



Ventura County 4-H Emerald Star Program Information

The Emerald Star is an award given to a 4-H member for planning and implementing an advanced leadership activity from beginning to end. The Emerald Star is separate from the state star rank system; it provides members the opportunity to enter the star rank system without having to earn the Bronze, Silver, Gold, and Platinum Stars. Each Emerald Star application will be evaluated for its value to the Ventura County 4-H Youth Development Program, value to the community, practicality, and feasibility.

4-H members are eligible to receive one Emerald Star. The Emerald Star patch is awarded after the project has been completed, evaluated and approved by the Emerald Star Committee. There is no limit on the number of applicants who can apply for or earn the Emerald Star at any given time.

Members are responsible for securing a knowledgeable adult to serve as their Emerald Star Mentor. The Mentor's role is to help the member select and implement a project and give guidance and encouragement. Mentors must be an authorized/trained 4-H volunteer.

Qualifications

Any Ventura County 4-H member who has been in 4-H for at least two years and is at least 13 years old as of Dec. 31st of the current program year. Has not previously completed an Emerald Star project.

The Emerald Star Project's Purpose is to:

- Strengthen life skills through project work in 4-H beyond the club level or within the greater community.
- Improve, create, and be involved in a leadership opportunity without requiring a previous star rank.
- Help grow and improve 4-H'ers in areas of organization, leadership, and planning a project from beginning to end.

Application Process:

- Think about what you want to do for your project. Talk to your project leader and other adults if you are unsure what needs in your community could be served by an Emerald Star project.
 - Is it something useful? Is it something that is needed in the county/community?
 - Does it provide a chance for you to demonstrate leadership beyond the project level in your own club?
 - Is it a project you can handle - complexity, cost, time, skills you have or can acquire, people involved, etc.?
 - Has a time schedule been prepared that is feasible?
- Review your plan with your 4-H Club Leader before submitting to committee.



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- Select and meet with your Emerald Star Mentor and plan your Emerald Star Project.
 - Mentor is requested by the Emerald Star Applicant prior to the submission of the Application.
 - Mentor must be an appointed, fingerprinted, trained volunteer (a non-leader can become a volunteer to be a mentor; contact the 4-H office for information).
 - Mentor should be willing to support the Emerald Star applicant by brainstorming, providing feedback and suggestions, assisting with problem-solving, etc. without completing any portion of the project for the applicant.
 - Mentor will review the Emerald Star Application prior to submission, attend approval interview with member and Emerald Star Committee, and check-in regularly with member(s) on progress.
- Prepare an application form. If more than one person is working on the project, a single application form for both members can be submitted (Section I is completed as a team, Section II is completed individually).
- Present your project plan to the Emerald Star Committee for approval.
- Complete your project!
- Prepare a final report/presentation for the Emerald Star Committee and County Management Board
 - Dress in business attire or the 4-H uniform.
 - Bring completed final report/presentation and all documents and materials (e.g. video, PowerPoint, information pamphlet, manual) that were developed during the project.
- After the final presentation, the committee signs final approval and the applicant puts complete, signed forms in his/her record book.
- Patch and certificate will be presented at the County Awards/Recognition and/or County Management Board Meeting and/or Club Meeting.

Projects may be

- Something new that has never been done before
- A *major* expansion or revision of an existing countywide 4-H event
- An event or activity involving more than one club
- A community activity involving a group, to serve the needs of an individual or individuals, or to serve an educational purpose

Ideally, Emerald Star projects should be completed successfully. However, a 4-H member *may* receive the Emerald Star even if his/her project is not successful. The end of project evaluation will assess how well the 4-H member planned, tried to implement (including revision of their plans) and evaluated his/her own efforts. These factors will be considered when determining if the member will receive the Emerald Star.



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Examples of Emerald Star Projects**:

- Develop and lead a countywide project
- Plan and carry out a learning day (e.g. project showmanship, showmanship clinic), a project workshop or training day, and/or judging contests
- Plan and carry out a community pride, outreach, or service learning project (Make a slide show, video, podcast, public access TV show, webinar)
- Prepare or improve educational materials in a project area for countywide use, such as a video, slide show, information pamphlet, or manual
- Develop project manuals or workbooks
- Develop leader teaching aids for projects or skills or to promote the program
- Plan and conduct training at local 4-H clubs on selected topics such as presentations, record books, officer training, citizenship etc.
- Plan and carry out a community service project such as a park clean-up day, Thanksgiving for the homeless, animal adoption
- Write a project member handbook and submit it to the 4-H office for future use
- Write a grant to bring programs and/or resources to the county program

Be creative! Be sure to include others in your plan so you can demonstrate your ability to provide leadership to others.

***A plan can involve something that has been done before and needs to be done again and improved, or it can be something that no one has ever done but that fulfills some kind of need in the 4-H program or community.*