

LEADERSHIP THROUGH STUDENT ORGANIZATIONS

One of the most exciting parts about being an agricultural educator is watching students grow and find their passions. For many students, this often comes when they are involved in a student leadership organization, such as the National FFA Organization.

STEPS TO SUCCESS

1. Have a thorough understanding of agricultural education and the three-circle model.
2. Work with your student leadership team (and the previous agricultural educator if possible) to gain access to a current FFA program of activities.
3. Develop a working relationship with FFA alumni and supporters.

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STUDENT LEADERSHIP ORGANIZATIONS OVERVIEW

The local FFA chapter can provide motivation, fun and recognition for your students, your program, and you. Ensure FFA success by seeking information and encouraging students leadership.

BENEFITS

Effective chapters help students —

- make school-to-career connections;
- develop career skills;
- develop premier leadership skills;
- prepare for responsible citizenship;
- earn recognition and build self-confidence.

In addition, the chapter can strengthen your agricultural education program by —

- integrating experiential and classroom learning with recognition opportunities;
- motivating students;
- encouraging students to take responsibility for their own learning;
- attracting additional students;
- building goodwill and recognition in the school and community.

ADVISOR'S ROLE

If you are the school's only agriculture teacher, then you will be the chapter advisor. If your school has multiple teachers, then you may not be the "official" FFA advisor but may still be involved with the chapter and its activities. In either case, you will be able to use leadership organization involvement to build student motivation and involvement in your program.

Here are key activities related to the advisor's role.

- Supervise chapter activities year-round.
- Stay informed about the organization's programs, events and resources, and share

related information with students.

- Inform prospective students and their parents about the organization.
- Instruct students in leadership and personal development.
- Build school and community support for the program.
- Encourage involvement of all chapter members in activities.
- Prepare students for involvement in competitive events and awards programs.

KEY RESOURCES

Numerous resources are available for student leadership organizations. One of your first contacts should be your state agricultural education and/or FFA specialist for assistance with FFA. At the end of this chapter are resources specific to organizations.

The following National FFA Organization resources detail FFA chapter management and programming information.

- [Official FFA Manual](#)
- [Agricultural and Agriscience Research Proficiency Award Handbooks](#)
- [American FFA Degree Handbook](#)
- [Career Development and Leadership Development Events Handbook](#)

FFA CHAPTER SUCCESS

A successful FFA chapter provides a variety of activities and experiences that interest students, give them leadership responsibilities and help them explore careers and community involvement.

CHAPTER ACTIVITIES

During the course of a school year and extended program schedule, your FFA chapter will probably be involved in the following types of activities.

- Election of officers
- Chapter meetings
- Committee work
- Fund raising
- Public relations
- Membership recruitment efforts
- National FFA programs—National FFA Convention and Expo, National FFA week, 212°, 360°, ILSSO, New Century Farmer, Washington Leadership Conference, Horizon Conference, etc.
- Chapter recognition programs—National Chapter Award, district/region and state membership awards
- FFA degrees and member recognition programs— Chapter Star Greenhand, Chapter Star in Agribusiness, Chapter Star Farmer, agriscience recognition award, proficiency awards
- Local, district/region and state career development events
- Community service projects
- Career seminars and tours
- State FFA Convention and National FFA Convention
- Team building and recreation
- Involvement with the local FFA Alumni chapter
- Chapter banquet and recognition ceremony

RECOGNITION OPPORTUNITIES

Membership in the National FFA Organization offers your students many avenues for individual and chapter recognition. In addition to local publicity and the personal rewards of a job well done, members may want to seek recognition in some of the following award programs. Check the current Official Manual for information related to each opportunity.

- **Agriscience Awards**
Recognize members' outstanding agriscience programs.
- **Agricultural Proficiency Awards**
Recognize members' outstanding supervised agricultural experience (SAE) programs.
- **Scholarships**
Support members' higher education.
- **Star Awards**
Recognize members' accomplishments in SAE programs and leadership.
- **Leadership Development Events**
Recognize members' performance in competitive events addressing major areas of agricultural instruction and leadership.
- **National Chapter Awards**
Recognize FFA chapters for development, implementation and evaluation of an annual Program of Activities.
- **Career Development Events**
Focus on student success. FFA members study and practice to gain a complete and comprehensive knowledge of what it takes to succeed in a related career.

STEP-BY-STEP FFA CHAPTER DEVELOPMENT

Check off these steps to ensure your FFA chapter is ready for a year of exciting action.

EXISTING CHAPTERS

- Review chapter records. Ensure the chapter has a constitution and is chartered. Check students' membership status. (Some may have already affiliated for three or four years. Past years' membership rosters will reflect these payments.)
 - Obtain a copy of last year's Program of Activities (POA). See what results were achieved and which areas might attract further member involvement in the coming year.
 - Meet with elected officers (many chapters select their officers in the spring). Help them plan ways to obtain members' input, involve members in planning, develop a written POA and keep members involved. Use as a guide for FFA events throughout the year. Make sure they are clear on their chapter roles and responsibilities. Provide them with key resources like the [National FFA Manual](#).
 - Support members as they set goals, develop activities and evaluate the results of their Program of Activities.
 - Ensure an accurate chapter roster and state and national FFA dues are remitted by the deadline date.
- Contact the National FFA Organization for a packet that will guide you through establishing and chartering an FFA chapter.
 - Discuss your intentions with school administrators. Explain how FFA experiences will enhance student learning and career preparation. Ask administrators to support your efforts.
 - Inform students about FFA and get them excited to participate. The National FFA Organization offers many promotional publications and videos that can help. One such resource is their [SAE Video Library](#). There are also additional ideas for student recruitment in this manual's [Marketing Your Program chapter \(Section 16\)](#).
 - Convene a meeting to organize the chapter, create the chapter's constitution and bylaws, and elect student officers.
 - Complete the official membership roster and remit it, with dues payment, by the deadline date.
 - Develop a basic Program of Activities to help guide the chapter's purpose. Ask an established chapter for a copy of their Program of Activities to assist the development of your POA.
 - Take students to FFA meetings and events, including district or state meetings, and leadership retreats and conferences.

NEW CHAPTERS

- Contact the state FFA advisor and state Agriculture Education Specialist to express your interest in establishing a chapter. Ask the state advisor to provide information and materials that will help you do so.

FFA PROGRAM OF ACTIVITIES

Successful FFA chapters understand that success is the result of planning carefully, then carrying out the plans. They organize their plans through a written Program of Activities (POA) that defines chapter goals and outlines the steps students will take to meet the goals. The POA must be tailored to meet the unique needs of the local chapter, members and community. The POA is organized in three divisions, with five quality standards in each division, as outlined below.

DIVISION I—GROWING LEADERS

Leadership: Activities that help the individual develop technical, human relations, and decision making skills to enhance personal success.

Healthy Lifestyle: Activities that promote the well-being of students mentally or physically, in achieving the positive evolution of the whole person.

Scholarship: Activities that develop a positive attitude toward lifelong learning experiences.

Personal Growth: Activities conducted that improve the identity and self-awareness of members.

Career Success: Activities that promote student involvement and growth through agriculture related experiences and/or entrepreneurship and promote career readiness.

DIVISION II—BUILDING COMMUNITIES

Environmental: Activities conducted to preserve natural resources and develop environmentally responsible individuals.

Human Resources: Activities conducted to improve the welfare and well-being of members and citizens of the community.

Citizenship: Activities conducted to encourage members to become active, involved citizens of their school, community, and country.

Stakeholder Engagement: Activities conducted to develop teamwork and cooperation between the local chapter and stakeholders.

Economic Development: Activities conducted to improve the economic welfare of the community.

DIVISION III—STRENGTHENING AGRICULTURE

Support Group: Activities conducted to develop and maintain positive relations among FFA, parents and community leaders interested in supporting agricultural education.

Chapter Recruitment: Activities conducted to increase agricultural education enrollment and/or FFA membership and encourage greater participation.

Safety: Activities that enhance safety in the community.

Agricultural Advocacy: Activities conducted to articulate and promote agricultural programs, practices, policies and/or education to elicit action.

Agricultural Literacy: Activities that help consumers become better informed about the production, distribution, and daily impact of food, fiber, and fuel.

FFA PROGRAM OF ACTIVITIES

PROGRAM BUDGET

Every chapter needs to have a budget to make sure that they are practicing good financial practices. Chapters host numerous fundraisers to help offset costs for conferences and competitions. Fundraisers also help chapters be active in their community by funding community service events. Fundraisers might also be used to help purchase equipment that will benefit the students education. The chapter budget should be created before the school year begins.

A chapter budget is needed to see if the chapter can actually fund events it wants to do. Remember when budgeting that programs should have money left over to fund the beginning of the next year.

FFA CHAPTER OFFICERS

Refer to your chapter's Constitution and Bylaws to follow proper selection process of officers

See the current [Official FFA Manual](#) for descriptions of officer responsibilities.

FFA CHAPTER OFFICER TRAINING

In order to ensure a successful year it is helpful to have an officer training prior to the start of the year.

CHAPTER MEETINGS

- Make sure you announce/ advertise your chapter meetings to ALL members.
 - Always prepare a written/typed agenda.
 - Use correct parliamentary procedure and official FFA ceremonies.
 - Have the secretary take accurate minutes, journaling the decisions made and motions in the meeting.
 - If time allows, adjourn for brief committee meetings, then reconvene.
 - Review the monthly calendar of events.
 - Try to meet at the same time and day of the week each time you meet.
- Include a student-planned program. Members might find interesting presenters among—
 - school staff or students;
 - university faculty or staff;
 - FFA Alumni members;
 - state FFA officers;
 - employers;
 - parents and other community members.
 - After the meeting, offer a recreational event planned by students, like bowling, skating, basketball, volleyball, softball, swimming, videos, bonfire, food, social, etc.

FFA PROGRAM OF ACTIVITIES

CHAPTER RECRUITMENT

Recruitment and retention of members is crucial for a program to thrive. Here are some resources to help you and your officers recruit new members and retain current members.

[Alabama FFA's Guide to Recruitment and Retention](#)

EVENT PLANNING GUIDE

Before the beginning of the school year, you and your officer team should sit down and create a Program of Activities or a calendar of events that the chapter will be participating in or organizing. Each event should have a committee that will help plan and organize that event. REMEMBER these events are student organized with advisor assistance.

FFA chapters bring their year to an end by celebrating their accomplishments and successes at their FFA Banquet. This is planned by students and should be included in your Program of Activities.

[National FFA Banquet Planning Guide](#)

TRAVEL

Part of your duties as an advisor will require traveling with your students. The following links can be helpful in planning and budgeting for your trips.

[National FFA Convention and Expo Implementation Guide](#)

STUDENT LEADERSHIP ORGANIZATION PARTNERSHIPS

The National FFA Organization is one of nine career and technical student organizations (CTSOs) linked to career and technical education programs. As with the FFA, other CTSOs are major intra-curricular components of their respective educational programs. They provide students with a variety of activities that help them prepare for leadership roles and careers.

CTSOS

- [National FFA Organization](#) - Agricultural education (middle grades, high school and collegiate)
- [National Young Farmers Education Association \(NYFEA\)](#) - Agricultural education (adult)
- [Future Business Leaders of America](#) - Business education
- [Family, Career and Community Leaders of America](#) - Family and consumer sciences education (formerly home economics)
- [Future Healthcare Professionals \(HOSA\)](#) - Health care education
- [DECA](#) - Marketing education
- [Business Professionals of America](#) - Office education
- [Technology Student Association \(TSA\)](#) - Technology education
- [SkillsUSA](#) - Trade, industrial and technical education

EXTRA-CURRICULAR ORGANIZATIONS

[Minorities in Agriculture, Natural Resources and Related Science \(MANRRS\)](#) - Agriculture education (middle school, high school, and collegiate)

[4-H](#) - Agriculture education (elementary school, middle school, high school, and collegiate)

[National Grange Youth](#) - Agriculture education (elementary school, middle school, high school and collegiate)

[Key Club](#) - Service Organization (high school)

MAKE THE STUDENT LEADERSHIP ORGANIZATION CONNECTION

Other Student Leadership Organization advisors in your school and community can be valuable allies as you begin your FFA advising efforts.

Although each program's students will want to claim their CTSO is "the best," each area has much to offer and can often complement the others. For example, if your FFA chapter grows flowers and designs floral arrangements, the DECA chapter might market and sell them. Such cooperation enhances extended learning opportunities and provides some "cross training" as students are exposed to other areas.

Ask your immediate supervisor for a list of the CTSOs in your school, their sponsors, a description of each and their purposes. Get to know the other CTSO advisors and their areas of expertise. Do not hesitate to ask for—and offer—assistance and ideas for joint projects.