



KANSAS

SALUTE TO EXCELLENCE 2026

VOLUNTEER RECOGNITION AWARDS NOMINATION FORM

4-H is a community of young people across Kansas who are learning leadership, citizenship and life skills. Volunteers are the heartbeat of the 4-H program serving as mentors, teachers and friends. The National Salute to Excellence Volunteer Recognition Award recognizes 4-H volunteers who demonstrate exceptional service to 4-H. The Kansas Association 4-H Volunteers has adopted the Salute to Excellence award to recognize and promote Kansas 4-H volunteers who have excelled in their roles locally and continue with selecting Kansas' top volunteers for National competition. The Kansas Association of Volunteers believes establishing the Salute to Excellence Award will provide two options for the Kansas 4-H Program: 1) recognition of 4-H Volunteers for their outstanding contributions to 4-H youth and 2) enhance the mission and awareness of the Kansas Association of 4-H Volunteers.

Each extension unit will select their representative and submit their nominees electronically to the Department of 4-H Youth Development by **March 1, 2026**. These individuals then will have an opportunity to be selected as the ***Kansas Outstanding Lifetime Volunteer*** and ***Volunteer of the Year***. The two Kansas honorees then become Kansas' nominees for the North Central and National award.

I. Award Criteria

1. The ***Volunteer of the Year Award*** is for individuals who have served as 4-H volunteers for **less than 10 years** at the local, county, district or state level as determined before January 1, current year.
2. The ***Outstanding Lifetime Volunteer Award*** is for individuals who have served **10 or more years** at the local, county, district or state level as determined before January 1, current year.

II. Nomination Procedures

1. Nomination Packets must be submitted by **March 1, 2026**, to Kansas 4-H Youth Development (kansas4h@ksu.edu).
2. A completed nomination will consist of a nomination resume of the applicant's 4-H and relevant community volunteer experiences and three (3) letters of recommendation. Please use the enclosed template when developing the nomination packet. A packet missing any of the four components (resume and 3 letters of recommendation) will be eliminated.
3. Letters of recommendation must be no longer than 2 pages in length, in 12-point font with 1-inch margins. Letters of Recommendation should be written by individuals who can best describe the nominee's qualifications for the award such as a 4-H youth participant, another volunteer, etc.
4. Nominations/letters of recommendation **must address** the following selection criteria:
 - Positive impact the nominee has on 4-H and on 4-H youth
 - Nominee's ability to work with young people on projects and activities in a way that promotes decision-making, problem-solving, meeting challenges, mastery and youth/adult partnerships
 - Nominee's innovative approaches to engaging youth and increasing diversity among participants
 - How nominee exemplifies a "mentor-learner" relationship with participants
 - Dedication to a safe and inclusive environment
 - How nominee models character and professional behavior when interacting with participants, families, and community partners

- Nominee's innovative approaches to performing volunteer service
- Increased funding/resources generated by nominee
- Recruitment of additional 4-H volunteers
- Personal growth from being a 4-H volunteer (that you have observed)
- Letter writers should be aware of the scorecard and address the relevant points in developing their word documents.

Award Information

1. County/District Offices establish deadline for local application.
2. Local applications due to the Department of 4-H Youth Development, **in word document format**.
3. Kansas Salute to Excellence recipients are recognized at Emerald Circle Banquet. Honoree will receive a plaque.
4. Regional and National winners should be announced during the Spring of 2026.
5. National Honorees will receive a plaque or similar symbol representative of their achievement. Additionally, Council will donate \$1,000 in the Honoree's name to a local 4-H program of their choosing.
6. Awardees should be prepared to provide information in subsequent years regarding the impact of their awards on their community.

Volunteer RECOGNITION awards Application Template

Application Guidelines: (County/Districts may determine to participate)

1. Application materials must be submitted electronically in a **Word Document (do not put in pdf format)** by the nominator to the local Extension Office. Each County/District (one for each county represented) Extension Office will select one nominee for each category.
2. Each completed application must be accompanied by **three letters** of recommendation. Letters of recommendation must be written by a 4-H staff member, 4-H youth participant, another volunteer, or a parent/guardian. **Letters should be no longer than 2 pages in length, in 12-point font with 1-inch margins.**
3. A resume of 4-H experiences and community service must be included and should follow the template provided. It is limited to 3 pages in length, in 12-font with a one-inch margin.

Nomination for (check one):

- ☐ *Outstanding Lifetime Volunteer (10 or more years of service to 4-H)*
- ☐ *Volunteer of the Year (less than 10 years of service to 4-H)*

Please include a high quality, 600dpi headshot of the nominee. If selected, nominee's photo, name, state and 4-H highlights will be posted on the 4-H website.

Application must include:

Name:

Street address:

Post Office, State, zip code

Email:

County, State

A. Brief overview of why the nominee deserves this award (500 words or less):

B. Evidence of a positive impact on the lives of 4-H youth:

- *Demonstrated ability to work with young people in a way that promotes youth empowerment, decision-making, problem-solving, meeting challenges, and mastery.*
- *Nominee's dedication to youth/adult partnerships and developing mentor-learner relationships.*

C. Evidence of a positive impact on the 4-H program:

- *Nominee's innovative approaches to engaging new youth and increasing diversity among participants.*
- *Dedication to providing a safe and inclusive environment for youth.*
- *Nominee's innovative approaches to performing volunteer service, recruitment of additional 4-H volunteers, partnering with other youth serving agencies, fundraising, providing other resources for 4-H, advocacy for 4-H, etc.*

D. Personal attributes:

- *Evidence of professional attitude, character, and morals.*
- *Personal growth from being a 4-H volunteer (that you have observed).*

E. Personal involvement in 4-H:

- *List local 4-H roles (4-H Project Leader; Community 4-H Club Leader, etc.). Include summary of years, roles, and organizations.*
- *List County (Parish)/District 4-H roles (County Extension Committee, etc.). Include summary of years, roles, and organizations.*
- *List State/Regional/National 4-H roles (Regional 4-H Volunteer Leader Forum Planning Committee, etc.). Include summary of years, roles, and organizations.*
- *List relevant 4-H honors/awards and years received.*
- *List relevant non-4-H volunteer roles. Include a summary of years, roles, and organizations.*

INCOMPLETE OR INAPPROPRIATE FORMATTED APPLICATIONS WILL BE DISQUALIFIED

WORD Document do NOT put in pdf format