2026 District 11 4-H Photography Contest
Rules and Guidelines

(For Juniors & Intermediates ONLY)

DISTRICT 11 4-H PHOTOGRAPHY CONTEST OBJECTIVES:

- To develop life skills in composition, light, story line, posing and awareness.
- To encourage 4-H members to use photography as a meaningful communication tool in their lives.
- To provide a photography project showcase opportunity for 4-H members.
- To continue to share the message of 4-H.
- To utilize photographs which can promote and strengthen the 4-H program.

THIS YEAR:

- There are 18 categories for the photography contest.
- The District 11 Photography Contest will follow the Texas 4-H Photography Contest (state contest) guidelines. All photos will be submitted and judged electronically. **Photos will be uploaded on Submittable**.

RULES AND GUIDELINES:

Participation Age:

The District 11 4-H Photography Contest is open to all Junior and Intermediate 4-H members.

- Junior participants must be in the 3rd through 5th grade as of August 31, 2025.
- Intermediate participants must be in 6th through 8th grade as of August 31, 2025.
- Senior 4-H members participating in the Texas 4-H Photography Display at Texas 4-H Roundup should refer to the 2025 - 2026 Texas 4-H Photography Contest Rules and Guidelines found on the Texas 4-H website.

Judging will take place the week of March 16 - 20, 2026. Results will be announced via District 11 4-H social media outlets by April 1, 2025.

Eligibility of Photos: All photographs must have been taken by 4-H members between the dates of January 1, 2025, and the time of entry. The date the photo is taken can be viewed by right clicking and looking at properties; any photo that has a date taken other than what is allowed will be disqualified. Photos may be submitted only one time and in only one category.

Number of Entries: A county may have only one entry per category per age group for a total of thirty-six (36) entries per county. All entries must be submitted electronically by February 13, 2026.

Entry Fee: A fee of $10.00 per photo must be paid by February 13, 2026 for official entry. Participants must pay via 4-H ONLINE by credit card or 4-H Check. All entries paid by paper check must come from a COUNTY/CLUB account and MUST BE POSTMARKED BY February 15, 2026. Late registration allowed February 14-18, 2026 for an additional $35.00.

Contestant Participation: Photography display participants are not to be present for judging. Participants do not need to attend District 11 4-H Spring Spectacular unless they are competing in another contest.

Entry Deadline: ENTRIES MUST BE SUBMITTED AND MADE ON 4-H ONLINE FROM FEBRARY 2 - 13, 2026.
Late registration will be allowed from February 14 – 18 for an additional $35.

Refusal Rights:
The District 11 4-H Program reserves the right to refuse inappropriate or unsuitable entries.

Judges:
Judges will determine the placings. Their decision on all entries is final.

Awards:
1st-3rd in each category will be given awards per age division.

Best of Show will be JUDGE'S CHOICE. All 1st place winners will be contenders for Best of Show per age division.

Disqualification of Entries:
Entries that do not follow the rules, division and class guidelines or any general guidelines will automatically be disqualified. County entries received past the deadline will be automatically disqualified and will be returned to the county.

Announcement of Results:
Results will be announced to all counties via e-mail and posted on the District 11 4-H website and social media.

Release of Liability:
The Texas 4-H and Youth Development Program, Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service, The Texas 4-H Youth Development Foundation and/or its employees/agents involved in the contest will not be held liable for missing, mislabeled, damaged, or non-displayed photographs. By entry, the 4-H member accepts this release.

Display and Future Use Rights:
By submitting an entry to the contest, the 4-H member grants permission to the Texas 4-H and Youth Development Program, Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service, the Texas 4-H Foundation, and any other public or private agency authorized by the Texas 4-H and Youth Development Program, the use, and rights associated to the use of the photographic likeness, in promotional publications, and other media, without compensation. Certain photos will be retained for future use. By entry, the 4-H member accepts these conditions of display and future use.

AMERICANS WITH DISABILITIES ACT
Individuals who require an auxiliary service or accommodation in order to participate need to contact the District 11 Office at 361/265-9203 no later than February 15, 2026 in order for proper arrangements to be made.

Contest Categories and Descriptions

Category Name	Description	Example
ANIMALS - DOMESTIC	Photos of domesticated animals adapted for human environments. ***Examples:*** *Dogs, cats, hamsters, horses, pigs, chickens.*	***Not allowed:*** *Wildlife, all waterfowl, zoo animals, or animals not under human care.*
ANIMALS - WILDLIFE	Photos of undomesticated animals in natural or zoo-like environments. ***Examples:*** *Deer, ducks, birds, snakes, whales.*	***Not allowed: D****omesticated animals, livestock, or pets.*
CATCH-ALL	Photos that do not fit into one of the other categories.	***Not allowed:*** *Duplicate entry of a photo already submitted in another category. Photo that belongs in another category.*
DETAILS & MACRO	Close-up photos highlighting fine details or making small objects appear larger than life. ***Examples:*** *Insect eyes, veins on a leaf, water droplet.*	***Not allowed:*** *Standard close-ups that don't emphasize fine details; digitally created "macro look" (heavily cropped to simulate a close-ups)*
DOMINANT COLOR	Photos where one specific color is the primary visual element. ***Examples:*** *A bowl of lemons in strong yellow light.*	***Not allowed:*** *Black & white, sepia, duotone, or multiple equally dominant colors.*
ELEMENTS OF DESIGN	Photos emphasizing line, shape, pattern, form, texture, perspective. ***Examples****: Repeating tile patterns, ripples in water showing repeating patterns, a spiral staircase showing perspective, textured bark on a tree, etc.*	***Not allowed:*** *Digitally created or computer-generated designs (Photoshop, Illustrator, etc.*
ENHANCED	Photos significantly manipulated or created using editing techniques. ***Examples:*** *Composites, stitched panoramas, artistic filters.*	***Not allowed:*** *Use of stock, AI-generated, or non-original images.*
FOOD	Still life photos highlighting food for artistic or commercial effect. ***Examples:*** Meals, cakes, fruits table settings.	***Not allowed:*** *Alcoholic beverages or photos where food is not the main subject.*
LANDSCAPE & NATURE (NON-ANIMAL)	Photos of outside scenics and natural settings without animals as the main focus. ***Examples:*** *Gardens, seascapes, cityscapes.*	***Not allowed:*** *People, man-made structures, or animals as the main subject..*

LEADING LINE	Photos using lines to guide the viewer's eye toward the subject. ***Example:*** *A river leading to a bridge.*	***Not allowed:*** *Weak or implied lines that do not clearly guide the eye.*
LONG EXPOSURE	Photos using extended shutter speeds to capture motion effect or low-light scenes. ***Examples:*** *Fireworks, night skies, light trails, waterfalls.*	***Not allowed:*** *Images with artificial blur or digital effects simulating long exposure.*
MOTION/ACTION	Photos that capture and freeze movement. ***Examples:*** *Sports, running animals, spinning rides*	***Not allowed:*** *Images of objects that are typically stationary or slow-moving. Blurry or poorly focused photos unless intentionally artistic.*
PEOPLE	Photos of individuals or groups across all ages and activities. ***Examples:*** *Families, children, portraits, fashion, sports.*	***Not allowed:*** *Photos without model consent; animals or objects as main subject.*
PLANT/FLORA	Photos of a single flower, tree, bush, or plant as the primary subject. ***Examples:*** *A rose, a tree's canopy. (Large landscapes with multiple plants belong in Landscape & Nature.)*	***Not allowed: Large landscapes where a single plant is not the central focus.***
REFLECTIONS	Photos capturing mirrored images in water, glass, metal, or other reflective surfaces. ***Examples:*** *Lakes, puddles, water droplet, building facades.*	***Not allowed:*** *Images where the reflection is not the primary subject.*
SHADOW/SILHOUETTE	Photos where a shadow or silhouette is the primary subject against a brighter background. ***Examples:*** *Shadows of people, animals, or structures.*	***Not allowed:*** *Images where the shadow or silhouette is not the primary subject.*
THEME – VOLUNTEERS IN ACTION (New)	Celebrate the heart of Texas 4-H by capturing volunteers in meaningful moments of service. From mentoring youth and leading workshops to organizing events and supporting communities, showcasing the dedication, passion, and behind-the-scenes efforts of 4-H volunteers who make a difference every day.	***Not allowed:*** *Posed portraits without volunteer activity shown; photos where the subject is not a 4-H volunteer.*
TRANSPORTION	Photos showcasing vehicles or modes of travel. ***Examples:*** *Bustling urban streets, cars, buses, trains, boats, bicycles, airplanes, and rockets.*	***Not allowed:*** *Images where transportation is background only, not subject.*

Judging Criteria:

Criteria	Description
IMPACT (Max Points: 15)	Impact is the sense one gets upon viewing an image for the first time. Compelling images evoke laughter, sadness, anger, pride, wonder or another intense emotion. There can be impact in any of these twelve elements.
CREATIVITY (Max Points: 15)	Creativity is the original, fresh, and external expression of the imagination of the maker by using the medium to convey an idea, message or thought.
TECHNICAL (Max Points: 20)	Technical is the quality of the image itself as it is presented for viewing, which includes the following aspects: • allowable amounts of retouching and adjustments (removal of red eye, cropping, minor straightening) • sharpness and correct color balance. • lighting, which includes the use and control of light. The use of lighting whether natural or man-made and its proper use to enhance the image. • Posing and capturing of the image
DIFFICULTY (Max Points: 5)	Difficulty is the level of challenge in capturing the image. It takes into account factors such as lighting conditions, subject movement, timing, and setting. Higher scores reflect images where the photographer successfully managed more complex or demanding conditions.
COMPOSITION (Max Points: 20)	Composition is important to the design of an image, bringing all of the visual elements together in concert to express the purpose of the image. Proper composition holds the viewer in the image and prompts the viewer to look where the creator intends. Effective composition can be pleasing or disturbing, depending on the intent of the image maker.
SUBJECT MATTER (Max Points: 15)	Subject Matter should always be appropriate to the story being told (i.e. category the photo is entered into) in an image. Subject matter also includes the center of interest for the photograph or where the maker wants the viewer to stop and they view the image.
STORY TELLING (Max Points: 10)	Story Telling refers to the image's ability to evoke imagination. One beautiful thing about art is that each viewer might collect his own message or read her own story in an image.
SUBMISSION OF PHOTO	Photos must be uploaded to Submittable in their appropriate category at time of entry. • Size Ratio: any size ratio, except for panoramic, is acceptable. REVISED • For this contest, panoramic is defined as a photo with an aspect ratio of 3:1 or 1:3 or wider/taller. • File Size: Photo must be a minimum of 1MB and a maximum of 20MB. • Tips: Upload the highest resolution possible. Review your photo at 100% size before uploading. Check your photo's file properties and/or metadata to ensure it meets the file size requirements. 1 MB (megabyte) is equivalent to 1,000 KB (kilobytes). Photos that are less than 1,000 KB do not meet the minimum file size requirement.