

Manitowoc County 4-H

Key Award Application Packet

All Materials Due: March 1

This packet contains:

Information and How to Apply

- Overview of 4-H Key Award
- The Application Process: It's All about Life Skills!

Application Materials

- Essay Question
- Adult Recommendation Form

Resources to Help You Be Successful

- Tips for Composing Your Cover Letter and Resume
- Cover Letter Outline and Sample Cover Letter
- Resume Outline and Sample Resume
- Life Skills Wheel
- Power Verbs for Resumes

THE FINAL PRODUCT: Due March 1

- Cover Letter
- Resume
- One page response to essay question
- One adult letter recommendation form from an adult who is familiar with your 4-H work and involvement (not a relative). This should be mailed separately.

Your application packet can be dropped off or mailed to:

Manitowoc County Extension Office
705 Viebahn Street
Manitowoc, WI 54220

OR

Emailed to: katrina.pionek@wisc.edu

Wisconsin 4-H Key Award

This award recognizes members in 11th grade and older who have shown consistent growth in their 4-H program, who have developed their leadership ability, and who have been helpful to other members in their club and community. You must have completed at least three years of 4-H club membership and one year of youth leadership. Up to 2 members may be selected in one year.

The Application Process: It's All about Life Skills!

The Manitowoc County 4-H Awards Committee uses an application process to support you in building life skills as you pursue extraordinary 4-H opportunities. These are the components of the process and the life skills on which they focus:

Part 1: You must complete a cover letter, resume, and essay and collect a recommendation letter to submit as a written application. You must also use self-discipline to prepare the materials and ensure they are submitted on time. Working on the written application materials builds record keeping and communication skills while simultaneously preparing you for the workforce. You will need to write about your 4-H experiences in a way that highlights the practical skills you have developed. 4-H adult volunteers who serve on the Awards Committee will review the written application materials.

Part 2: You will receive notification about whether or not you were selected for the Key Award. You can build resilience and character as you receive feedback on what you did well and what you could improve on if you were to apply again.

ESSAY QUESTION

Include in your application packet a one-page response to this essay prompt:

4-H has helped me to become a better community member by....

Tips for completing your essay response:

- Choose a common and professional font, such as Arial or Times New Roman. Your font size should be no less than 11 point and no larger than 12 point. Use the same font throughout your document.
- Include your name, grade, and 4-H club at the top of the page for your essay response.
- The essay response should be single-spaced.
- Use 1" margins at the top, bottom, and both sides of your page.
- Your essay response should be no more than one page long.
- Include information from throughout your 4-H experience.
- Be thoughtful and honest in your response.
- Proofread your essay response and have someone else proofread it as well for accuracy in grammar and spelling.
- You will be evaluated by your depth of thought and how clearly you can communicate.

ADULT RECOMMENDATION

The following applicant, _____, is applying to be selected as a 4-H Key Award recipient. You have been identified as a person who could speak to their qualifications for this award.

Please complete the following recommendation and return it as directed below.

Below or on a separate sheet, please explain why the applicant is deserving of the honor. Feel free to describe the applicant's leadership skills (such as communication, listening skills, presentation skills, self-confidence, teamwork, time management, responsibility, etc.), as well as any additional information that would be helpful to the selection committee.

Name (print): _____

Signature: _____

Title/Relationship to Applicant: _____

Recommendations should be sent directly to:

Manitowoc County Extension
Attn: 4-H Leaders Association
705 Viebahn Street
Manitowoc, WI 54220
Or
Katrina.pionek@wisc.edu

DEADLINE DATE: March 1

TIPS FOR COMPOSING YOUR COVER LETTER AND RESUME

- Use a computer. You can save your work and make revisions as necessary from year to year. The cover letter, resume, and essay questions must be typed with a computer.
- Plan ahead. Go through each part of the resume and cover letter before typing. Collect your thoughts and use the guide materials in this packet. Translate your skills into action oriented, concise descriptions. As much as possible, think of your 4-H experience as a job. What do you do? What skills have you developed and how have you personally changed because of your 4-H experience?
- Order is important. Resumes are typically put together by organizing information in the order that it happened. Arrange information in reverse chronological order (most recent first) within the sections designated in the examples in this packet.
- Consider layout, design, and abbreviations. Your cover letter and resume should be easy to read and understand. Arrange your resume as illustrated in the sample copy provided. Choose a common and professional font, such as Arial or Times New Roman. Your font size should be no less than 11 point and no larger than 12 point. Use the same font throughout your application documents. Use between .5" and 1" margins at the top, bottom, and both sides of your page. Avoid using too many abbreviations, as not everyone is familiar with them. If you do use an abbreviation, please include what it means in parentheses after the abbreviation the first time it is used in the resume.
- Your resume may be one to two pages long, but no more than two pages.
- Keep your cover letter to one page in length. It should not just repeat the resume but instead should tell a story that makes your resume come to life. Use the cover letter to show your passion for 4-H and why you want to be recognized with a 4-H Key Award.
- Individualize it. This is YOUR resume and cover letter. Add your own personality to it.
- Proofread it. Your documents should be free of spelling and grammatical errors. Use spell check and follow up by having at least two other people proofread your cover letter, resume, and essay response. This is where many people make minor mistakes! Don't lose points in the process by forgetting to proofread your documents.
- Use the 4-H name and emblem correctly while you are writing your resume and cover letter. Here are some tips from the National 4-H Council:
 - When writing the term "4-H", it should be the numeral "4" separated from a capital "H" with a hyphen (not a dash, slash, or space).
 - It is well documented in English usage, as well as in the most familiar style manuals, that you should never begin a sentence with a numeral. To comply with this rule, you would need to begin a sentence using "Four-H." This language rule, however, is contrary to the regulations set down for use of the 4-H Name and Emblem, since you are always supposed to write "4-H." if such a situation comes up as you write your cover letter or resume, try to re-word the sentence so that it does not start with the term "4-H".
 - Avoid separation of any of the elements of the 4-H name at the end of sentences. This can sometimes be difficult because some software programs override use commands. Often, this does not become visible until after you have printed your documents. Be sure to proofread to avoid this.
- Ask for help if you need it! If you have never gone through this process, you will probably have questions. Don't hesitate to ask! Email Katrina Pionek, 4-H Educator, at Katrina.pionek@wisc.edu with questions, or call her office at 920-683-4172. Make sure to ask questions or get clarification if you don't understand something.

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|-----------------------------|
| COVER LETTER OUTLINE |
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Date (Note: Use a font size no smaller than 11 pt. and no larger than 12 pt.)

Extension Manitowoc County
Attention: Manitowoc 4-H Leaders Association Awards Committee
705 Viebahn Street
Manitowoc, WI 54220

Dear Selection Committee:

PARAGRAPH 1: What are you sending and why are you sending it? Include the name of the award for which you want to be considered (Key Award).

PARAGRAPHS 2 & 3: These are the “why me?” paragraphs. Explain in no more than two paragraphs why you are uniquely qualified to represent Manitowoc County 4-H. Ask yourself what distinguishes you from other applicants. Also share why you are interested in receiving this award.

FINAL PARAGRAPH: Close the letter. Thank the committee for considering your application.

Sincerely,

Type Your Name Here As You Will Sign It Above

(Don’t forget to sign your letter!)

IMPORTANT: Please compose the cover letter in your own words, not in the exact words from the sample on the next page!

Cover Letter Sample

February 23, 2026

Extension Manitowoc County
Attention: Manitowoc 4-H Leaders Association Awards Committee
705 Viebahn Street
Manitowoc, WI 54220

Dear Selection Committee:

It is my pleasure to submit my resume and essay response to be considered for the Wisconsin 4-H Key Award.

This is my seventh year as a 4-H member. I have been very active with my projects and as a member of my club, Lucky Clovers. My enclosed resume highlights my 4-H involvement.

4-H has provided me with some great experiences. I have increased my communication skills by participating in the Creative Arts Festival, as well as serving as secretary for my club. I have learned to give back to my community by helping with my club's senior citizens holiday party and helping at the local food pantry.

Last year I became involved as a Cloverbud project youth leader. I enjoyed working with other youth and adults from Manitowoc County to plan the county Cloverbud events and workshops. I had to learn to work as part of a planning team to get ready for a program. One of my jobs was preparing packets of craft project materials before a meeting and then teaching the craft to Cloverbuds. This was a chance for me to use my organizational and leadership skills.

Thank you for considering my application.

Sincerely,

Chris Clover

Chris Clover

Resume Outline

NAME

ADDRESS LINE 1

ADDRESS LINE 2

PHONE NUMBER

E-MAIL

Education

School name, grade in school

4-H Summary

4-H club name, years in 4-H as of 3rd grade. List all projects in which you are or have been enrolled. Include the number of years you have been or were a member of that project. Indicate in which projects you are currently enrolled.

4-H Activity Involvement

Summarize the 4-H activities in which you have participated and the number of years you participated. Include both club and county involvement.

Skill Development

Translate what you have learned as a result of participation in 4-H projects and activities into skills you have developed.

Personal Development

Translate what you have personally gained as a result of participation in 4-H projects and activities into personal attributes.

Other Activities

In this section, include school activities, work experience, or other community/extracurricular activities and the number of years you participated.

IMPORTANT: Please compose the resume in your own words, not in the exact words from the sample on the next page!

SAMPLE RESUME

CHRIS CLOVER
705 Viebahn Street
Manitowoc, WI 54220
920-683-4172
4hrocks@email.com

EDUCATION Clover High School, 11th grade

4-H SUMMARY Lucky Clovers 4-H Club, 6 years
Arts & Crafts, Archery, Photography, Sheep, 5 years (current projects)
Foods & Nutrition, 3 years
Poultry, 2 years

4-H ACTIVITY INVOLVEMENT

Club:

Offices held: Reporter, Treasurer, Vice President
Fundraising Committee, 2023-2025
Village Parade, 2022-2025
Adopt-a-Highway, 2018-2025

County:

Teen Council, 2025-2026
Pinewood Derby, 2025
Creative Arts Festival, 2022-2025
Summer Camp Counselor, 2021-2025

State:

4-H American Spirit, 2023
Art Team, 2023-2025

SKILL DEVELOPMENT

- Gained knowledge of effective photograph composition
- Developed proficient knowledge of sheep nutrition, fitting, and showing
- Identified optimum feeding rations for animals, staying within family budget and utilizing crops produced
- Advanced showmanship skills through workshops and competition experiences
- Collected 57 pairs of mittens for community service project
- Documented growth and learning in project areas annually through record book
- Strengthened organizational skills through arrangement of state art exhibit featuring over 100 pieces of artwork

PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT

- Strengthened communication skills, including spoken and written
- Grew as a team player and role model
- Exhibited sportsmanship in and out of competitive situations
- Organized special events and meetings while paying close attention to detail
- Used parliamentary procedure to manage club meetings with over 30 members
- Taught groups of up to 10 younger members in sheep, arts & crafts, and archery
- Worked with peers, younger members, and adults on multiple committees

ACTIVITIES

- Dish Washer at Tasty Restaurant, 2020-2025
- Community Choir, 2022-2025
- Forestville High School Soccer Team, 2024-2025



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Based in part on the Cooperative Extension work, Acts of May 8 and June 26, 1914, in cooperation with the U.S. Department of Agriculture, Carlsson A. Frost, director, Cooperative Extension Service, Iowa State University of Science and Technology, Ames, Iowa.

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POWER VERBS FOR RESUMES

As you write the Skill Development and Personal Development sections of your resume, you should use “power verbs.” Power verbs imply a strong message. Below is a list of power verbs that might apply to the life skills that you have developed through your 4-H experiences. This list is just the beginning. Consult a thesaurus for more action verb ideas. As you write your bulleted statements, be sure to use a variety of verbs versus the same verb over and over.

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|--------------|-------------|--------------|-----------------|
| Achieved | Developed | Logged | Researched |
| Adapted | Devised | Maintained | Resolved |
| Administered | Diagnosed | Managed | Restored |
| Advised | Directed | Marketed | Reviewed |
| Analyzed | Discovered | Maximized | Revised |
| Arranged | Distributed | Modified | Revitalized |
| Assembled | Enhanced | Motivated | Secured |
| Assessed | Established | Navigated | Selected |
| Assisted | Evaluated | Negotiated | Served |
| Budgeted | Examined | Obtained | Showed |
| Built | Executed | Operated | Simplified |
| Calculated | Expanded | Optimized | Solved |
| Collected | Expedited | Organized | Started |
| Coached | Facilitated | Originated | Stimulated |
| Communicated | Formed | Performed | Streamlined |
| Compiled | Formulated | Planned | Strengthened |
| Completed | Generated | Prepared | Summarized |
| Composed | Guided | Presented | Supervised |
| Computed | Handled | Produced | Supplied |
| Concluded | Identified | Promoted | Taught |
| Condensed | Illustrated | Processed | Tested |
| Conducted | Implemented | Proposed | Trained |
| Convinced | Improved | Provided | Transferred |
| Coordinated | Increased | Put together | Updated |
| Corrected | Initiated | Realized | Upgraded |
| Created | Innovated | Received | Utilized |
| Critiqued | Installed | Recommended | Verified |
| Decided | Instituted | Recorded | Was responsible |
| Delegated | Instructed | Recruited | for |
| Delivered | Integrated | Reduced | Wrote |
| Demonstrated | Introduced | Repaired | |
| Designed | Invented | Replaced | |
| Determined | Launched | Reported | Represented |

This packet was adopted by Katrina Pionek, 4-H Youth Educator for Manitowoc County. It is based on materials from Washington County 4-H.