



# IOWA

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# FFA ASSOCIATION

## STATE OFFICER CANDIDATE WORKBOOK

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# LETTER FROM THE IOWA FFA PRESIDENT

Dear State Officer Candidate,

The state officer candidate process is an amazing experience and one our organization prides itself on. The candidate process starts way before April though. The hours spent studying, practicing, and discovering your leadership style are all necessary components to be successful in this process. Believe it or not, but even though you are the one running for office, those around you are a part of the process too! Whether it's family, friends, coaches, or employers, all have a hand in your process. They support you, offer encouragement, maybe even sharpen your skills. If they aren't involved by now, they should be.

As an officer I've learned that everything you do is bigger than yourself. No action is without consequence, either good or bad. The work that you put in now, is going to benefit you later. The relationships and passion you foster throughout these next few weeks will help you grow and develop your leadership style.

If you are elected, then your life will forever be changed. You will join the ranks of a family only few can claim. You will be given a platform to change lives and pour yourself into others. What you do with it will be entirely up to you. Will you use it to its full potential? Will you coast through the year, relishing on the fact that you won? Not sure? I'd recommend answering the self-reflection questions found later in this book.

Something I will encourage you on is this: be you. If you are the type of person who is down to business and wants to get things done, then great! If you prefer to be social, interact with people, learn their story and make a real connection, fantastic! If you are some hybrid of what I described, cool! As you prep for interviews, do not lose sight of who you are or make yourself mimic someone else. Why? Because you are going to serve as you if elected. Read that again. No matter how much you try to force yourself be the "funny person" in interviews for example, the less the Nominating Committee is going to get see you for who you really are. There is no cookie cutter for these positions. Any great leader needs a passion for what they're doing and a willingness to learn more. State Office is no different.

Your time in our organization has prepped you for this moment, whether you realize it or not. The hours spent with your advisor, the thoughtfulness you put into working with fellow members, the minutes dedicated to serving your community are all going to come together for you in this process. Never lose sight of those who got you here. They believe in you and what you're capable of.

As I close, I want to share some other helpful pieces of advice that I've acquired via my county fair show barns:

- Never hug a badger
- Don't spit into the wind
- Sneaking up on a skunk is a poor move
- Love others as you love yourself

On behalf of the entire state officer team, good luck!

Go Get Em,

**Chandler Jahner**

2019-2020 State President

## PAST STATE OFFICER REFLECTIONS

“When I think back on my time as a state officer, I can’t help but think about how it was about everything other than me. It has all been about service. Now, I’m sure some of you are thinking you’ve heard this before and are beginning to think we are trained to say this, but that’s definitely not the case. Your year as a state officer is a year of service. You are not just a leader, but a servant leader, serving 15,000+ FFA members in the great state of Iowa. Having that attitude of service is the first step in preparing for the role as a state officer.”

***Elisa Russ***

2016-2017 State President

“As most of you know, being a state officer is more than just a title. You are a role model, teammate, facilitator, advocate, and leader of (in my opinion) the strongest student led organization on the planet. This experience of running is like none other that you will be a part of—let it grow and shape you, and always remember it’s not where you serve but how. Even if you do not get elected you are a leader that can and will grow our organization for years to come.”

***Ally Babcock***

2017-2018 North Central State Vice President

“Looking back on my time serving as an officer, the words humble service come to mind. Each time that I would zip up my jacket I wasn’t doing it for me. I was doing it for the 15,000 members in our state who deserved me putting on that jacket and giving it 250% every time. I’m sure you’ve heard something like this before, and it isn’t just some cliché we say. Serving as an officer means that you represent and serve the state, yourself, and most importantly members just like yourself. Officers have such a large impact on those they get to serve, just think of an officer who has impacted you. Understanding the impact, you can make on those you are serving is the first step in the process of becoming a state officer.”

***Zach Hamilton***

2017-2018 State President

“Serving as a state officer is one of the most unforgettable experiences out there. For me, it meant going from a farm kid who had twelve in his graduating class to representing over fifteen thousand students across the state of Iowa. More than that though, it meant service: helping those around me and doing my best to uphold the standards of the Iowa FFA. It can be easy to get caught up in the title, but we owe every action we make as a State Officer to one group of people that make this organization great: The members. Through this process, commit yourself to service and never forget who you are doing it for.”

***Cole Reiman***

2018-2019 Northwest State Vice President

## **PERSONAL GROWTH QUESTIONS**

Please take the time to honestly reflect on the following questions and answer them. No one will see the responses to these questions and they will probably not be asked in the interview process. They are simply designed to help you reflect on yourself. The better you know yourself, the better you can convey who you are to the Nominating Committee.

1. What compels you to run for state office?
2. What does true service look like?
3. What is the most significant decision you have made in your life? Why was it significant?
4. What do you want in return from your service as an officer?
5. What is the biggest way you can connect/relate with members?
6. What do you value most in life?
7. When is the last time you intentionally made someone smile? Why did you make that effort?

## TRAIT BUILDERS

The National FFA Organization has identified eight traits required for fulfilling the job description of a state and national FFA officer. As leaders, we have all five traits. Some are revealed in stronger ways than other, but regardless, we have all five. If you are able to develop yourself in these five areas, you can better serve as an officer.

### **#1: COMMUNICATION – 20%**

Demonstrates the effective use of various forms of communication. (ex. Non-verbal, listening, written, speaking and ability to convey a message in both large group and one-on-one settings.)

### **#2: TEAM PLAYER – 20%**

Demonstrates the ability to work in a team setting, values diversity of opinion and works to be inclusive in the process and is willing to put others before self. Demonstrates the ability to see the big picture, break large projects into smaller tasks, appropriately prioritize multiple demands and use time management and organizational tools to produce quality results by identified deadline.

### **#3: AREAS OF KNOWLEDGE – 20%**

Demonstrates the ability to articulate the systemic nature of food, fiber, agricultural and natural resources issues, FFA and all respective current issues. (ex. Agriculture knowledge, FFA knowledge, and American education and agricultural education systems knowledge) Demonstrates the ability to seek solutions and resources when finding information. (ex. Solve problems, think critically and conduct research)

### **#4: CHARACTER – 20%**

Displays a disposition that is genuine, responsible, honest, mature, confident, respectful and has a positive outlook on life.

### **#5: INFLUENCE – 20%**

Demonstrates the ability to influence others through modeling expectations, building relationships and growing the organization. (ex. Motivates FFA members, mentors and coaches others, represents members, builds relationships) Displays personal attributes that are courageous and passionate while carrying out the FFA mission with contagious enthusiasm. (ex. Self-confidence, commitment to FFA, energetic, takes initiative, commitment to service)

## **INTERVIEW ROUNDS**

### **ROUND #1 – PERSONAL ROUND ONE**

- 3-5 Q's • 6 mins • 1 on 12 •

Purpose: Get to know your goals, motivations & desire to be a state officer

Tips: Make your first impression a lasting impression & practice interview questions.

### **ROUND #2 – MULTIPLE CHOICE TEST**

- 30 Q's • 30 minutes •

Purpose: Evaluate your base understanding of core issues & facts related to agriculture, agricultural education and FFA.

Tips: Study the suggested reference list resources.

### **ROUND #3 – ROUND ROBIN**

- Completed twice • 2 minute preparation • 5 minute conversation •

Purpose: Evaluate your ability to carry a conversation with industry and career experts

Tips: This is not a speech round – it's a conversation. Study and research the hot topics and be able to have general conversations about them.

### **ROUND #4 – ONE-ON-ONE**

- 12 interviews • 2-3 Q's • 3 minutes •

Purpose: Evaluate targeted traits & give the Nominating Committee a chance to interact with you one-on-one.

Tips: Set-up mock interviews and practice answering interview questions.

### **ROUND #5 – WRITING EXERCISE**

- 1 topic • 45 minutes •

Purpose: Evaluate your ability to convey knowledge & understanding via writing. Tips: Study and research the 'Hot Topics.'

### **ROUND #6 – ADVOCACY STAND AND DELIVER**

- 20 minute preparation • 3 minute speech • 2-3 Q's • 5 minutes Q's •

Purpose: Evaluate how you verbally convey a message in front of a group or crowd. Tips: Study and research the 'Hot Topics.'

### **ROUND #7 – PERSONAL ROUND TWO**

- 3-5 Q's • 8 minutes •

Purpose: Evaluate your character, passion for success and influence. Tips: Be yourself & share examples about your life outside of FFA.

## HOT TOPICS

The following is a listing of six 'Hot Topics' that will have the possibility of being covered throughout the interview process. The 3 topic areas are *American Agriculture, Agricultural Education, FFA*. One of the topic areas will be selected by the Nominating Committee for 'Round 6 – Advocacy Stand & Deliver' with the other two topic areas being utilized in 'Round 3 – Round Robin.' All 3 topic areas will be used in 'Round 5 – Writing Exercise.'

### AMERICAN AGRICULTURE

- Environmental impacts that effects Iowa Ag Economy
- How youth can be assets to local and state Agriculture given current market conditions

### AGRICULTURAL EDUCATION

- SAE for All and its implementation in Ag programs across the state over the next several years
- The value of relationships with local and state Alumni groups to help teacher retention for programs both young and old

### FFA

- The impact of 50+ years of Women in FFA
- Resources FFA chapters need available to help local programs diversify and stay relevant

Below is a checklist of things to include in both your essay and speech for 'Round 5 – Writing Exercise' and 'Round 6 – Advocacy Stand & Deliver.' These bullet points are items that are utilized to evaluate you:

- 2 – 3 Statistics (with source cited)
- Explain career advantages and disadvantages of the hot topics
- Articulate how the facts & issues are impactful
- Recall one relative historical event
- Promote agriculture's/FFA's/ag ed's ability to develop leaders

A good starting point would be to increase your knowledge base on each of these topics. Write down and memorize 2-3 statistics about each particular topic. Practice giving a speech or writing about each one.

## **POST-INTERVIEW PROCEDURE**

After the interview process, the Nominating Committee will set the ballot. At the delegate business session of the Iowa FFA Leadership Conference, the ballot will be announced. Those balloted will be escorted to a holding room.

Each candidate will give a two-minute speech to the state delegate body. The at-large positions (President, Secretary & Reporter) will give their speech to all delegates. The Vice President positions will give their speech to the delegates from their respective district.

After giving a two-minute speech, each candidate will be asked two questions by the delegates (the President candidates will be asked four).

After this, the delegates will cast their votes and the decision will be made final. The results will be announced during the final session of the Iowa FFA Leadership Conference.

## **POST-ELECTION PROCEDURE**

The Iowa FFA Leadership Conference is adjourned, the clean-up crews have begun their work in Hilton Coliseum, and the 6,000 conference attendees are exiting to return home. The *new* Iowa FFA State Officer Team will begin its term of serving over 15,000 members of the Iowa FFA Association.

Not everyone who runs for state office is fortunate enough to be elected. Always remember, the selection process decides *where* you serve, not *how* you serve. If you are not elected, does that mean you will hang up your jacket and quit your FFA career? Will you forget all the hard work and dedication you've committed to this great organization? We need people with your hard work, service, and passion to continue giving all they have to their home chapter, post-secondary programs, and Alumni.

If elected, you will be rushed off stage for your first-ever team picture. Immediately following, the rush of conference attendants will congratulate you: members, advisors and parents. You will then be escorted to the New/Old Officer Team Meeting. The 2019-2020 Iowa FFA State Officer Team will give you some short advice and let you meet as the rest of your teammates. You will have your first-ever team meeting and begin your lifelong journey as a member of the 2020-2021 Iowa FFA State Officer Team.

## SUGGESTED REFERENCES LIST

The following is a list of resources compiled to help assist you in your preparations for state office. This is a thorough list, but do not limit yourself to only the resources listed below.

### AMERICAN AGRICULTURAL EDUCATION

- CASE (Curriculum for Agricultural Science Education): [www.case4learning.org](http://www.case4learning.org)
- NAAE (National Association of Agricultural Educators): [www.naae.org/about](http://www.naae.org/about)
- Iowa FFA Annual Report: <http://www.iowaffa.com/annualreport.aspx>
- The Council for Agriculture Education: <https://www.ffa.org/thecouncil>
- Iowa Team Ag Ed: Iowa FFA Association, Iowa FFA Foundation, Iowa Association of Agricultural Educators, Postsecondary Agricultural Students of Iowa, Iowa FFA Alumni
- Association for Career & Technical Education: <http://www.acteonline.org/>

### AGRICULTURE

- Iowa Ag Facts (by Iowa Farm Bureau):  
[www.iowafarmbureau.com/public/167/ag\\_in\\_your\\_life/ag\\_facts](http://www.iowafarmbureau.com/public/167/ag_in_your_life/ag_facts)
- Iowa Agriculture Quick Facts:  
<https://quickstats.nass.usda.gov/>
- Coalition to Support Iowa's Farmers:  
[www.iowaagriculture.gov/quickfacts.asp](http://www.iowaagriculture.gov/quickfacts.asp)

### FFA

- Iowa FFA Association Website: [www.iowaffa.com](http://www.iowaffa.com)
- National FFA Organization Website: [www.ffa.org](http://www.ffa.org)
- Iowa FFA Today: [www.iowaffa.com/iowaffatoday.aspx](http://www.iowaffa.com/iowaffatoday.aspx)
- FFA Student Handbook (latest edition)
- Official FFA Manual (latest edition)

### LEADERSHIP AND PERSONAL GROWTH BOOKS

- 7 Habits of Highly Effective Teens* by Stephen Covey
- Habitudes* by Tim Elmore
- Teens Guide to World Domination* by Josh Shipp
- Generation iY* by Tim Elmore
- Uncommon* by Tony Dungy
- Making Vision Stick* by Andy Stanley
- Encouraging the Heart* by James Kouzes and Barry Posner

## **SAMPLE INTERVIEW QUESTIONS**

Being able to effectively answer questions about yourself will be a key in the interview process. Ninety-five percent of the questions asked will be behavioral based, which means they will be focused on examples from your life.

Be bold enough to create a STAR moment (Something They'll Always Remember). The Nominating Committee will see many people throughout the interview process. What will make you stand out?

Hop down from your tower. It is easy to use large terms to sound smart, but don't! You must try relating with the committee, not talk over them. The key is to relate with them and share authentic experiences from your past. And, as always, SMILE and be yourself.

### **SAMPLE BEHAVIORAL INTERVIEW QUESTIONS:**

1. Name a time when you have disagreed with your siblings. How did you move forward with that decision?
2. As a state officer, you will need to be very independent. What made you independently successful as a district or chapter officer?
3. Name a time you were thrown into an uncomfortable situation and how did you handle it?
4. If not elected to serve as a state officer, how will FFA still play an important role in your life?
5. Describe the leader you want to be. What's keeping you from being that type of leader?
6. Take off your jacket. Where would you be without FFA?
7. When has someone looked up to you and how did you cultivate that relationship?
8. Describe a person you look up to. When have you been that person for someone else?
9. Tell us about a time you were successful and how it has affected you.
10. When is a time two activities in your life were scheduled for the same time? How did you handle this conflict?
11. Name and explain three characteristics that every state officer should have. How do you exhibit those characteristics?
12. Tell us about a time a weakness has challenged you and how you overcame it.
13. Define character and tell us about yours.
14. Tell us about your SAE and share how it has helped develop your skills.
15. Explain the three components of the Ag Ed model and how each one has played an important role in your life.
16. Name one current issue in agriculture that has impacted you personally. How has it impacted you?
17. What does SAE stand for and why is it important that you have one?
18. In what ways has your personal SAE prepared you for the future?
19. Name one leadership experience you have had and how it has allowed you to grow as a leader.
20. Name a time your leadership positively impacted another person. How do you know that it had an impact?
21. What is the biggest mistake you have made? How have you dealt with it?
22. Give an example of a time when you encountered a challenge and how you overcame it.

23. We, as a committee feel like we haven't gotten to know the real you, who is the real (insert your name here).
24. Define leadership. How do you fit into that definition?
25. Give an example of a time when you served in the follower role under another leader's guidance.
26. What is the most significant decision you have made in your life?
27. Give an example of a time you have empowered another person.
28. What do you do to keep track of all the things going on in your life?
29. Tell me about a time you recognized a problem and how you addressed it.
30. Share with us a time when you were pressured to do something that was against your values – how did you handle it?
31. Have you ever had to make a major decision on your own? What was it? How did you make it?
32. Share with us a goal you have set and what you did to achieve that goal.
33. When you have a lot of work to do, how do you get it all done? Give an example.
34. Tell me about the last time you have had to come to a compromise with someone.
35. When do you give positive feedback to people? Tell me about the last time you did.
36. Have you ever had to persuade a peer to accept your thoughts or do something? How did you go about doing it?
37. Have you ever had to settle conflict between two people? What was the situation and what did you do?
38. Describe the most difficult scheduling problem you have faced and how you worked through it.
39. When given an important assignment, how do you approach it?
40. How do you react when faced with constant time pressure? Give an example.
41. Have you ever been in a position where you had to lead a group of peers? How did you handle it?
42. When was the last time you made a key decision on the spur of the moment? What was the reason and result?

## QUESTION & ANSWER

### WHO IS THE NOMINATING COMMITTEE?

Twelve members, two from each district, make up the State Officer Nominating Committee. The Nominating Committee will select the candidates they think will do the best job and present the ballot at the Business Session on Monday, April 20<sup>th</sup> at 10:00 AM.

### WHAT KINDS OF QUESTIONS ARE ASKED?

95% of the questions asked throughout the interview process are behavioral-based questions. This means they are looking for an example from your life.

### HOW DO I ANSWER THE QUESTIONS?

As a capable leader, you have hundreds of stories that show your qualities and capabilities of a leader. This interview is the time when you need to bring those out and share them. The key is to share an example of a situation in your life that would answer the question.

### WHAT DOES THE ELECTION PROCESS LOOK LIKE?

1. Complete the application
2. Participate in the State Officer Candidate webinar (late March)
3. Interviews at the FFA Enrichment Center (week before convention)
  - Round 1:** Personal Round #1
  - Round 2:** Multiple Choice Test
  - Round 3:** Round Robin
  - Round 4:** One-on-One Interviews
  - Round 5:** Writing Exercise
  - Round 6:** Advocacy Stand & Deliver
  - Round 7:** Personal Round #2
4. Ballot is announced at the Business Session at the State Leadership Conference
5. Candidates give 2-minute speech
6. Candidates answer two questions (President candidates answer four questions)
7. Votes are cast and election results are final
8. Results are announced at the final session of the Iowa FFA Leadership Conference
9. New/Old State Officer Team Meeting following the conference.

### HOW MANY PEOPLE WILL GET BALLOTTED?

Eighteen people will be balloted. Nine will be elected to the team.

### WHAT DO I DO WHEN I'M NOT INTERVIEWING?

When not in the interview room, you will be in a holding room with the rest of the State Officer Candidates. You may work on schoolwork, prepare for interviews and/or just hang out!

## CONCLUSION

We encourage you to take this opportunity to get to know who *you* are as an individual and a servant leader. Throughout this workbook, we hope you found the table of contents explored in-depth.

The Iowa FFA Association knows that you have what it takes to lead the future of this organization. For this reason, the well-rounded set of resources in this workbook has been developed that will help you better understand the selection process, develop yourself as a leader, and broaden your interview skills and techniques. Going through this process will not only help you be a more prepared candidate, but it will also better prepare you for future endeavors.

Although we would love to have each candidate selected, only nine people will be elected to state office. We cannot promise that you will be selected, however, we can promise that this workbook will allow you to be prepared and gain techniques that are important in and outside of the National FFA Organization. Always remember, the selection process decides *where* you serve, not *how* you serve. If you are not elected, does that mean you will hang up your jacket and quit your FFA career? Will you forget all the hard work and dedication you have committed to this great organization? We need people with your hard work, service, and passion to continue giving all they have to their home chapter, post-secondary programs, and Alumni.