



TO: Agents and Program Associates with 4-H Responsibilities

FROM: Connie Darden, MVLA President

DATE: November 21, 2025

SUBJECT: Mississippi 4-H Volunteer Leaders' Association's Annual Leadership Conference

The Mississippi 4-H Volunteer Leaders' Association's (MVLA) Annual Leadership Conference will be held February 27-28, 2026, in the Bost Extension Conference Center. The conference will begin with registration at 4:00 p.m. Friday, and conclude Saturday by 4:00 p.m. This year we are doing a drawing for a **Grand Prize** at the end of the auction following the awards banquet on Friday and one at the end of the conference on Saturday! *You must be present to win so plan to stay for the whole, fun-filled conference!*

The MVLA Annual Leadership Conference provides an excellent opportunity for 4-H Volunteers, Extension faculty and friends of 4-H to participate in outstanding experiential learning activities, workshops, great fellowship, and enlightening entertainment. The theme this year is "**Ask Me About MVLA**". We encourage you and the 4-H Volunteer Leaders from your county to plan to share in this event. **The Torchbearer Award will be presented to the agent (or volunteer) that brings the most Volunteers from their county to the Conference, so get out there and recruit Volunteers from your county to attend!**

The Leadership Conference will open with an informal reception from 4:00 – 5:00 p.m. followed by an awards banquet Friday evening, February 27, in the Bost Extension Conference Center. Outstanding 4-H Volunteers in each of the following categories will be recognized:

1. **Harvey Gordon Rising Star Outstanding Volunteer** Award Category – 4-H Volunteers who have served 1-3 years.
2. **Outstanding Volunteer of the Year** Award Category – 4-H Volunteers who have served 4-10 years.
3. **Ruby Beckley Lifetime Outstanding Volunteer of the Year** Award Category – 4-H Volunteers who have served more than 10 years.

Applications for the above awards and MVLA Officer nominations are due by January 30, 2026. Nomination forms will be sent in a separate email and will be available online. This is a great way to recognize the Outstanding Volunteers who work hard to encourage, teach, and support our Youth!

If you have a volunteer who has 50 or more years of service as a 4-H volunteer, please let us know if they will attend as we would like to recognize them during the awards banquet. Other years of service awards are recognized at the North and South Forums later in the year.

Please encourage all delegates to bring items valued at a minimum of \$25 for the Live and Tea Cup Auctions, as well as items for the Silent Auction. The auctions serve as the main fundraiser for the Mississippi 4-H Volunteer Leaders' Association and will be held at scheduled times during the

Conference. The auctions always provide many exciting moments and attendees are encouraged to outbid each other while enjoying the fast-paced action. The Tea Cup Auction is a new addition this year. You will have the opportunity to purchase tickets. Each item will have a bag or box into which you will place tickets for the items you choose. You can place as many tickets as you like in the bag or box for items that you want. One ticket will be drawn from the bag or box for each item to select the winner of the item. Everyone that purchases tickets has a chance to win! A donation request letter from the MVLA President is available. **The Go Getter Award will be presented to the person bringing the most auction items (valued at least \$25.00 each)!** Each county is also encouraged to bring **two door prizes** to be given away throughout the Conference.

We will also offer the game of Heads or Tails this year. This is a fun opportunity to win prizes. Those who choose to purchase a \$5.00 glow bracelet will be eligible to play. The Heads or Tails game will be played at various times during the Conference. More details will be provided at the Conference.

This year, registration for **first-time attendees** will be **\$100.00** for the entire Conference. Registration for full-time return delegates is **\$130.00**. Full-time registration fees include the Friday reception and banquet meal, Saturday lunch and snacks, Conference t-shirt, and MVLA annual membership. Volunteers are responsible for their own lodging arrangements.

Please Note: This year we will be collecting items for a Community Service Project, Bully's Pantry. The goal of this project is to provide non-perishable food items, personal care items, and school supplies to current Mississippi State University students in need. A list of suggested items is included in this packet. Please bring items to donate for this worthwhile project!

Registration forms and Conference information are included for you to share with 4-H Volunteers in your county. Please submit registration and workshop selection for each delegate via the Extension Intranet. **Extension Agents must register each adult participant online.** The registration link will be emailed at a later time, so watch your email. The county delegation form sent with the registration fees to the MVLA treasurer **does NOT** register them for the Conference and workshops. **Registration closes January 30, 2026.** Please make registration fees/checks payable to MVLA. Do **NOT** include workshop fees with registration fees; these will be need to be paid at the workshop during the Conference.

The media release form, registration fees and the county delegation form should be mailed to the attention of:

**Debby Carnathan, MVLA Treasurer
415 Lee Horn Drive, Suite 2
Houston, MS 38851**

Agents and Volunteers are encouraged to participate in the Conference. The workshops and interaction with others will motivate and encourage growth in your county 4-H program! Coffee Shop, Bingo and other fun activities will be held Friday night following the auction. Please be sure to share this with Volunteers. Information can be found on the MSU website as well as the MVLA Facebook page.

A block of rooms is reserved for the 4-H Volunteer Conference at LaQuinta Inn & Suites - 662-270-4100. Please refer to the reserved block group name "Mississippi 4-H Volunteer Leaders' Association 2026" when making your reservation. Rooms must be reserved by **February 11, 2026.**

***Please register all participants through the Extension Intranet. Mail the registration fees (NOT workshop fees) along with the list of Agents and Volunteers registered and photo release form (last two forms of this packet) to Debby Carnathan, MVLA Treasurer, 415 Lee Horn Drive, Suite 2 Houston, MS 38851. Registration must be complete by January 30, 2026. Please make checks payable to MVLA. No refunds on registration.**

"Ask Me About MVLA"
Mississippi 4-H Volunteer Leaders' Association Annual Leadership Conference
Mississippi State University Bost Extension Conference Center
February 27-28, 2026

CONFERENCE HIGHLIGHTS

FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 27, 2026

- MVLA Board Meeting & Pre-Conference Set up
- Registration at Bost Extension Conference Center (3:00 – 5:00 p.m.)
- Volunteer Reception 4:00-5:00 p.m.
- Annual Banquet – 6:00 p.m.
 - Guest Speaker
 - Award Recognition (Nomination forms due in State 4-H office by **January 30, 2026**)
 - Pinning Ceremony for new Lifetime Members of MVLA. All Volunteers and Extension employees who pay a \$100 lifetime membership by **February 1, 2026** will be pinned at the Annual Banquet.
- Live Auction
- **Grand prize drawing – Must be present to win!**
- Coffee Shop, Bingo and other Fun Activities

SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 28, 2026

- General Assembly
- Mississippi 4-H Volunteer Leaders' Association Annual Business Meeting
- Officer Elections – Nomination forms are due in the State 4-H Office by **January 30, 2026**. Campaign speeches will be presented during the MVLA business meeting (**candidates must be present**). Elected officers will be announced during lunch.
- Workshop Host and Hostess Orientation
- Workshops
- New MVLA Officers will be installed
- Closing Assembly - Conference evaluations
- **Grand prize drawing – Must be present to win!**

AUCTIONS, GAMES, AND MVLA 4-H STORE

- Conference delegates will have an opportunity to participate in a Silent Auction, a Live Auction, Tea Cup Auction and Heads or Tails Game. Please bring quality items valued at \$25 or more for the live and Tea Cup auctions and Heads or Tails Game, as well as items for the Silent Auction. A donation request letter from the MVLA President is available. The MVLA store will be open, featuring a variety of 4-H and MVLA promotional items for purchase.

DOOR PRIZES

- Counties are asked to bring at least **two** door prize items. Door prizes will be given away during general assemblies.

DRESS CODE

- Dress is casual attire during most events. Professional dress is encouraged for the Annual Banquet.

Mississippi 4-H Volunteer Leaders' Association Annual Leadership Conference
Mississippi State University
Bost Extension Conference Center
February 27-28, 2026

Theme: "Ask Me About MVLA"

FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 27 - A.M.

10:00-12:00 MVLA Board Meeting/Conference Set Up..... Bost Extension Center

12:00 P.M. **LUNCH**

1:00 Registration/Reception Set-Up..... Bost Extension Conference Center
MVLA Officers and Coordinators

4:00-5:00 Registration & Reception Bost Extension Conference Center

Silent Auction Opens

BANQUET - Bost Auditorium

6:00 Call to Order Connie Darden, MVLA President

Pledge of Allegiance.....

4-H Pledge.....

Greetings Dr. Mariah Morgan
Interim Head, MSU Extension Center for 4-H Youth

Darrell Banks, Extension Agent, Choctaw County

Crayton Coleman, Extension Agent, Noxubee County

Invocation.....

Dinner

Entertainment

Introduction of Speaker Jameka Harkins, MVLA President Elect

Guest Speaker Franco Shields

Awards..... Connie Darden, MVLA President
Lisha Hopper, MVLA Reporter

Announcements Connie Darden, MVLA President

Live and Tea Cup Auctions will begin immediately following the awards presentation.

Grand prize drawing – Must be present to win!

8:30-9:30 Coffee Shop, Bingo and Other Fun Activities – Bost Building B

SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 28 - A.M.Breakfast at your hotel (or location of your choice)

7:30-8:00 Registration..... Bost Extension Conference Center Lobby

8:00-8:45 ***Entertainment by Mississippi 4-H Volunteer Choir***

General Assembly Bost Extension Conference Center Auditorium

Welcome/Call-to-Order Connie Darden, MVLA President

Pledge of Allegiance.....

4-H Pledge

Thought-for-the-Day

Greetings..... Dr. Mariah Morgan
Interim Head, MSU Extension Center for 4-H Youth

MVLA Annual Business Meeting

Call to Order Connie Darden, MVLA President

Introduction of MVLA Board Members Connie Darden, MVLA President

MVLA Minutes Judy Caples, MVLA Secretary

Financial/Budget/Membership Report Debby Carnathan, MVLA Treasurer

Introduction of Candidates Rose Coffey-Graham, Past President

Candidates Speeches – 3 minutes..... Candidates must be present

Other Business of Importance Connie Darden, MVLA President

Door Prizes

Announcements Connie Darden, MVLA President

8:45 MVLA Officer Election Ballot box will be set up in the lobby

9:00-10:15 **WORKSHOPS – Session I**

10:15-10:30 **BREAK & EXHIBITS** Bost Extension Conference Center

10:30-11:45 **WORKSHOPS – Session II**

11:45-1:00 **LUNCH**.....Bost Extension Conference Center Auditorium

Call to Order Connie Darden, MVLA President

County pictures will be taken during lunch

Entertainment by Mississippi 4-H Volunteer Choir

MVLA Election Results Connie Darden, MVLA President

First Time Attendance Recognition..... Debby Carnathan, MVLA Treasurer

Door Prizes

1:15-2:30 **WORKSHOPS – Session III**

2:40 **Silent Auction Closes**

2:45-4:00 **WORKSHOPS – Session IV**

4:00 Closing Assembly..... Bost Auditorium

Installation of MVLA Officers Rose Coffey-Graham, Past President

Grand prize drawing – Must be present to win!

CONFERENCE ADJOURNS

MSU Food Security Network



Bully's Pantry (BP) is a collaborative effort between the Division of Student Affairs and the Student Association. As part of the MSU Food Security Network, a broader initiative to meet the basic needs of students, BP provides nutritious food, toiletries, school supplies, and other necessary items to current Mississippi State students in need.

Most Needed Food Items:

- Meals in a can (beef stew, chili, chicken noodles soup)
- Single serving meals (hamburger helper, ramen noodles, macaroni & cheese)
- Canned protein in water (tuna, salmon, chicken)
- Peanut or other seed butters (crunchy and smooth)
- Canned foods with pop-top lids
- Hot/Cold cereals
- Rice and pasta
- Pasta sauce
- Canned fruit
- Granola bars or light popcorn
- Apple sauce

Personal Care Items:

- Toothpaste & toothbrushes (individually wrapped)
- Soap
- Feminine hygiene items
- Paper towels
- Toilet paper
- Tissues
- Laundry detergent pods

School Supplies:

- Spiral notebooks
- Loose-leaf paper
- Pens
- Pencils
- Highlighters
- Folders
- Binders
- Index cards
- Post-it Notes

MVLA Conference Workshops 2026

4-H Spa & Relaxation

Courtney Headley

In this hands-on workshop, participants will create a variety of homemade self-care products and learn simple relaxation techniques to simulate a day at the spa. All are designed to be easy, affordable, and perfect for use during 4-H club meetings. The finished items also make wonderful gifts for 4-H'ers to share with family members, friends, or neighbors.

Limit 30

Branching Out: A Fun Education Program to Promote 4-H Forestry

James Shannon

This is an education program that will provide 4-H Volunteers with knowledge, skills, and resources to lead youth in forestry projects. Youth forestry education provides youth with an understanding of forestry principles, provides an appreciation of how forests benefit society, and allows preparation for rewarding natural resource management careers.

Limit 30

Cookie Mix in a Jar: A Hands-On Gift Making Workshop

Malikah Jones

Discover a fun, creative way to engage youth and spread joy! In this hands-on session, Volunteers will learn how to assemble layered cookie mix jars, perfect for gifts, fundraisers, or club activities. Participants will explore packaging ideas, recipe variations, and tips for leading this project with youth. Leave with a sample jar and the confidence to bring this sweet activity to your next meeting.

(\$10/person fee for supplies – Payable at workshop—Do not send with registration)

Limit 20

Empowering the Next Generation through Poultry Youth Programs

Tannah Christensen

This workshop will educate participants on the state's poultry youth programs while providing resources and strategies for implementation.

Human Trafficking Is Real! What Our Children & Youth Need to Know

Carol Bullard and Judy Caples

Educating ourselves about Human Trafficking is the best thing anyone can do. Participants will find out what they already know about Human Trafficking, how to report anything suspect, what can be done to stay safe, and know the dangers for which to look.

Limit 20

Medicinal Herbs – How to Use Them

Reta Scott

Participants will learn the different ways to use herbs as nature's medicine. This workshop will be a hands-on experience.

Limit 20

Ornament Making Fun

Madison DeGraffenreid

Volunteers will have the opportunity to make some unique ornaments they can take home and they can also teach to the kids and other Volunteers in their counties. Participants will get to use things found in nature to create ornaments. It's a great lesson that can be used in horticulture and forestry clubs, as well as entering them in Exhibit Day.

Limit 15

Parliamentary Procedures

Kayla Dowden

This workshop equips participants with essential skills in parliamentary procedures for effective meeting management. Attendees will learn to draft motions, facilitate discussions, and navigate formal meetings, promoting order and fairness. By the end, participants will confidently lead meetings, ensuring transparency and collaboration within their organizations. Suitable for all experience levels.

Photography Judging

Kevin Hudson

This workshop will give you a better understanding of the Photography Judging contest and how to prepare your 4-H'ers for success.

Planting Seeds in Youth for Our Future

Warner Creekmore

This will be a hands-on workshop. Participants will be expected to engage in discussions and participate in various activities. The participants will be offered ideas for programming and learn that lessons can be easy and fun for the youth who participate in Jr. Master Gardeners. The participants will have a great time with the activities. **Limit 10**

A Resource for Educational/Project 4-H Club Meetings Using a Manual Entitled *Nobody's Telling Us What We Need to Know to be Successful*

Laura Lynn Kerner

The manual, *Nobody's Telling Us What We Need to Know to be Successful*, is a playbook that teaches life management skills in unique and effective ways, preparing students to meet life's challenges with self-confidence, knowledge and assurance they can succeed. **Limit 30**

'Rockin' Out with Geology

Debbie Bruister

Participants will be given many resources and doing hands-on activities to do with their club. The class will explore how rocks are formed, where minerals come from and much more. This is a new unit being implemented and so easy to incorporate, since we are surrounded by rocks!

Sports Fishing

Thad Moody

This hands-on workshop equips 4-H agents and volunteers with the skills and confidence to lead fun, safe, and educational sport fishing programs. Participants will learn basic fishing techniques, casting skills, knot tying, fish identification, and water safety practices. The session will also cover how to teach youth ethical angling, conservation principles, and responsible outdoor stewardship. By the end of the workshop, agents and volunteers will leave with practical activities they can use immediately, a better understanding of how fishing supports youth life-skill development, and the tools needed to create engaging, youth-friendly sport fishing experiences in their counties.

Sustainable Floral Design

James DelPrince

Participants will learn about sustainable floral design characteristics, things to choose and things to avoid. The project will use easily acquired materials and locally grown fresh flowers when possible, and is suitable for multiple age groups. (\$10/person fee for supplies – Payable at workshop—Do not send with registration) (Deadline to register for this workshop is February 20, 2026) **Limit 20**

Time Travelers: Unearthing the Past

Debbie Bruister

Archeology is all around us, and learning about our past helps us to understand our present. This workshop is hands-on and will give many different activities to use with 4-H'ers. It will be easy to plan field trips and get the 4-H'ers interested in our history. This uses critical thinking and problem solving to analyze artifacts. This is a new unit Mississippi is implementing.

A Walk Through of State 4-H Club Congress

Courtney Headley

Participants will gain an understanding of what to expect while attending State 4-H Club Congress at Mississippi State University. This session will highlight the contests for which youth can prepare and explore additional activities and opportunities available during the event. **Limit 30**

2026 MVLA Conference Fun Activities

Bingo

Rose Coffey-Graham and Jameka Harkins

Try your luck at winning prizes while you enjoy playing Bingo.

Coffee Shop

Reta Scott

Relax with a hot cup of coffee, visit with other Volunteers, and share ideas with each other.

Karaoke/Line Dancing

Crayton Coleman and Darrell Banks

Share your singing talent or learn the newest line dances and have some fun!

Rolling With Recycled Items

Connie Darden and Lisha Hopper

Come and make some creative items with toilet paper rolls and other no cost or low cost materials.

2026 MVLA Conference Workshops

WORKSHOP SELECTION FORM – *Please use for the Online Registration*

Name: _____ County: _____

SATURDAY WORKSHOPS - CHOOSE ONE WORKSHOP IN EACH TIME SLOT

Session I – 9:00 –10:15 a.m.

- _____ Empowering the Next Generation through Poultry Youth Programs
- _____ Planting Seeds in Youth for Our Future (Limit 10)
- _____ Human Trafficking Is Real! What Our Children & Youth Need to Know (Limit 20)
- _____ A Resource for Educational/Project 4-H Club Meetings Using a Manual Entitled *Nobody's Telling Us What We Need to Know to be Successful* (Limit 30)

Session II – 10:30 -11:45 a.m.

- _____ 'Rockin' out with Geology
- _____ 4-H Spa & Relaxation (Limit 30)
- _____ Branching Out: A Fun Education Program to Promote 4-H Forestry (Limit 30)
- _____ Photography Judging

Session III – 1:15 – 2:30 p.m.

- _____ Sustainable Floral Design (\$10/person fee for supplies – Payable at workshop—Do not send with registration) (Deadline to register for this workshop is February 20, 2026) (Limit 20)
- _____ A Walk Through of State 4-H Club Congress (Limit 30)
- _____ Time Travelers: Unearthing the Past
- _____ Sports Fishing

Session IV – 2:45 – 4:00 p.m.

- _____ Cookie Mix in a Jar: A Hands-On Gift Making Workshop (\$10/person fee for supplies – Payable at workshop—Do not send with registration) (Limit 20)
- _____ Medicinal Herbs – How to Use Them (Limit 20)
- _____ Ornament Making Fun (Limit 15)
- _____ Parliamentary Procedures

REGISTRATION FORM – To be used for online registration

**MISSISSIPPI 4-H VOLUNTEER LEADERS' ASSOCIATION
ANNUAL LEADERSHIP CONFERENCE
February 27-28, 2025
Mississippi State University, Starkville**

*This form is to be used by the Extension Agent to register participants on-line. The deadline for on-line registration is **JANUARY 30, 2026**.*

Name: _____

Address: _____ City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Phone: _____ County: _____

E-Mail Address: _____

Full MVLA Conference registration **\$130.00** _____

Full MVLA Conference registration for First Timers only **\$100.00** _____
(Banquet meal, breaks, lunch, t-shirt & annual membership)

Full Conference registration for MVLA Lifetime members **\$120.00** _____
(Banquet meal, breaks, lunch & t-shirt)

Friday Banquet – ONLY **\$ 30.00** _____
(Banquet meal only)

Saturday registration – ONLY **\$100.00** _____

Saturday registration – ONLY for First Timers Only **\$ 70.00** _____
(Lunch, breaks, t-shirt & MVLA annual membership)

Saturday registration – ONLY **\$ 90.00** _____
(Lunch, breaks & t-shirt)

MVLA Lifetime Membership ONLY **\$100.00** _____

Conference T-shirt (S M L XL XXL XXXL XXXXL) **Choose Size** Size _____

Late fee for registration after January 30, 2026 **\$ 10.00** (T-shirt size not guaranteed) _____

Is this your first time to attend the MVLA Conference? _____ Yes _____ No

Are you currently a registered Mississippi 4-H Volunteer? _____ Yes _____ No

Are you a Lifetime Member of MVLA? _____ Yes _____ No

Please list any dietary restrictions: _____

All participants must be registered and have paid all registration fees to attend. This Conference is for adults only (this includes all workshops). *Childcare will not be provided during the Conference.*

Emergency Contact (Name & Phone #): _____

MISSISSIPPI STATE UNIVERSITY

PHOTO RELEASE FORM

I hereby grant permission to Mississippi State University (MSU), Mississippi State University Extension Service (MSU-ES), or anyone authorized by MSU, to use and reproduce any and all photographs of me that have been taken during my involvement in the Mississippi Volunteer Leaders' Association Conference without compensation to me. All negatives and positives (whether digital or film), together with any prints, are owned by MSU. MSU reserves the right to crop and edit the photographs and to use these photographs in any form, including but not limited to print and electronic publications, social media, or web posting. MSU may choose not to use the photographs at all, or may choose to use the photographs at its discretion at a later date. MSU reserves the right to discontinue use of photos without notice.

I acknowledge that I am 18 years of age or older have read and understood the terms of this release.

Name (Print)

Signature

Date

Contact information:

Phone

Email

2026 MVLA Conference County Delegation

County: _____

Participant	Registration Fee	First Timer (Y or N)
1. _____	_____	_____
2. _____	_____	_____
3. _____	_____	_____
4. _____	_____	_____
5. _____	_____	_____
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10. _____	_____	_____
11. _____	_____	_____
12. _____	_____	_____
13. _____	_____	_____
14. _____	_____	_____
15. _____	_____	_____

Please submit this form with payment (**NOT** workshop fees) and mail to:

Debby Carnathan, MVLA Treasurer
415 Lee Horn Drive, Suite 2
Houston, MS 38851