

Introduction

Welcome to the Manitoba 4-H Council Communications Event Planning Guide. This binder will assist you in taking all the necessary steps to ensure the success of your communications event.

In this section, you will find a list of Committee Roles and Responsibilities, including an activity guide outlining tasks before, during, and after the event. Additionally, there is a timeline and a checklist.

The subsequent sections provide detailed information for each task involved in planning and holding the event. The binder is organized so that planning can be broken down into smaller sections, allowing tasks to be assigned to individuals or small subcommittees.

As you read through the binder, you will notice some material is found in multiple sections to facilitate easy distribution to subcommittees.

Many sections include ready-to-use templates, such as 15 timers' pages—one for each category and age group—as well as templates for developing letters or press releases.

This binder is also provided on an attached USB stick, allowing you to save and customize the templates. The USB stick includes logos for each area council.

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

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

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We welcome your feedback on the guide as you use it. Please share your thoughts with Karen and April so we can make improvements.

Committee Roles and Responsibilities

In addition to your organizing committee, every level of competition needs an **adult non-member "ruling" committee** (consisting of more than one person) that holds authority over the competition. This committee is accountable to the club or council that empowers it and must be well-versed in 4-H communication procedures to administer the competition and enforce the published rules effectively. It's crucial that the committee thoroughly understands the competition procedures, rules, and potential situations that may arise, enabling them to act impartially and appropriately in all scenarios.

The objective of the 4-H communications program is to encourage members to present in front of an audience, gain confidence, and develop communication skills, rather than focusing on winning. The primary goal of the organizing committee is to ensure the contest is enjoyable for everyone.

Below is an organizer's checklist to assist with your planning and administration process. Please read it carefully, allocate responsibilities among committee members, and set deadlines for each task.

1. Select Date and Facility:

- Choose the competition date and facility at least two months in advance.
- Set the competition date, ensuring it occurs 1-2 weeks before the next level of competition. Check if your club, zone, or area program already has a predetermined date.
- Select a facility suitable for the number of speakers and the expected audience. School gyms, libraries, churches, or town halls are often ideal.
- Establish or confirm the event budget.
- Determine the date and location of the next level of competition and identify the contact person.
- Consider logistics and hospitality—will lunch be provided? Is the facility accessible to everyone?
- Submit your activity plan through CaselQ.

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 available. For club competitions, arrange judges no less than two weeks in advance.
- Choose judges from a variety of backgrounds based on their knowledge, attitude, interests, relevant experience, willingness to help, and ability.
- Ideally, each communication category should have three judges or multiples of three. For example, in a 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 instance, a judge assessing senior members' speeches 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 remain impartial.
- Judges must not be immediate family members (including aunts, uncles, and grandparents) of any of the speakers they are judging. Judges may also prefer not to judge speakers from families they know very well (e.g., 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 the rules, guidelines, and procedures members are taught.

3. Recruit Officials and Helpers:

All officials and helpers should be arranged at least two weeks before the competition.

- Select the Emcee (potential candidates include past winners, senior members, or Alumni) and recruit Timers and Room Chairs.
- Provide officials with their "Roles and Responsibilities" sheets (found in the book).
- Recruit individuals to set up tables, chairs, and equipment. Ensure a key is available for the person responsible for opening the facility.
- Arrange for people to provide and serve refreshments (optional).
- Recruit greeters (possibly 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 leading up to the competition, inform 4-H members and parents about the contest details.
- Write a brief press release for the newspaper in advance of the contest and request a reporter or photographer to attend.
- Put up posters in local stores and other community spaces. Generic event posters are available in the resources section on the [4-H Manitoba](#) website and on the USB accompanying this binder.

5. Determine the Speaking Order:

- Establish the speaking order at least one week before the competition to allow sufficient time for material preparation.
- At club competitions, speakers can draw numbers at the start of the event. For all other levels, pre-determine the speaking order.
- If using two teams of judges, alternating categories can save time and help the program run smoothly without long breaks.

6. Prepare Materials:

Ensure all materials are ready in the week before 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 room chair sheets in the order they will speak, ensuring consistency across all sheets. Speaking resources are available on the [4-H Manitoba](#) website or check the relevant sections of this planning guide.
- Prepare packages for judges containing score sheets, comment sheets, notepapers, pencils, pens, erasers, and calculators.
- Prepare packages for timers and room chairs. Have extra score sheets, comment sheets, timer sheets, and room chair sheets available at the competition.
- Acquire equipment and supplies such as a PA system, podium (both optional), stopwatches, pens, and calculators.
- Obtain certificates and gifts if you plan to award these at the end of the competition.

7. Recognition:

- Thank the sponsors, judges, Emcee, and officials. An inexpensive gift is optional but

- appreciated. If possible, have a club member present the gift.
- Congratulate the participants. Consider giving an appropriate item, such as a certificate, to recognize participation. Expensive or elaborate awards are not necessary, as an overemphasis on "placing" might give the impression that "winning" is valued over participating. Many areas use a system where all competitors receive the same token.

8. Wrap Up Details:

Complete these tasks within one week following the competition to ensure no details are overlooked:

- Prepare and distribute a news release (optional).
- Inform winners of the time, date, and location of the next level of competition. This may be handled by the organizers of the next level if available.
- Provide the winners' names, speech/presentation titles, club, and contact information to the organizers of the next level of competition. They need this information to prepare for their event.
- Write an evaluation for next year's committee, noting what worked well, what didn't, and any suggestions.
- If you are requesting funding for your communications event you will need to complete and submit the event report form, with all receipts, to Manitoba 4-H Council.