



Introduction And History Of The Gold Star

The Gold Star Award is the highest achievement award given by the Texas 4-H Youth Development Program through the county 4-H Program. The Texas 4-H Gold Star Award can only be awarded once in a member's 4-H career.

The presentation of the Gold Star Pin began in 1933, the first year Mr. E.C. Martin was the Boys 4-H Club Specialist. Mr. Martin tells us the pin was prompted by an effort to recognize the people who did the work rather than the agents. Previous to this time, the agents submitting the largest number of 4-H records received the recognition.

Records in the Extension Fiscal office indicates that the first Gold Star Pins were purchased in 1933. For the first several years the Gold Star Pins were presented at a dinner during Short Course at College Station. In the beginning each county made a nomination of their outstanding 4-H member and 100 members were selected to receive the award. After several years, the awards were presented to the outstanding 4-H boy and girl in each county.

How Quotas Are Determined

Each county 4-H Program is provided a quota annually of the number of Gold Star Awards that can be awarded. These quotas are determined based on the total number of youth in 4-H Clubs in grades 10th to Post High School who have participated in the county program during the **2018-2019** year. Each county is guaranteed a minimum number of at least two Gold Stars annually. Quota numbers are calculated using the ES-237 report from 4-H CONNECT. (Enrollment-Reports-Previous Year-Quick Exports-ES237-Youth(Members): By County)

A list of the counties with their ES-237 enrollment and Gold Star Quota is provided. If additional Gold Stars are needed for very special circumstances, they are to be requested by the County Extension Agent to both the District Extension Administrator and 4-H Specialist. The request should include a clear justification for the additional Gold Star Award.

Quotas have been determined based on the following enrollment guidelines:

1 to 100 youth	2 Gold Star Winners
101 to 250 youth	3 Gold Star Winners
251 to 450 youth	4 Gold Star Winners
451 to 700 youth	5 Gold Star Winners
701 and over	6 Gold Star Winners

The Texas 4-H Gold Star award is presented to the most deserving young people without regard to gender.

Requirements For The Texas 4-H Gold Star

As the highest award given by the Texas 4-H Youth Development Program, County Offices and Agents are asked to maintain a high level of integrity and honor through their selection process of county Gold Star recipients. At the minimum, the following guidelines should be used in the eligibility and selection process for each county:

- The member must have at least completed their 9th grade school year at the time of application, and must have completed at least 3 years in 4-H, including the current year.
- The Texas 4-H Gold Star Award can only be awarded once in a member's 4-H career.
- The 4-H member must have completed projects in at least three different project areas, submitted appropriate record forms, and have participated in one or more activities in at least three of the following areas:
 - Projects and/or project exhibits
 - Participation in leadership experiences such as Leadership Labs, Texas 4-H Congress, or National leadership events such as National 4-H Congress/Conference, and any county, district, or state leadership group.
 - Competitive events (judging, educational presentation, public speaking, food show, quiz bowls, etc).
 - Citizenship service activities
 - Camps at the county, district, or state level.
 - 4-H Promotion (speeches, poster displays, radio, TV, newspapers)
 - Other (includes exchange programs, fund raising)

Note: The requirements for projects and activities do not all have to be completed in the current year. They may have been accomplished over the entire period of time the person has been in the program.

- The member must have exhibited leadership skills by serving as a 4-H officer or committee chair (club, county, district or state), and/or as a junior or teen leader in an activity or project with or under the supervision of an adult volunteer leader.
- The 4-H member must have participated in one or more community service activities. Examples include providing leadership to a One Day 4-H project, working with or mentoring junior 4-H members; participating in community service projects (individual, group or club); and motivating other 4-H members through participation in demonstrations, projects and/or exhibits.
- The 4-H member must submit a Texas 4-H record book in the year they are to be considered for the award.

Recipient Selection Process

Because the Texas 4-H Gold Star is the highest award given to a 4-H member in Texas, the selection of each award recipient should be completed through a process that ensures the integrity and honor of the award, as well as provide the highest level of respect and consideration for the 4-H member applying.

All award opportunities, not just the Texas 4-H Gold Star Award, should be announced county wide through all communication methods utilized by the County Extension Office. This may include county newsletter, social media, e-mail blast, etc. Additionally, each club manager should be notified with the information.

The selection process should be completed by a unbiased selection committee who has a vast knowledge about 4-H in general, but who is not directly associated with any of the applicants. To achieve an unbiased committee it may be necessary for the County Office/ Agent to recruit individuals from other counties to serve. An Extension Agent or Extension support staff member from the county selecting recipients should never serve on the selection committee. Additionally, no parent, sibling, or relative of an applicant should ever serve on the selection committee.

Once a committee selects the recipients, all parties involved in the awarding and recognition process should respect and honor the decision of the selection committee. If it is determined that an issue has arisen during the selection process, the County Extension Agent should contact their District Extension Administrator and District 4-H Specialist immediately for direction.

The minimum requirements to receive the Texas 4-H Gold Star Award is the submission of a Texas 4-H record book, a Gold Star application, and an interview.

In preparation for interviews, the following guidelines should be considered:

- Announce interview date, time, and location in ample time (minimum 4 to 6 months) so all award applicants have time to determine their availability.
- Be consistent in any process of allowing an applicant to interview through other methods beyond a face-to-face interview. If one applicant is allowed to call in using a phone, then all other applicants should be allowed the same opportunity. Regardless of the interview method used, each applicant should be reviewed fairly and equally.
- A scoring matrix should be used to ensure integrity of the selection process. This includes both the record book/application and interview process.
- Use the same judges to select all the Gold Star award recipients.
- Applicants should be orientated either in writing or verbally about the format of the interview, including style of questions, number of judges, expectation of dress, etc. County Extension Agent expectation is to provide an opportunity for the 4-H member to be successful through the application and interview process.