



Maryland 4-H State 4-H Dog Skillathon Contest: General Rules

Objectives of the 4-H Dog Skillathon Contest

The primary objective of the Maryland 4-H Dog Skillathon Contest is to provide an opportunity for youth enrolled in 4-H to demonstrate knowledge and understanding of animal science and management related to dogs in a competitive setting where attitudes of friendliness and fairness prevail. The Skillathon offers age-appropriate quizzes and stations that are designed to test youth knowledge of dogs; youth move from station to station. Some stations may include visual diagrams or equipment, or hands on activities to demonstrate a dog related technique. The contest's coordinators strive to provide an educational experience for participants and spectators.

General Information

1. Contest date and time: **Saturday, February 21, 2026, Registration: 9:30 a.m. Contest Begins: 10:00 a.m.** Contest location: University of Maryland Animal Sciences Building, College Park, MD.
2. **This is a contest in which individuals compete. There will be NO team entries.** There will be a \$5.00 entry fee for each contestant.
3. There is no limit to the number of individuals that each UME unit may enter in this contest.
4. Individuals participating in the statewide contest must be enrolled as a Maryland 4-H member for 2026 in 4-H Online by **February 11, 2026**. Contest registration must be submitted via the 4-H Online registration system by **February 11, 2026** at <https://v2.4honline.com/>.
5. This statewide competition will be governed by the prescribed procedures and regulations. Additional rules may be added for specific purposes. Contestants not complying with the rules will be disqualified. Coaches and/or spectators not complying with the applicable Procedures and Regulations will be dismissed from the contest area. **All challenges to the contest, including stations, official's decisions and results, must be submitted in writing to the State 4-H Animal Specialist within 24 hours of the contest.**
6. Each participating county is requested to provide an adult to serve as a station monitor.

Contestants and Eligibility

1. **Individuals participating in the statewide contest must be enrolled as a Maryland 4-H member for 2026 in 4-H Online by February 11, 2026. Contest registration must be submitted via the 4-H Online registration system by February 11, 2026.** Counties must verify entries in 4-H Online and will be invoiced for entry fees based on the total number of participants registered from their programs. There will be a \$5.00 entry fee for each contestant.
2. Junior contestants must be between the ages of 8-10; Intermediate contestants must be between the ages of 11-13; and Senior contestants between the ages of 14-18 as of January 1 of the current year.

3. Senior contestants receiving college or vocational training beyond high school (university, college, junior college or technical school) in areas specific to dogs are not eligible to compete in the Maryland 4-H Dog Skillathon Contest.
4. Attire: Clothing that identifies the contestant's 4-H county/city may not be worn.
5. All electronic devices (cell phones, tablets, calculators, etc.) are prohibited. Contestants are advised to leave these devices either in their car or with their parents or coaches prior to the start of the contest. If a contestant's phone should ring, or if they are discovered using such electronic devices during the contest, the contestant will be disqualified.
6. Contestants requesting a reasonable accommodation to participate in this event must indicate the need on the contest registration form in 4-H Online by the registration deadline. A reasonable accommodation is a modification or adjustment to a program that will enable a person who has a disability to participate in and/or benefit from the program.

Contest Officials

1. **Judges:** Official judges shall place/answer the classes/stations. They will make the official placing/answers, and file the official placing/answer card with the Contest Superintendents.

Contest Phases

1. Quiz phase of the contest may include questions about the dog industry.
 - a. Juniors – 10 questions
 - b. Intermediates – 20 questions
 - c. Seniors – 25 questions
2. Stations phase of the contest will consist of a series of stations or tables where contestants will respond to the requirements of the station. Examples of stations which may be used include, but are not limited to:
 - a. Breed Identification (**2026 Focus Group – Breeds from the Herding Group – approximately one-half of the points of this station will pertain to breeds from the Focus Group.**)
 - b. Care and Behavior
 - c. Equipment Identification - includes care, grooming, handling, showing and dog sports, and training.
 - d. Nutrition and Feeds Identification
 - e. Health and Diseases
 - f. Insects and Parasites
 - g. Anatomy and Physiology - includes external parts, skeletal, internal organs, parts of gastrointestinal tract, male/female reproductive organs.

Scoring

1. The maximum score for the quiz is 100 points.
2. The maximum score for each station of the contest is 50 points.
3. Ties in the overall contest will be broken in the following order:
 - a. Highest score in the Quiz Phase; if still tied then,
 - b. Highest total score in the Station Phase; if still tied then,
 - c. If still tied, the scores at each station, in order, may be used.
4. Ties within any phase of the contest are to be broken using the overall score first and then the same sequence as above.
5. Contest score cards/answer cards/judging cards will not be returned to participants following the contest. Contest stations will be available for viewing for a limited time following the contest and official keys will be displayed at each station.

Awards

1. A trophy will be awarded to the highest placing individual overall in each age division.
2. The top ten (10) individuals overall in each age division will be awarded ribbons.
3. A ribbon will be awarded to the highest placing individual for the Quiz and Stations phases in each age division.

Recorders and Cameras

1. No recording devices such as video recorders or cameras are permitted in the contest rooms. Photographs will be permitted during the awards ceremony.

MARYLAND 4-H DOG SKILLATHON REFERENCES

JUNIOR DIVISION

- **NEW EDITION!** *Dog Resource Handbook* (Ohio State University), **2024 edition – you may purchase at: Ohio 4-H Website at <https://extensionpubs.osu.edu/dog-resource-handbook/>**
- **UPDATED RESOURCE!** *The American Kennel Club's Meet the Breeds: Dog Breeds from A-Z by American Kennel Club, 5th edition, March 2016.*
- *AKC Obedience Regulations* – Page 1 through Novice Chapter and Rally Novice
- *MD 4-H Dog Bowl Reference Sheet*

INTERMEDIATE DIVISION

- **NEW EDITION!** *Dog Resource Handbook* (Ohio State University), **2024 edition – SEE JUNIOR DIVISION ABOVE**
- *MD 4-H Dog Bowl Reference Sheet*
- *AKC Obedience Regulations* – Page 1 through Open Class and Rally Advanced
- **UPDATED RESOURCE!** *The American Kennel Club's Meet the Breeds: Dog Breeds from A-Z by American Kennel Club, 5th edition, March 2016.*
- New AKC breeds and changed Group designations, as found on the AKC Website on their Complete List of AKC Recognized Breeds and Miscellaneous Class Breeds List at <http://www.akc.org/dog-breeds/>. Only responsible for information about the Group and from the General Appearance section for **NEW AKC breeds as of February 1, 2026.**

SENIOR DIVISION

- **NEW EDITION!** *Dog Resource Handbook* (Ohio State University), **2024 edition – SEE JUNIOR DIVISION ABOVE**
- *MD 4-H Dog Bowl Reference Sheet*
- *Dog Owners Home Vet Handbook –4th Edition - 2007*
- *AKC Obedience Regulations* – Page 1 through Open Class, Rally Advanced and Rally Excellent
- *AKC Complete Dog Book, 20th Edition - Pages 1-6; Pages 13 – End*
- New AKC breeds and changed Group designations, as found on the AKC Website on their Complete List of AKC Recognized Breeds and Miscellaneous Class Breeds List at <http://www.akc.org/dog-breeds/>. Only responsible for information about the Group and from the General Appearance section for **NEW AKC breeds as of February 1, 2026.**

FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT:

Chris Anderson

University of Maryland Extension, 4-H Youth Development Specialist, Animal Science

Maryland 4-H Center, 8020 Greenmead Drive, College Park, MD 20740

Phone: 301-314-7187

Email: canders2@umd.edu

Ashley Travis

University of Maryland Extension - Washington County, Extension Educator, 4-H Youth Development

Phone: 301-791-1304

Email: ashley90@umd.edu

