



2026-2027 Texas 4-H Water Ambassadors Program

Application Instructions

Applications open March 1 – April 15, 2026

Visit www.texas4hwaterambassadors.com to learn more about the program.

A. GENERAL INFORMATION

The Texas 4-H Water Ambassadors Program provides high school youth an opportunity to gain advanced knowledge and develop leadership skills related to the science, technology, engineering, and management of water in Texas. By connecting with water professionals, water ambassadors gain exposure and recognition as youth leaders, learn about scholarship and internship opportunities, and explore the diverse career paths in the water industry. The program is led by Texas 4-H and Texas A&M AgriLife Extension and supported by water industry sponsors through the Texas 4-H Youth Development Foundation.

Each year, aspiring youth are selected to join the Texas 4-H Water Ambassadors Program. Those selected participate in a summer 4-H2O Leadership Academy. Over the next 12 months, the ambassadors commit to completing a minimum of 40 hours of service.

SESSION 1 - Tier I 4-H2O Leadership Academy (June 7 – June 12, 2026)

SESSION 2 – Tier I 4-H2O Leadership Academy (June 14 – June 18, 2026)

****Youth will be assigned to only one session.***

The 4-H2O Leadership Academy is an educational tour across Texas exposing youth to a wide range of water resources, water uses, ecosystems, and water quality concerns. Ambassadors learn about applied research and technology, water law, policy, planning, and management strategies employed to conserve this valued resource. As they meet and interact with leaders in the Texas water industry, water ambassadors gain an appreciation for the complexity of managing surface and groundwater and develop a broad perspective of the value of water to local, regional and state economies.

Leadership, Mentorship, & Community Service

Water ambassadors commit to a minimum of 40 hours of service over a 12-month period following the Leadership Academy. Service hours are earned by delivering water education at local 4-H clubs,

Educational programs of the Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service are open to all people without regard to race, color, sex, religion, national origin, age, disability, genetic information, or veteran status. The Texas A&M University System, U.S. Department of Agriculture, and the County Commissioners Courts of Texas cooperating.

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schools, fairs, and other community events. Credit is also earned by assisting local water utilities, groundwater conservation districts, and County Extension Agents in water outreach activities. Additional service credit is awarded to water ambassadors who complete continuing education opportunities and required monthly assignments.

B. OBJECTIVES

- Experience the wide diversity of water resources, water uses, sensitive ecosystems, and water quality concerns throughout the state.
- Gain insight into water law, policy, and planning strategies to protect and preserve surface and groundwater resources.
- Learn strategies for improving municipal, agricultural, and industrial water conservation and efficiency.
- Understand the importance of water to local, regional, and state economies.
- Develop valuable leadership and communication skills while educating others.
- Learn about the many career opportunities in the water industry.

C. BENEFITS OF BEING A 4-H WATER AMBASSADOR

- Serve a statewide 4-H leadership position and be accorded the respect appropriate to this role.
- Build friendships with peers across the state who share your interest in water and natural resources.
- Become a subject matter expert among your peers. Educate others in your community and state on the importance of water to Texas.
- Explore career opportunities in the water industry and beyond.
- Gain deep insight into the governance and management of water resources.
- Learn about scholarships and internship opportunities available through water industry organizations.

D. SELECTION CRITERIA

- Demonstrate a genuine interest in pursuing an in-depth understanding of Texas water issues.
- Pledge to devote the time and effort necessary to deliver water education in your community.
- Be willing to teach youth and adults about water issues.
- Be willing to work individually and as part of a team.
- Be mature, responsible, and use good judgement and appropriate behavior while serving as a water ambassador and while representing the Texas 4-H Water Ambassadors Program.
- Have dependable, regular access to the internet and email.
- Commit to participate in the summer 4-H2O Leadership Academy.

E. IMPORTANT DATES & DEADLINES

- Applications are accepted March 1 through April 15, 2026.

- Applicants are notified of their acceptance by May 1, 2026. Further instructions and tentative itinerary for the summer 4-H2O Leadership Academy are provided at that time.
- Applicants must be a member of Texas 4-H and pay the \$300 participation fee in 4-HOnline by June 1, 2026. Payment details are provided to selected students.
- Youth will attend either SESSION 1 – 1 Tier I 4-H2O Leadership Academy June 7 – June 12, 2026, or SESSION 2 – Tier I 4-H2O Leadership Academy June 14 – June 18, 2026. Drop-off in San Marcos, pickup in Waco for both trips.

F. ELIGIBILITY

Applicants must be 14 years of age or older by September 1, 2026, and be entering the 9th, 10th, 11th or 12th grades for the 2026-2027 school year. Applicants do not have to be a current member of Texas 4-H but must agree to become a 4-H member (\$30 annual membership fee) if selected before participating in any activity of the Texas 4-H Water Ambassadors Program, including the Tier I 4-H2O Leadership Academy.

G. TERMS OF SERVICE

Ambassadorship is a 12-month commitment, “officially” beginning July 1, 2026, and ending June 30, 2027. Ambassadors who meet the minimum 40 hours of service are invited to serve another term. Twenty hours of service must be completed by January 1, 2027. All first-year students are referred to as “Tier I” 4-H Water Ambassadors. Ambassadors must complete all monthly assignments.

H. HOW TO APPLY

There are two steps to apply: 1) Complete the online application; and 2) Email two letters of recommendation to david.smith@ag.tamu.edu. **Recommendation letters must be emailed directly from the person writing the letter.**

Step 1: Complete Online Application

All questions on the application are listed below. There are four short essay questions. **It is highly recommended that applicants prepare responses before completing the online application questions.**

*** Link to online application *** https://agrilife.az1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_50eOeku4HkKaHS6

Online Application Questions:

1. First Name:
2. Last Name:
3. Mailing Address:
4. City:
5. State:

6. Zip Code:
7. Applicant Birthday:
8. Grade for the upcoming 2026/2027 school year:
9. Applicant's Email:
10. Applicant's Phone Number:
11. Parent/guardian First & Last Name:
12. Parent/guardian Email:
13. Parent/guardian Phone Number:
14. Are you currently a 4-H club member? (If you are not a current 4-H club member, you must join a local 4-H club to participate if selected.)
15. In what county do you live?
16. What is your shirt size (short-sleeve polo)?
17. Do you prefer men's or women's polo shirt style?
18. What is your T-shirt size?
19. How would you prefer your name to appear on a name badge?
20. **Essay:** What inspired you to apply to become a Texas 4-H Water Ambassador? Max. 300 words
21. **Essay:** What water issue most affects your local community? As a 4-H Water Ambassador, how can you help bring awareness to this issue? Max. 300 words
22. **Essay:** What personal skills, abilities, or traits do you have or hope to grow as a 4-H Water Ambassador? Max. 300 words
23. **Essay:** What are your hobbies, interests, leadership roles and/or service commitments. If selected, how will you manage your time to meet the added time and effort expected of a 4-H Water Ambassador? Max. 300 words
24. If selected, I will actively participate in continuing education activities, including completing monthly assignments, participating in virtual seminars, and attending the spring and fall retreats to increase my general knowledge of water issues and grow my leadership skills. Please type initials to agree ____
25. If selected, I pledge to deliver and report a minimum of 40 hours of water education and service throughout my 12-month term of service. Twenty hours must be reported by January 1, 2026. Please type initials to agree ____
26. If selected, I pledge to communicate with 4-H Water Ambassadors Program staff by responding to email requests and surveys in a timely manner. Please type initials to agree ____
27. If selected, I agree to pay the \$300 program participation fee by June 1, 2026. (You must be enrolled in Texas 4-H to pay the participation fee.) Please type initials to agree ____
28. If selected, I will participate in SESSION 1 - Tier I 4-H2O Leadership Academy, June 7-12, 2026, or SESSION 2 - Tier I 4-H2O Leadership Academy June 14-18, 2026. Ambassador drop-off is in San Marcos and pick-up is in Waco. Please type initials to agree. All selected will be assigned to one of these dates; however, you may indicate your preference.
29. I understand that I must email (2) letters of recommendation to david.smith@ag.tamu.edu by April 15, 2026, to complete my application. Please type initials to agree ____.
30. PARENT/GUARDIAN. I approve of the responses provided and agree to the terms stated herein. PARENT/GUARDIAN Please type your initials to approve: ____

Step 2: Submit Two Letters of Recommendation (Must be emailed directly by person writing the letter.)

Recommendation letters can be from county extension agents, teachers, 4-H club leaders, and/or others who can attest to your scholarship and character. Letters from family members are not accepted. Letters should highlight the applicant's leadership qualities, communication skills, maturity, and other personal attributes that would support the individual becoming an effective 4-H Water Ambassador.

Letters of recommendation must be submitted as email attachments and sent by individuals writing the letters – not from the applicant. Email to Mr. David Smith, 4-H Water Ambassadors Program, david.smith@ag.tamu.edu by 11:59 PM on April 15, 2026, containing the email subject line “4-H Water Ambassadors Application – Applicant Name”.

I. PARTICIPATION FEE

If selected, the individual must pay the \$300 participation fee by June 1, 2026. Applicants do not have to be a current member of Texas 4-H to apply, but he/she must agree to become a 4-H member if selected before participating in the Texas 4-H Water Ambassadors Program (\$30 annual membership fee). Payment for the program participation fee is made on 4hOnline. Further instructions provided to selected students.

J. SPECIAL ACCOMMODATIONS

A candidate whose disability prevents him or her from completing the application or essays in the usual method should contact the 4-H2O Program Coordinator for assistance. Mr. David Smith, david.smith@ag.tamu.edu.

K. EXPECTATIONS

Membership in the Texas 4-H Water Ambassadors Program requires a substantial amount of time and commitment. Ambassadors are expected to:

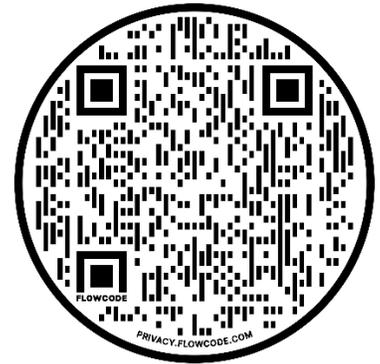
- Participate in either SESSION 1 - Tier I 4-H2O Leadership Academy June 7-12, 2026, or SESSION 2 – Tier I 4-H2O Leadership Academy June 14-18, 2026. Your specific session will be assigned.
- Complete **ALL** monthly continuing education assignments by the specified due dates. Each assignment requires about 1-2 hours to complete.
- Participate in scheduled continuing education webinars – typically held once per month.
- Complete a minimum of 40 hours of service between July 1, 2026, and June 30, 2027. Twenty hours of service must be completed by January 1, 2027.
- Report education/service activities and maintain regular contact with the Texas 4-H Water Ambassador Program Coordinator.
- Communicate with your County Extension Agent and 4-H club leader(s) regarding your water ambassador activities.
- **It is imperative that ambassadors regularly attend and participate in local 4-H club meetings and events.**

Those who do not demonstrate a good faith effort to meet all listed expectations will not be invited to serve a second term.

L. CONTACT INFORMATION

Inquiries about the Texas 4-H Water Ambassadors Program or the selection process should be directed to:

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4-H2O Program Coordinator
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Check out the Texas 4-H Water Ambassadors website to learn more, www.texas4hwaterambassadors.com