

ENGAGING VOLUNTEERS

“If you want to go fast, go alone. If you want to go far, go together.” The best way to grow your agricultural education program is to engage volunteers in your local community.

STEPS TO SUCCESS

1. Work with your alumni and advisory board to develop a list of individuals who may be willing to volunteer their time and talents to help grow your program.
2. Work with your alumni to find opportunities for them to engage with and support your program.

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WORKING WITH FFA ALUMNI AND SUPPORTERS

Former FFA members and others in the community can supply invaluable assistance, expertise, and support to your program and FFA chapter. Organizing supporters through local affiliates of National FFA Alumni and Supporters will add cohesion, prestige and national resources to their efforts.

National FFA Alumni and Supporters secures the promise of FFA and agricultural education by creating an environment in which people and communities can develop their potential for premier leadership, personal growth, and career success. The association operates at the local, state and national levels. Members may be former FFA members, parents, industry representatives, counselors, administrators, community leaders, agricultural educators or any other adults who wish to support the FFA and agricultural education.

BENEFITS

An active FFA Alumni and Supporters group can strengthen your agricultural education program by

- supporting FFA members through coaching, mentoring or financial contributions;
- linking students to the community and the community to students;
- bringing parents back to school;
- building community partnerships;
- influencing educational legislation and policies at the local, state, and national levels;
- helping ensure continued program support and success.

In the meantime, involvement in FFA Alumni and Supporters benefits adults through opportunities to:

- grow personally and professionally;
- gain recognition;
- contribute to students' growth and success;
- strengthen local agriculture and agricultural education;
- contribute to the community.

THE INSTRUCTOR'S ROLE

As the agriculture instructor and FFA advisor, you will be an important resource to the FFA Alumni and Supporters affiliate, just as it will be a tremendous help to you. Here are some important aspects of your role.

Share your expectations for the agricultural education program. Identify specific areas in which Alumni and Supporters members might provide assistance.

Communicate with Alumni and Supporters members openly and directly. Clarify roles. For example, the instructor generally directs the program, an Advisory Committee provides vision, and Alumni and other volunteers support efforts to achieve the vision.

Encourage FFA members and Alumni and Supporters members to work together. The resulting interactions can be valuable real world learning experiences for students.

Recognize and thank Alumni supporters.

WORKING WITH FFA ALUMNI AND SUPPORTERS

CHARTERING OR REACTIVATING AN ALUMNI AND SUPPORTERS CHAPTER

To charter or reactivate as a National FFA Alumni and Supporters chapter, your chapter must meet and maintain these qualifications:

1. Have at least 10 annual or life members that will pay National FFA Alumni member dues and State FFA Alumni dues (if applicable).
2. Have current bylaws in harmony with the National FFA Alumni Bylaws.
3. Have a council of elected officers.
4. Complete the Application for Chartering/Reactivating/Renaming.
5. Submit the completed application for Chartering/Reactivating to your State FFA Alumni Association.

Your state FFA alumni association will complete the process on their **CREATE NEW CHAPTER** tab of the **ALUMNI STATE PROFILE** page of **Manage My FFA**.

Once the state has completed the process they will notify alumni leaders of their FFA.org account information. You will have 30 days to submit your initial roster using **Manage MyFFA** on FFA.org and 30 days following submission of your membership to pay your membership dues invoice. After this has been completed you will then be allowed to apply to be a part of National FFA's 501c3 status.

KEY RESOURCES

National FFA library of resources for additional FFA Alumni and Supporters

<https://ffa.app.box.com/v/start-an-alumni-chapter>

This library includes in-depth materials related to

- How to Start an Alumni & Supporters Chapter
- Marketing membership
- Awards
- Membership & Rosters

Suggested Alumni and Supporters Chapter Bylaws

<https://ffa.app.box.com/v/start-an-alumni-chapter/file/322108479179>

The National FFA Alumni and Supporters provides assistance and information for local instructors and FFA Alumni and Supporters affiliates.

P.O. Box 68960
Indianapolis, IN 46268-0960
(888) 332-2668

LOCAL FFA ALUMNI & SUPPORTERS ACTIVITIES

Local FFA Alumni & Supporters activities provide rewarding experiences for community supporters while enhancing your agricultural education program and FFA chapter. Your FFA Alumni & Supporters affiliate might want to try some of the following ideas.

- Present agricultural careers day for school, school district or county.
- Coach CDE teams.
- Raise funds to support agriculture program and FFA chapter projects—pork raffle, fruit and nut sale, steak fry, chicken BBQ, pancake breakfast, etc.
- Raise funds for improved agriculture program facilities and/or technology.
- Finance students' trips to National FFA Convention.
- Finance students' trips to Washington Leadership Conference.
- Assist with agricultural improvement programs.
- Host a beginning-of-school-year event for FFA members, families, incoming students and FFA Alumni and Supporters members.
- Sponsor scholarships for FFA members to study agriculture after high school.
- Assist with students' SAE programs and other work-based learning experiences.
- Assist with FFA chapter activities—county fair auction, annual banquet, fund raisers, etc.
- Assist with FFA chapter programs—Food For America presentations, community service, etc.
- Chaperone students on FFA trips.
- Transport students' projects to fairs, judging events, etc.
- Host a joint leadership seminar for FFA and FFA Alumni officers.
- Judge local award applications and CDEs.
- Serve as guest speakers in agriculture classes and at FFA meetings.
- Challenge FFA members to recreational tournaments...softball, volleyball, etc.
- Advocate for agriculture program and FFA chapter at school board and town council meetings.
- Arrange an exchange between two FFA chapters.

Source: compiled from reported activities of Michigan Alumni and Supporters affiliates.

PURPOSEFUL RECRUITMENT AND USE OF VOLUNTEERS

BEFORE YOU RECRUIT

1. Be aware of your school's volunteer policies and procedures. (Do volunteers have to complete a background check?)
2. Know who makes up your school's community.
3. Identify and describe the different areas that you will need volunteers.

RECRUITMENT BASICS

1. Always recruit volunteers to help students and teachers, not to give service to the school. People work for people, not organizations.
2. Tell people what they will do, how long they will be expected to do it, and who will benefit.
3. Be honest and upfront with people when trying to recruit. Do not lie about the work or minimize the time needed.
4. Never use guilt when trying to recruit.
5. Avoid the "first-warm body through the door" method of recruitment. If you cannot get the right person for the specific task, do not take anybody.
6. Remember that you are trying to take away a person's reason for saying "NO", not twisting their arms to volunteer.
7. Peer recruitment works well. Parents recruit parents; retired persons recruit retired persons, etc.

8. For small programs, it is crucial that you concentrate on developing a corps of dedicated volunteers. They will be your best recruiters. Their enthusiasm and dedication can lead to wider acceptance of volunteers by the teachers and school staff. Remember, quality, not quantity, counts.

Source: Albuquerque Public Schools. (n.d.). Recruiting, Placing and Retaining Volunteers. Retrieved August 25, 2022, from <https://www.aps.edu/community/volunteer-with-aps/documents/Recruiting,%20Placing%20and%20Retaining%20Volunteers.pdf>

SETTING THE TONE WITH VOLUNTEERS

- Explain the roles and responsibilities for your volunteers
- Have defined and clear expectations
- Communicate clearly with your volunteers before and after the volunteer opportunity
- Keep your volunteers up to date with your programs activities