



STATES' 4-H INTERNATIONAL

Global Citizenship & Cultural Immersion Programming for 4-H Aged Youth

States' 4-H Winter Pen Pal Program Outline

Thank you for your interest in the States' 4-H Winter Pen Pal Program. The following information is an outline of the program's structure, responsibilities, timeline, and goals.

- 1) **Program:** This program will run from January 18 – April 18, 2021.
- 2) **Cost:** This program is free for participants, but we do request that youth who apply are committed to writing twice-per-month with their pen pal over the course of the three-month program period.
- 3) **Requirements:**
 - Be between the ages of 9-18
 - Currently reside in a States' 4-H member state (AK, AZ, CO, FL, IA, ID, IL, KS, KY, MD, MI, MO, MT, NC, NJ, NY, OH, OK, OR, SD, TX, VA, WA, WI)
 - Be a 4-H member or former States' 4-H Exchange participant
 - Participants must provide TWO working email addresses. One can be a parent's email address
 - States' 4-H strongly encourages participants to provide alternative methods of contact when registering (mailing address, phone number, App ID)
 - U.S. participants will be asked to write first after being matched with their pen pal
- 4) **Registration:** Interested youth may sign up for the pen pal program by filling out a registration form. Please provide the following registration form to your interested youth participants.
<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/7N8RBHY>.
- 5) **Matching:** States' 4-H will conduct the matching process by reviewing the information received on the registration forms and pairing the youth with an appropriate match to the best of our ability. Finalized matching information will be sent to each state in one Microsoft Excel file in early January. You will need to distribute the matching information to your youth participants.
- 6) **Rematching:** States' 4-H will consider requests for re-matching on a case by case basis if the participant is unable to connect with their international pen pal. U.S. youth should understand that re-matching is based on availability.
- 7) **Letter Writing:** Youth participants are tasked with exchanging a letter or message (via their preferred communication method) to their match at least **twice** per month.
 - States' 4-H requests that U.S. youth initiate first communication
 - States' 4-H will suggest a topic of the month and a list of other writing ideas to help foster ideas of what to write if they want to use it
- 8) **End of Program:** At the end of the program (mid-April) States' 4-H will provide an online space for participants to post their reflections on their pen pal experience. This is not a required part of the program but participants will be encouraged to share.



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Program Timeline

Online Registration Opens:	Nov. 16
Recruiting and Selection of Pen Pal Participants:	Nov. 16 ~ Dec. 11
Matching Information is Distributed to Participants	Dec. 18 ~ Jan. 11
Pen Pal Program Period:	Jan. 18 ~ April 18, 2021

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

1. How much does this program cost?

This program is being offered free of charge to all eligible participants.

2. When will the online registration site will be open?

- The online registration period will open on November 16th.
- The online registration period will end on December 11th.
- Online registration link for U.S. participants: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/7N8RBHY>.

3. Is there a limit to the number of participants who can apply?

Participant limits are only determined by the interest from our international partners. In the event of an imbalance in participant numbers, we may keep a waitlist of extra participants to be used when re-matches become required. We will do our best to ensure anyone who wants to participate will have the opportunity to do so.

4. Will youth participants be guaranteed a pen pal from the countries they select on their registration form?

Matches may be limited based on the number of applicants we receive from our international partners. We will do our best to match all youth with one of their top 3 country preferences if possible.

5. What if a participant does not receive a reply from her/his American pen pal?

- States' 4-H requests that the participant first try making contact through the alternative methods of contact provided at the time of matching: second email, phone number, etc. State Coordinators should also inform States' 4-H that the participant is not receiving responses.
- If the participant continues to not receive a response after **five days** of trying to make contact using the alternative contact information, States' 4-H will make its best effort to re-match the participant with a new pen



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pal. Note: re-matching will be done based on availability, participants may not have a second pen pal who is the same age/gender as their first pen pal.

6. Who is responsible for what?

States' 4-H:

- Provide the online registration site
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- Pair international participants with US participants
- Assistant in participant recruitment
- Send pen pal match information to the international partners and participants directly. Matching information will include name, age, gender, two email addresses, and any additional contact information provided
- Follow up with unresponsive US participants and re-match as necessary

State and Local Coordinators:

- Recruit participants
- Encourage US youth to initiate first communication with their match
- Alert States' 4-H if participants are not receiving responses; potentially follow up with unresponsive participants

Participating Youth:

- Fill out the registration form
- Communicate at least **twice** per month with their pen pal

Please feel free to contact us with additional questions or further clarifications about any of the above-mentioned items.