

## Introduction

Welcome to the Manitoba 4-H Council Communications Event Planning Guide. This binder will help you to take all the necessary steps to make the communications event a success.

This section of the guide gives a list of Committee Roles and Responsibilities including an activity guide that outlines responsibilities before, during and after the event. Also included is a time line and a checklist.

In the subsequent sections, you will find the detailed information for each task in planning and holding the event. The binder is set up so that planning could be broken down into small sections and the tasks given to one individual or a small subcommittee.

You will find as you read the binder that some material is found in more than one section - this is to make it easier to give one section to a subcommittee.

Many of the sections include templates that are ready for you to fill in and use. For example, there are 15 timers' pages - one for each category and age. There are also templates for you to use to develop letters or press releases.

This binder is duplicated on a USB stick (attached). This will allow you to save and customize the templates. The USB stick also has logos for each area council.

This guide can be used at club, zone, area or provincial level competitions.

If you have any questions about using the binder, planning a communication event or about the 4-H communication program, please contact:

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We also welcome your feedback on the guide as you use it. Please share your feedback with Lynn and Shannon so we can make improvements to the guide.

## **Committee Roles and Responsibilities**

In addition to your organizing committee every level of competition needs an adult non-member "ruling" committee (comprised of more than one person) that has authority over the competition. The committee is responsible to the club or council that empowers it, and must be familiar with 4-H communication procedures so that it can properly administer the competition and enforce the published rules. **It is extremely important that the committee have a thorough understanding of competition procedures, rules, and situations that may arise, and is able to act impartially and appropriately in all situations.**

The objective of the 4-H communications program is to encourage members to present in front of an audience and gain confidence and communication skills, not to win. The main goal of the organizing committee is to make the contest enjoyable for everyone.

Below is an organizer's checklist to help with your planning and administration process. Please read it carefully, divide responsibilities amongst committee members and decide on a deadline when each task will be completed.

1. **Select Date and Facility:** The competition date and facility should be selected no less than two months in advance.
  - Set the date of the competition, keeping in mind that the competitions should take place 1- 2 weeks ahead of the date of the next level competition. Your club, zone or area program plan may already have a date established.
  - Choose a facility suitable for the number of speakers and the anticipated audience. School gyms, libraries, churches or town halls often work well.
  - Establish or obtain the event budget.
  - Find out when and where the next level of competition will be held and who the contact person is.
  - Logistics/Hospitality - will lunch be served? Is the facility accessible to all?
  
2. **Select Judges:** Zone and area competition organizers should select judges no less than four weeks before the competition to ensure the most qualified and experienced judges are used. Club competitions should arrange judges no less than two weeks in advance.
  - Choose judges from a variety of backgrounds based on their knowledge, attitude, interests, appropriate experience, willingness to help and ability.
  - Ideally, each communication category should have at least three, or multiple of three, judges. For example, if you have a very large club, nine judges could be used (three for juniors, three for intermediates and three for seniors).
  - Judges must remain consistent throughout the event. For example, a judge judging a senior member's speech must judge all senior speeches.
  - A judge should only judge any given member's speech or visual at any level once in the same year. Judges must be impartial.

- Judges must not be a member of the immediate family (including aunts, uncles and grandparents) of any of the speakers they are judging. Judges may also prefer not to judge speakers of families that they know very well (ex: teachers, close friends of the family).
  - Send each judge the judge's orientation package (available in the Judges section of the binder) two weeks before the competition to ensure they are familiar with rules and guidelines as well as procedures members are taught.
- 3. Recruit Officials and Helpers:** All officials and helpers should be arranged at least two weeks prior to the competition.
- Select the Emcee (possible candidates are past winners, senior members, or Alumni) and recruit Timers, Tellers and the Impromptu Coordinator.
  - Provide officials with their "Roles and Responsibilities" sheets (provided in the book).
  - Recruit people to set-up tables, chairs and equipment. Arrange for a key to be available for the person who will open the facility.
  - Arrange people to provide and serve refreshments (optional).
  - Recruit greeters (perhaps members) to welcome guests, distribute programs and nametags, and direct judges and speakers to competition organizers.
  - Recruit a clean-up crew.
- 4. Promote the Event:**
- In the two weeks prior to the competition. (Optional)
  - Inform 4-H members and parents about the details of the contest.
  - Write a brief press release for the newspaper in advance of the contest and ask if a reporter or photographer can attend.
  - Put up posters in local stores etc. There are generic event posters available at [www.4h.mb.ca](http://www.4h.mb.ca) in the resources section.
- 5. Determine the speaking order:** Establish the speaking order at least one week before competition to allow enough time for material preparation.
- At club contests, speakers can draw numbers at the start of the contest. For all other levels, the speaking order should be pre-determined.
  - If using two teams of judges, alternating categories can save time and will help the program run without long breaks.
- 6. Prepare Materials:** Ensure all materials are in place in the week prior to the competition.
- Prepare and photocopy the programs. Printed programs are optional at club contests.
  - Print or type the speakers' names and speech titles on score sheets, timer sheets and teller sheets in the order in which they will speak, and in the same order on all sheets. Speaking resources are available on the 4-H Manitoba web site <https://4h.mb.ca/communications/> to download. Or check the individual sections of this planning guide.
  - Prepare packages containing score sheets, comment sheets, notepapers, pencils, pens, erasers and calculators for judges.
  - Prepare packages for timers and tellers. Have extra score, comment, and timer and teller sheets available at the competition.
  - Acquire equipment and supplies such as a PA system, podium (both of these are optional), stopwatches, pens, and calculators.
  - Obtain certificates and gifts if you plan to award these at the end of the competition.
- 7. Competition Procedures:** Meet with judges before the competition to clarify procedures and answer questions.
- Meet with speakers, Emcee and timers to determine speaking order if it has not been prearranged. At this time speakers may test the P.A. system (if available) prior to the

competition starting.

- Ensure judges and all officials have necessary materials and supplies.
- Enforce all rules. If a speaker is to be disqualified, wait until the end of the competition and advise the judges not to rank that speaker. Speakers should be told privately and in a professional manner that they have been disqualified and given the reason why. Committee representatives that have a close relationship with a member or members who are participating in the competition should abstain from delivering the decision.
- Destroy score, placing and teller sheets after the competition. They should not be shown to anyone. Keep the names of the top four contestants in case the top speaker(s) is/are unable to compete at the next competition level.

#### 8. Recognition

- Thank sponsors, judges, Emcee and officials; an inexpensive gift is optional, but appreciated. A club member should present the gift where possible.
- Congratulate participants. An appropriate item (e.g. a certificate) can be given to recognize participation. Expensive or elaborate awards are not required. An overemphasis on "placing" might give the impression that "winning" is valued over participating. Many areas have used a system where all the competitors receive the same token.

#### 9. **Wrap up Details:** Complete within one week following the competition so no details are over looked.

- Prepare and distribute news release. (optional)
- Inform winners of the time, date and place of the next level of competition. o  
If available, this may be handled by the organizers of the next level.
- Give winners' names, title of speeches/presentation, club and contact information to the organizers of the next level of competition. They need this information to prepare for their competition.
- Write an evaluation for next year's committee including what did and did not work, and your suggestions.
- Complete and submit the event report form to Manitoba 4-H Council
- Submit photos with photo release forms to Manitoba 4-H Council