



Pathways to The Big E (Eastern States Expo, ESE)

Have you heard of the Big E? Is your goal to travel and participate in the Big E? If you've ever wondered, let this be a guide.

The Big E or Eastern States is located in West Springfield, MA and takes place annually in September <https://www.thebige.com/p/generalinfo/bigeinfo>. It is the largest event on the East Coast and the fourth largest fair in North America. The Big E is America's Premier Exposition and world's only multi-state fair, representing all six New England States. There is much to see, do, smell and taste. Another place to seek general info is here: <https://www.easternstatesexposition.com/>

The Big E offers Vermont 4-H youth a unique opportunity to represent the state on a regional stage while building confidence and showcasing their skills to fairgoers from across New England. Vermont sends youth to participate in livestock competitions such as dairy, horse, beef, sheep, goat, dog, as well as poultry and rabbit events. Did you know Vermont 4-H youth also have the opportunity to showcase their skills in public speaking and talents in performing arts? In the New England Center, our 4-H youth take the stage through song, dance, and presentations, while nearby at "pod" tables, they feature their hands-on action exhibits and tabletop presentations.

How do you get there? 4-H youth must first participate in a 4-H Regional Communications Days (Spring Showcase) held usually in March or April. Youth should apply the feedback provided by judges to improve their entry and participate in Vermont's 4-H State Communication Day usually held in May. Specific exhibits are chosen to advance to the Big E/Eastern States.

Highlighted Steps to the Big E:

Step 1. In March or April, participate in a Regional Communications Day Competition (Spring Showcase)

Step 2. In May, participate in the State Communications Day

Step 3. Ensure a chaperone is fingerprinted.

Step 4. In September, join the Vermont delegation at the Big E in the New England Center.

The following info is subject to change per categorical numbers of qualifiers at the Vermont State Communications Day.

The following categories are anticipated to participate in Eastern States:

- Action exhibits – Teams of 4 advance (groups rotate in teams of two). Exhibits are presented from a bean-shaped pod. People are passing by and might stop for all or part of a presentation.
- Performing Arts Stage Performances – song, dance, puppetry, magic, poetry slam, etc. will advance. No white ribbon entries for stage will be selected to attend.
- Demonstrations and Illustrated Talks (Individual and Group) will advance. No white ribbon entries advance.
- Tabletops – The top 3-5 tabletops will be chosen to represent at Eastern States. Exhibits will be adapted from completely static displays to having an interactive component presented from the pods or as a short oral presentation that is presented on stage. These will be selected based upon Big E stage availability.
- All fashion review/clothing sewing and smart shopper advance to the Big E.
- 4-H Promotional Videos, Interview a 4-H Alumni can advance to the Big E.
- Photos – People's Choice vote will select the top TWELVE photos at the State Communications Day for display. These are collected at State Day to ensure they are labeled, laminated, and sent prior to the opening of the Big E.
- Posters – EIGHT posters will be selected as part of a People's Choice vote held during State Communications Day. These are collected at State Day to ensure labeled and sent prior to the Big E's opening.

*All photos should be DUPLICATES, not originals as they will be laminated and not returned. Youth might want to make an additional copy for fair, as the photos advancing will be kept after State Day. We will laminate and label photos and add the 4-H member's first name, age, county, and state. Photos must be size 8"x10" with a total matted size no larger than 11"x14." Posters must be sized between 12"x18" and 14"x22" and are NOT laminated. These are collected after State Day. We will add the 4-H member's first name, age, county and state. Posters and photos are not returned to the state unless specified. Please notify a Vermont 4-H staff member if you would like your photos returned.

No Cloverbuds can participate in the Big E. Participants for the Big E must be age 8 by Jan. 1. Only those age 9 by Jan. 1 can stay in the dorms. Those age 8 must stay off-site. ALL other participants (and an approved chaperone) are expected to stay in the dorms provided on-site at the Big. The Big E has been great about meeting ADA accommodations. *Finger-printing will be available at the State Communications Day for those considering being a Big E chaperone.**

<https://go.uvm.edu/4hcomm>