

PARTICIPANT SURVIVAL GUIDE



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Welcome!

So you're going to Congress? You have a wonderful week in store for you when you get to the University of Florida campus the week of July 27 – 31. We will *blast* through time with exciting competitive events and educational workshops. We want you to have a great time at Florida 4-H Congress, so we have prepared this survival guide so you and your parents will know exactly what will be happening that week. Your county 4-H agent will be your best resource for information, but this handbook will give you a glimpse of the Congress experience!

Please make sure you review this guide carefully. We are going to refer to it as the "Participant Survival Guide" because in order to "survive" Congress (it really isn't that difficult!), you will need to know all that this book has to offer. So, don't put it aside and let it collect dust! Take a few minutes and find out what it has to say. You will be very glad that you did!

Before you leave for Congress, your county 4-H coordinator will have an orientation with you and the other participants from your county. At that time, many of your questions will be answered. If you want to get ahead of the game and find out some neat details on your own, check out the Congress website at:

<http://florida4h.org/events/congress.shtml>

We look forward to seeing you in July!

Jordan Barney
State 4-H Events Coordinator

Brynn Huysman and Rachel Pierpont
Assistant Events Coordinators





It's All About Attitude!

The week of 4-H Congress is all about having a good time! But, it is also about getting some very important things accomplished. Many programs happen during Florida 4-H Congress including:

- State Competitive Events
- Awards and Recognition Interviews
- Share the Fun
- Fashion Revue
- Education Workshops
- State Council Officer Elections

Because there is always something going on, it feels like you are always rushing to be somewhere! This can become very tiring (especially with only 4 hours of sleep because you stayed up talking with your roommates!). So, it is very important to remember that everyone (including adults) will get worn out and irritable at some point! Some tips for avoiding this:

- Make sure you are where you need to be when you need to be there!
- Allow yourself plenty of time to walk to your next activity. You may have to cut your social engagement short, but you will be on time – and that is very important!
- Get plenty of sleep!
- Prepare ahead of time! Before you come to Congress, review the schedule and get a mental idea of how you are going to accomplish your activities. You will be notified ahead of time if your workshop requires advanced preparation so that you have ample time to prepare.
- Ask for help! When you don't know something, find someone who does and ask! You will not get in trouble for not knowing, and you will be directed correctly.

There are other tips for coming to Congress in your "Resources" section of this handbook. Make sure that you check out all of the information that will help you enjoy Congress.

Remember, it is all about attitude. If you come prepared to have a great time – according to the plans and rules – you will and so will everyone else. Have a contagious attitude throughout the week, and see how many people you can positively influence to do the same!





Wristbands and Nametags

When you arrive at Congress on Monday, you will be given a nametag and a wristband. You must wear each of these items at all times during Congress. They are your ticket to participate in activities during the week and receive meals. If you lose your nametag or wristband it will cost \$10 to replace it so be careful to keep close track of both of these items.

The Schedule

The Congress schedule, or program, will dictate the times, events, and locations for the week. This schedule has been created with you in mind. Although it may look huge you will find that it is easily navigated when you focus on where you need to be. Your county agent or volunteer will also help you make sure you know where you are going. A condensed schedule is in your Resources section. Go there now and review each day. Make notes on events that are specific to you. Remember, you will be walking to all of the activities, so a 5-minute travel allotment is always necessary.

You will be receiving a complete schedule at Congress check-in on Monday. Keep it with you all the time. There are always extra programs at the Congress Information Desk. If you lose yours, and if you ask nicely, the kind folks there will give you another one!



Congress Evening Events

Monday - Opening Assembly

Monday night's assembly is always a blast! You should be dressed in your district attire (consult with your agent about what this is). The Spirit Rally is also on Monday night. Each district will plan its own special "rally" to compete for the coveted spirit stick! The evening assembly will begin with a spirit rally. Each district will have a sign (made and brought by the district) that will utilize during the assembly to rally the troops. Following the district rally the opening assembly will begin. You will be introduced to the planning committee and welcomed to campus. A short video outlining place thought-out the week that you will be visiting, will follow. Our key note Speaker will dazzle the audience to wrap up our evening.

Tuesday - Fashion Revue and Share the Fun

Tuesday night the fashion designers and stars of the future will strut their stuff and perform on the Reitz Union Runway. Vocal performers, dancing ballerinas, comedians, and dramatic interpreters will all grace the stage! Be sure to applaud for those brave enough and talented enough to entertain us. Look out Paris and Broadway, make way for 4-H! Fashion Revue and Share the Fun are always a hit, and an evening that you will not soon forget!





Wednesday - Competitive Events Awards Assembly

On Wednesday, have a great dinner out on the town with your county delegation for County Night Out. Then return to the Reitz Union as we recognize all of the hard work put in by our state competitive events participants at the assembly. Also, get ready to jam out with the 2nd Annual Air Band Competition (see the website for the registration form). What a night!

Awards Banquet

This is the final evening of Congress, your opportunity to look your very best. You never know who may appear during this special evening. On this very prestigious evening, those youth who have been awarded scholarships and national awards trips will be announced. We will also be presenting the adult awards and our departing seniors! We will wrap up this very special evening with the passing of the torch from the reigning State Council officers to the newly elected officers. All scholarship and trip awards will be presented during a wonderful banquet!

Other Congress Events

State Competitive Events

On Tuesday, youth who have progressed to the state level competitive demonstration and illustrated talk will compete. Also on Tuesday, the State Horticulture Identification contest, State Fashion Revue Contest and State Share the Fun will be held. If you are not participating in state events, you will be involved in a very interactive and entertaining session led by Barrett Keene!

Educational Workshops

All youth delegates will participate in educational workshops on Thursday. With registration, you should have chosen workshops by Program Area and specific tracks. You will remain in the same track all day on Thursday. Educational workshops are designed to give you an educational experience. They are fun, exciting, and hands-on too. So be prepared to be intellectually challenged, and do some really cool things at the same time.

Awards and Recognition Interviews

Youth who submit Awards portfolios and are selected for interviews will be interviewing on Wednesday. Interviews begin at 11:30 AM and continue throughout the day. If you are selected for an interview, you will receive a letter letting you know what time and where you will be interviewing. If you would like to submit an Awards portfolio next year to be considered for 4-H scholarship (must be a graduating senior) or a national award trip (must be 14 by September 1st), let your county 4-H agent know you would like to participate.

Community Pride Luncheon

several counties submitted proposals to receive grant funds to do a Community Pride project (ask your agent if you may want to do this next year). Counties who were





funded must submit reports and pictures of the project by June 1. These reports are judged, and counties receiving honors will present their projects at this Community Pride Luncheon that will be held in the Grand Ballroom Room at the Rietz Union. Also, one youth and one adult from each county and any new agent may attend this event. Your agent will select which youth from your county gets to attend. This program is on Wednesday.

State 4-H Council

The Florida 4-H State Council meets during the week of Congress to discuss and review their constitution, elect new officers, and plan the upcoming 4-H year. Two voting delegates from each county are selected to participate in this program as well as current state officers. If you are a voting delegate for your county it is very important that you participate at each state council meeting (see your tentative schedule in your Resource section). You will be voting on next year's State 4-H Council officers, as well as voting on issues with the council constitution. Your agent will notify you if you are the voting delegate for your county.

Dorm Life and the University of Florida



While at Congress you will be housed in dormitories at the University of Florida. This is an exciting experience, as you will get the feel for what it may be like to be a University student one day. The University of Florida is a beautiful campus and there are many things to do. There is a pool outside the dorms, and you will be permitted to use it during your free time. The Reitz Union has a game room, food court, and outside amphi-theater that provide entertainment and social opportunities. Other campus attractions, however, should not be explored without the consent of your county coordinator. Be mindful that there are expectations about the appropriate use of free time. You will be expected to stay in designated areas during this time. Safety is very important, and we are concerned about yours. Be smart! You will have a much better time if you are.

Making the Most of Congress

Social Opportunities

There will be times during the Congress week when you do not have a scheduled activity. This is time for you to relax and enjoy your friends. Whatever it is that you choose to do during this time, you **MUST** let your agent or county coordinator know where you are at all times. They will let you know what is "off-limits" and what is okay. Spending time with friends and making memories is one of the best parts of Congress, so respect the rules to ensure that you get to have a good time. During your free-time you should not be in your dorm room. If you have a need to go to your room, check with an adult first.





Saying Goodbye and Keeping in Touch

You will inevitably make many new friends from other counties that you will want to keep up with in the future. That is the great thing about 4-H; you will most assuredly have another opportunity to see your new friends again. Make sure you exchange email and addresses before you leave. Planning for future 4-H events together will be much more fun when you anticipate all of the friends you already know will be there. Thursday evening is always an emotional and exciting time, especially for those 4-H'ers who are graduating and moving on. This is a great time to witness the positive impact that 4-H has had on many young people. Some of them will continue to college, others will join the work force, still others may pursue careers in the military. No matter what the future path, all 4-H'ers will be able to attribute their future with their 4-H past!

Taking Congress Home

Friday is here...you are boarding the bus or van, and you are headed home! But don't let your Congress experience end here. Next year Congress is available for all 4-H youth in Florida, ages 14-18. Make plans to share with your club, other clubs, or even your local newspaper the wonderful experience you had at Florida 4-H Congress. Encourage members to be preparing to come to Congress, either through a state competitive event, interview, or as an educational program participant. All good things must come to an end, but you can help ensure that future Congress is even more fun and exciting than this year's when you spread the word!



Resources Section

Beginning on the next page, you will find some resources to help you prepare for your trip to Congress. These include:

- **2009 Congress Dress code**
- **Congress Tip sheet**
- **Tentative Schedule**



Florida 4-H State Dress Code

Youth and Adult

General Guidelines:

- General appearance should be neat and clean
- No clothing deemed inappropriate (see below)
- No bare feet
- Hats should be worn respectfully. Hats are not appropriate during meals and group sessions while indoors
- Event leaders may ask individuals to modify their clothing selection if standards of decency in appearance are not met

Items that are inappropriate for any 4-H event or activity:

- Shorts more than 4" above the knee
- Blouse straps must be at least 2" wide
- No spaghetti strap, halter or tube tops
- No cut-off or muscle shirts
- No offensive or inappropriate language, graphics or logo t-shirts
- No holes in clothing (Shirts or pants/shorts)
- No pajamas
- No low cut pants or shirts

Relaxed:

- Your choice, as long as it follows the general guidelines

Business Casual:

- Khaki shorts, slacks, skirts, capris
- Polos, shirts with collars (no ties), blouses
- Flats or low heeled shoes, western boots
- Sports jacket for boys is optional
- Denim must be dark, pressed and clean. Only skirts and jeans allowed
- **No** tennis shoes or flip flops
- **No** spaghetti straps or strapless dresses/tops unless worn with a jacket or sweater, t-shirts
- **No** hats

Professional:

- Matching suit jacket and skirt/slacks
- Tie for boys
- Dress shoes, sandals as appropriate, dress shoes with socks for boys
- Dresses, skirts, blouses
- If pants/skirts have belt loops, belt is required
- **No** Denim
- **No:** tennis shoes or flip flops, hats, spaghetti straps or strapless dresses/tops unless worn with a jacket or sweater

Formal:

- Suits with ties for boys
- Strapless or spaghetti strap dresses for formal or banquet attire are acceptable
- Dress shoes, sandals as appropriate, dress shoes with socks for boys
- **No** Backless, low-cut or exposed midriff dresses
- **No:** tennis shoes or flip flops, denim, or hats

These guidelines will be used for all State Level 4-H Events and Activities. However, please read each event's guidelines as there maybe exceptions for certain events.



2009 State 4-H Congress Tip Sheet

Luggage

Pack lightly. If you can't carry it yourself, don't bring it! Your living quarters have stairs, stairs, stairs. Make sure you can get all of your gear to your room! Comfortable shoes are a MUST!

Packing

Your home away from home during the week will require you to bring bed linens including a pillow and blanket, toiletries and towels. You will also want to bring an alarm clock and a notebook and pen for recording information.

Do not bring the following items to Congress. They will be confiscated: electronic beepers or pagers, telephones to be plugged into the dorm phone jack, walk-mans, head-sets, mp3 players or laser pointers. Also, any form of tobacco, firearms or other weapons, and alcoholic beverages are STRICTLY PROHIBITED! See Code of Conduct.

Mail & Phone

All mail to be sent to you can be addressed to:

4-H Congress Participant {your name} {County}

PO Box 110225

Gainesville, FL 32611-0225.

This mail will be posted at the Message Board at Congress Headquarters, 2nd floor Reitz Union. Important phone numbers are: Graham Hall Library – (352) 392-6021 and State 4-H Office – (352) 846-0996. Please note that delays in campus mail can be significant, so items mailed to Congress participants should be mailed well in advance.

Recreation

There are swimming pools located near the dorms for use during un-scheduled time. The video arcade, T.V., bowling alley and pool tables located in the Reitz Union can be used at your own expense.

Keys

Carry your room key with you at all times, even to the bathroom. Your roommates may accidentally lock you out. A lost key or building swipe card will take \$10 precious dollars from your spending money to replace!

Dances

There are themes for each dance. You don't have to dress to attend; you will be given your garb at the door!

***Tuesday:** Sock Hop

***Thursday:** Shooting for the Stars

Money

Be prepared to purchase lunches and a supper while at Congress. Additionally, you may be responsible for lunches and breakfasts on Monday and Friday while traveling. You will also have opportunities to buy souvenirs. \$35 - \$45 for meals and \$50 for spending is ample funds for most delegates.

Weather

Florida's weather is unpredictable. Although, normally hot and sunny, an occasional thunderstorm can dampen one's spirit if not prepared with an umbrella or raincoat.

Safety

NEVER walk alone at night! Travel in groups of threes or more if possible! Try to have an adult with you at all times. Always LOCK YOUR DOORS! Turn off all appliances when leaving – even if for a short time.

2009 FLORIDA 4-H CONGRESS TENTATIVE SCHEDULE

MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY
10:00 – 1:00 Check-In	6:30 Breakfast	6:30 Breakfast	6:30 Breakfast	8:00 – 10:00 Check-Out
12:00 Officer Candidate Luncheon	8:15 District Meetings	8:15 District Meetings	8:00-12:00 GATOR! Track	
1:00-2:30 Fashion Revue Check-In	8:15 Food Preparation Contest	9:00-12:00 GATOR! Track	8:00-8:15 Off Campus Workshop Assembly	
1:30-2:30 State Council Meeting	8:30 Fashion Revue Judging	9:00-11:30 Dance Workshops	8:15-12:00 Program Area Workshops	
2:30 Awards Interviewees Orientation	9:00 Share the Fun Rehearsal	9:00-11:30 State Council Meeting	12:00-1:00 Lunch	
2:00 Agent/Adult Meeting 1 st Session	9:00- 12:00 Activity for non-competitive youth	10:00-12:00 Check-In WED – FRI Participants	1:00-4:00 GATOR! Track	
3:00 Agent/Adult Meeting 2 nd Session	9:00 State Competitive Events Begin	11:30 State Awards & Recognition Interviews	1:00-4:00 Program Area Workshops	
3:00 Campaign Rotations	9:00-12:00 GATOR! Track	11:30 Lunch – on your own	6:00 Awards Banquet	
4:15 State Council Meeting	12:00 Lunch – on your own	12:00 Community Pride Luncheon	8:30 Dance-Shooting for the Stars & Senior Reflections	
5:00 BBQ at Stadium	1:00- 5:00 Carnival/ Workshops	1:00-3:30 GATOR! Track	9:15 National Congress Delegate Meeting	
6:30-7:15 Congress Committee Meeting & DEDs	1:00- 5:00 GATOR! Track	1:00-2:00 Tree Planting	10:45 Final Song and Final Goodbyes!	
7:00 Congress Group Picture	1:00-4:00 Fashion Revue and Share the Fun Dress Rehearsal	2:00-3:30 County Recreation Time	11:30 Floor Meetings	
7:15 District Meetings	5:00-6:45 Dinner	3:45-7:30 County Night Out	11: 45 Curfew	
7:45 District & County reps line up for Parade	7:30 Fashion Revue & Share the Fun Assembly	8:00 Competitive Event Awards Assembly/Air Band		
8:00 Evening Assembly	9:30 Sock Hop Dance	10:30 Curfew		
10:15 Floor Meetings	11:00 Curfew			
11:15 Curfew				

