

## New statewide virtual showcase provides opportunity for Michigan youth to shine

*Michigan State Fair and Michigan State University Extension partner to provide online showcase and scholarships for youth.*

In the midst of a global pandemic where countless cancelled events have eliminated normal opportunities for Michigan youth to demonstrate their skill, mastery and hard work, two state organizations have teamed up to ensure youth across the state can still showcase their accomplishments and projects. Through a newly launched initiative, the [Michigan State Fair](#) and [Michigan State University Extension](#) are proud to offer the [2020 Michigan State Fair 4-H & Youth Virtual Showcase](#). This online experience will provide a virtual platform for any Michigan youth to exhibit their work in all project areas and apply for a total of \$50,000 in scholarships.

“Michigan 4-H’ers and other youth work hard all year long on their many projects, and that didn’t stop when the pandemic hit,” said Jake DeDecker, state 4-H leader with MSU Extension. “In fact, many youth took that extra time and poured their efforts into projects and activities. By partnering with the Michigan State Fair, we are able to provide youth with a new and exciting way to showcase what they’ve worked on, alongside peers from all across the state, while they receive recognition for their accomplishments and obtain valuable feedback for their personal development.”

Registration for the Michigan State Fair 4-H & Youth Virtual Showcase is currently open through August 23. To participate, youth will enter photos and videos of their individual projects through the online [FairEntry platform](#). Any Michigan youth, aged 5-19, is encouraged to participate in this free event; prior participation in 4-H is not required.

There are a wide variety of participation options, and youth may enter as many classes as they wish. Project areas range from traditional classes like showmanship, breeding and market classes for livestock and companion animals, to still exhibits such as crafts, creative writing and baking. Youth may also enter projects that are not normally showcased in a typical fair by submitting educational projects, demonstrations and more in areas such as shooting sports, urban agriculture and leadership, among others.

Across the state, many youth may have already taken part in their own county-based online fair experience; 60 Michigan counties have hosted 4-H virtual showcase opportunities this summer. While the Michigan State Fair 4-H & Youth Virtual Showcase follows a similar format, allowing youth to showcase their skills and recognize their hard work in an online format, participants in the statewide event will also have the opportunity to apply for up to \$50,000 in scholarships, generously provided by the Michigan State Fair.

“A major focus within our event has always been giving back to the community and encouraging the educational and personal development of Michigan’s youth,” said Blair Bowman, Michigan State Fair manager. “We are thrilled that we will be able to continue and expand upon that tradition through this new virtual platform.”

Field Code Changed

Exhibits entered into local virtual showcases experiences may also be entered into the statewide showcase; however, prior exhibition is not required. Evaluation of Michigan State Fair 4-H & Youth Virtual Showcase projects will begin on August 24, with winners announced during the Michigan State Fair, September 3-7.

To learn more about the event and view individual class opportunities, visit [extension.msu.edu/MSF4HShowcase](https://extension.msu.edu/MSF4HShowcase). To register for the showcase, visit [MichiganStateFairYouthShowcase.fairentry.com](https://MichiganStateFairYouthShowcase.fairentry.com).