University *of* California
Agriculture and Natural Resources

Guidelines for 4-H Premium Awards

These guidelines are established to help ensure that there is equity in the 4-H unit, county and state requirements for premium awards, such as youth monetary awards, grants, scholarships and other leadership and development opportunities available to 4-H youth. All 4-H programs are encouraged to use the language in this document for award applications.

The goal is to remove barriers to opportunities for youth regardless of their degree of participation or primary delivery mode.

Applicants for 4-H higher education scholarships should be:
- A current high school senior, graduate, or equivalent who is already enrolled in **or** accepted to an institution of higher education. Institutions of higher education include accredited vocational schools, colleges or universities.
- Enrolled in the California 4-H Youth Development Program at the time of high school graduation or equivalent, such as receiving a General Education Diploma (GED).
- Enrolled or planning to enroll in at least half of the full-time course load as defined by the applicant's institution.
- Not older than 25 as of December 31st of the application year.

Applicants for other monetary, leadership and other development opportunities can be required to complete application criteria that is related to the award.

Below is a table summarizing what requirements are acceptable and unacceptable to ask in the application process for any premium award. More details on each of these bullet points can be found below.

What You CAN Ask or Require	What You CANNOT Ask or Require
- Academic transcripts or GPA - Proof of enrollment or acceptance to an institution of higher education - Resume (4-H or other format) - An interview specific to the award - Leadership positions held *if* directly related to the award - Letters of recommendation - Essays or short answer prompts relevant to the requirements	- A Record Book or any parts of a Record Book (other than the 4-H Resume) - Star Ranks achieved - Financial information beyond establishing the Federal Poverty Guidelines * (see page 3)

Acceptable Application Requirements

The following items **may be included** as application requirements for 4-H premium awards. Premium award applications may include one or more items from the list below:

- Academic transcripts (official or unofficial)
- Proof of enrollment in or acceptance to an institution of higher education
- Resume (4-H or another format)
- An interview is acceptable if the interview is about youth engagement specific to the award. The interview may not be used to ask extensive questions that mimic what is normally reported in the Record Book.
- Leadership positions held either inside or outside of 4-H as long as the request for this information is directly related to the type of award. For example, youth who apply for financial assistance to attend State Leadership Conference may be asked leadership role and experience questions because it is directly related to the event.
- Letters of recommendation
    - One 4-H advisor, program representative, or adult volunteer reference and one professional reference outside of 4-H (community, work or school related) are recommended
- Essay or short-answer questions related to the intent of the award (500 words maximum per essay). Examples of acceptable essay or short-answer prompts:

    1. Describe your experiences volunteering in the community, inside and outside of the 4-H Youth Development Program. How did these experiences help shape you as a young person?

    2. How did your 4-H experiences influence your career aspirations and desire to pursue higher education?

    3. What strengths and leadership skills have you gained through the 4-H Youth Development Program?

    4. In the future, how will you utilize what you have learned in the 4-H Youth Development Program?

    5. Describe one meaningful citizenship or service learning experience. What did you gain from this experience and what did you give back to the community?

Unacceptable Application Requirements

The following items shall **NOT** be required for any 4-H premium awards at any level for any reason:

- A 4-H Record Book or any individual elements of the 4-H Record Book, except for the 4-H Resume.
  - o   No requirement for an Annual Project Report, a Personal Development Report, a Leadership Development Report, a 4-H Story, and/or a Collection of Work.
- Achievement of specific Star Ranks, as Star Ranks are achieved via the 4-H Record Book process.
- Financial records and information*

**Financial Need-Based Awards*

In the case of endowments or donors who specify that premium awards are to be awarded based on financial need only, the following language **MUST** be used:

To determine eligibility for financial assistance, please indicate if the following applies to your household:

Household monthly cash income is at or below 185% of the Federal Poverty guidelines. This criterion is met if one or more children in the household are eligible for or enrolled in free or reduced-price school breakfast or lunch. (Reference: http://www.fns.usda.gov/cnd/governance/notices/iegs/iegs.htm)

❑ My household meets this criterion.
❑ My household does *not* meet this criterion.

Note: The UC reserves the right to verify the above information by further reviewing the household financial status with the parent/guardian.

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Include this tax disclaimer on application forms:

Funds for qualified educational expenses (e.g., books, tuition, other required fees) that are provided to scholarship awardees, are not taxable for the recipient. When scholarship awardees receive funds that may be used for nonqualified expenses, then the recipient is responsible for reporting to IRS the amount of funds received as taxable income. Please consult with a tax professional regarding your individual tax situation

Guidelines for Ethical Premium Award Evaluation Committees

1. Premium award evaluation committees must consist of at least three (3) people, only one of which may be a youth member and who is not applying for an award in that category.

2. Committee members must disclose any relationship with applicants.

3. No member of the committee may be a relative of an applicant.

4. Committee members must have a working knowledge of the 4-H program OR be advised by a 4-H volunteer or staff member.

5. Premium award administration must be consistent with the UC ANR Nondiscrimination Policy.

If the unit is struggling to abide by these guidelines due to donor wishes, please contact UCCE 4-H staff for assistance.

If the county is struggling to abide by these guidelines due to donor wishes, please contact the State 4-H Office, Incentives and Recognition Advisory Committee Chair.