 Lobbyist application closes
- March 14, 2024 Press Corps application closes
- March 29, 2024 Lobbyist and Press Corps notification
- April 1, 2024 Early Bird Registration opens on 4HOnline
- April 30, 2024 Early Bird Registration closes on 4HOnline
- May 1, 2024 Registration continues on 4HOnline at an increased fee
- May 30, 2024 Bill submission closes
- May 30, 2024 Registration closes on 4HOnline
- July 1, 2024 Delegate Letters distributed
- July 1, 2024 Bill Book posted online

July 12, 2024	Texas 4-H Congress Leadership Team arrives
July 14, 2024	Congress Delegates and Chaperones arrive
July 17, 2024	All Participants depart

**Participation Costs**

Registration costs include hotel, meals, snacks, and production fees. Other costs that delegates may incur include transportation to and from Austin, meals in route to and from Austin, three (3) breakfast meals while in Austin, and incidental spending money.

REGISTRATION TYPE	EARLY BIRD REGISTRATION (Apr 1 – Apr 30)	REGULAR REGISTRATION (May 1 – May 30)
House/Senate/Press Corps/Lobbyist	\$425.00	\$500.00
Texas 4-H Congress Leadership	\$500.00	\$500.00

The registration cost of approximately \$425.00 is due in part to the assistance of more than \$100,000.00 from donors such as the Houston Livestock Show and Rodeo, Ed Rachal Foundation, and others. Without these gracious donors, the registration cost would be more than \$800.00 per person.

**Travel Information**

**Start Date: Sunday, July 14, 2024**

District Capitol Tour will be Sunday afternoon for those in town.

District 2 delegates must arrive at the hotel by 5:00 pm

Dinner starts at 6:00 p.m. followed by the Opening Session.

**End Date: Wednesday, July 17, 2024**

All Participants must depart the hotel by 10:00 am

Travel costs are not covered in the registration fees. THE DISTRICT WILL NOT MAKE TRAVEL ARRANGEMENTS FOR YOU. TRAVEL IS ON YOUR OWN. We will make one trip to the airport that afternoon to try and accommodate any D2 members flying in.

Parking is available at the hotel for approximately \$35.00 per day for self-parking at the hotel. Anyone with large vans, pickups, or other vehicles that will not be able to park in the garage will need to communicate with Congress Coordinator by May 1 to secure parking with the City of Austin along the streets.

**Submitting Legislative Bills**

Any 4-H member may submit a Texas 4-H Congress bill for consideration and debate. Participating in Congress is not a requirement. Writing and submitting a bill provides each 4-H member the opportunity to participate in an exercise in civic engagement.

**All participants in Texas 4-H Congress must submit a COMPLETE bill for consideration.**

“All” includes Texas 4-H Leadership Team, Lobbyists, Press Corps, and District Delegates. To accomplish the writing and submission of legislative bills, it is recommended that the County Extension Agent, or a volunteer, assist the youth in learning what a quality bill includes, how to write one, and then submitting the bill on-line. Refer to the Texas 4-H publication entitled “Understanding the Texas Legislative Process, A Guide for Participating in Texas 4-H Congress.” This publication is located on the Texas 4-H website. 4-H members from the same county, or other counties, are not allowed to submit the same bill for meeting this requirement.

**2024 Committees**

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|-------------------------------------|--|
| Agriculture and Livestock           | Education                              |
| Energy and Environment              | Government, Finance and Appropriations |
| Homeland Security and Public Safety | Judiciary and Juvenile Justice         |
| Public Health and Welfare           |  |

**Participant Communication, Dress and Forms**

All necessary forms for Texas 4-H Congress will be posted on the Texas 4-H Congress website, as well as sent electronically to each participant in the Texas 4-H Congress participant packet. Copies of all communications will be sent via e-mail to county and district offices.

Suggested attire for the event will also be emailed. Since this is a prestigious event and the 4-H members will be on the floor of the Texas House of Representatives and Senate, a coat and tie and slacks/khakis are to be worn by all males and professional style dresses, pant suits, skirts/blouse, slacks/blouse/blazers are to be worn by females at all official legislative events.

**Theme Party**

TBD

**Texas 4-H Congress Participant Roles**

- **House or Senate Members: REQUIRED TO APPLY AT THE DISTRICT LEVEL**
  - These roles are primarily for 4-H members that have never participated in Texas 4-H Congress. Members serving in the House or Senate should be prepared and able to speak about issues affecting Texas and Texas youth. Issues the 4-H member will be speaking about may or may not be related to the subject matter of the bill they submitted. House and Senate members will be participating in a variety of professional settings such as committee meetings, chamber sessions, and may be lobbied or questioned on different issues by the Lobbyist group and/or the Press Corps. Assignments are made by the State 4-H Office.
  
- **Lobbyists: APPLY AT STATE LEVEL THROUGH 4HONLINE**
  - The responsibility of the Lobbyist group is to identify certain bills and then lobby members of the House and Senate to either pass or defeat the bill. Lobbyist members should be prepared and be comfortable approaching others who may have a different opinion on legislative topics. The Lobbyist group will hold a private reception for certain House and Senate Members, along with Congress Leadership.

- Applications to be considered for a Lobbyist position will be submitted online through 4HOnline. The online application opens February 15 and closes March 17. Applicants will be notified whether they have been accepted to serve in the Lobbyist role. If not selected and space is available, they could apply to be part of the district delegation.
- **Press Corps: APPLY AT STATE LEVEL THROUGH 4HONLINE**
  - Texas 4-H Congress Press Corps members can be either first time or returning 4-H members. Individuals applying for the Press Corps should have strong skills in writing, word processing, interviewing, photography, and focused on making deadlines. The Press Corps group is responsible for publishing daily articles, videotaping, and helping maintain a Texas 4-H social media presence. Press Corps members may not be able to attend certain activities because of publication deadlines.
  - Applications to be considered for a Press Corp position will be submitted online through 4HOnline. Applications are open February 1 – March 17. Applicants will be notified of their selection to serve in the Press Corps. If not selected and space is available, they could apply to be part of the district delegation.
    - *Press Corps members allotted to participate up to 15*
- **Texas 4-H Congress Youth Leadership Team: ALREADY SELECTED**
  - Members of Texas 4-H Congress Leadership Team will assume key legislative roles throughout Texas 4-H Congress. Members will arrive in Austin on Friday before Congress begins between 3:00 PM and 5:00 PM. Leadership Team members will be involved in training and planning the two days prior to 4-H Congress to be able to effectively conduct the necessary business. It is a requirement that the selected Texas 4-H Congress Leadership Team members participate fully in Congress to participate in the leadership roles (beginning on Friday and ending on Wednesday).

There will be two D2 Agents serving as chaperones. Their contact information will be shared with D2 participants & parents. D2 participants will be put into a GroupMe with the chaperones for communication during the event. District 2 4-H Specialist, Bailee Wright, will also be in attendance and her contact information will be shared as well.