



IOWA

FFA ASSOCIATION

STATE OFFICER CANDIDATE WORKBOOK

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LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT

Dear State Officer Candidate,

I want to start by congratulating you for having the initiative to take the next step of running for state office! Less than 1% of FFA members run for a chance to become a state leader in the largest student-led organization in the world. The candidate process starts well before April. The hours spent studying, practicing, and discovering your leadership style are all necessary components to be successful in this process. I know the process sounds intimidating at first, but it is an amazing opportunity filled with growth.

As an officer, I've learned that everything you do is bigger than yourself. The work that you put in now is going to benefit you later. You represent the entire association and all of the more than 20,000 Iowa FFA members. Everything you do as a state officer is for the members and the betterment of the entire organization. You have the ability to change lives and impact others in ways that you never thought possible. State officers leave an impact on others because they put the members first. Every time you zip up that association jacket, you represent more than just yourself. You are just a small part of something much greater.

If I could offer one piece of advice, it would be to always remember that who you are matters. Each candidate offers unique strengths and abilities to the association, and each person is different for a reason. Avoid comparing yourself to other candidates and past state officers. While growth must occur in order to make the most of this process, you should never change who you are. There is not a "perfect state officer" mold that you have to fit into. The personality and skill set that you possess are what qualifies you to become a state officer. The nominating committee and the members want to get to know you for who you are, not who you think you should be.

Take some time to reflect on your "why" for FFA – why you got started in FFA, what FFA means to you, and why you want to serve others this next year as a state officer. Remember these "whys" as times get tough, as you will have many ups and downs. No other experience compares to that of being a state officer. If you are elected, you will become part 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 the fact that you won? Not sure? I'd recommend answering the self-reflection questions found later in this workbook.

On April 21st, the lives of nine individuals will change forever. Whether or not your name is called, your talents and skills are still needed to advance the agriculture industry and our organization. It is not where you serve that matters but how you serve. We hope that you choose to make the most of every situation and continue to give back.

On behalf of the Iowa FFA Association and the state officer team, I wish you the best of luck on your journey and thank you for your service and dedication to the FFA.

Best Wishes,

Chloe Zittergruen
2025-2026 State President

PAST STATE OFFICER REFLECTIONS

"Serving as a state officer was a once-in-a-lifetime, fulfilling year marked by growth, independence, and unforgettable experiences shared with a tight-knit team that became like family. From early-morning travel across the state to long hours spent working, laughing, and learning together, the journey created lasting memories and lifelong bonds. Though it meant giving up a traditional freshman year, it offered something far more meaningful—impacting others, discovering new strengths, and embracing opportunities that won't come again. Every officer's year is unique, but each is shaped by the willingness to try, step outside one's comfort zone, and answer the call of service. Ultimately, the experience was challenging, rewarding, and entirely worth it."

Cody Messer

2024-2025 Southeast State Vice President

"Simply put, being an Iowa FFA Officer is one of the most unique and rewarding experiences you can ever be a part of, and I can chop that up into three things. 1. You build relationships with 8 teammates that are unlike any you have ever had. 2. You quite literally make great friends at every single event. 3. You go on the largest self-discovery journey that you will take up to this point in your life. Is the process challenging, and will it push your limits? Yes. Will there be days when you will be tired and worn out? Yes. But there are not a lot of experiences out there that will shape you better or reward you more than being a state officer."

Collin Bauer

2024-2025 State President

"Rarely in your life do you get the opportunity to lead, impact, and serve on such a massive scale. You gain a team of 8 other individuals who are in your corner during your year of service, as well as after. You meet FFA members who are just getting started in the journey, and you have the opportunity to propel them down a path of success. You get to go to incredible places with outstanding people. Along with all of the incredible opportunities and experiences, there are some difficult times, long days, busy weeks, and a mountain of responsibility. Remember, you are worthy of this opportunity, and you're ready to tackle the difficult days."

Will Vlasek

2023-2024 Southeast State Vice President

"Serving others has been one of the most transformative experiences of my life. Through my time as an Iowa FFA State Officer, I've learned that the heart of service is not about recognition or titles but instead it's about creating opportunities for others, inspiring them to believe in their potential, and being a source of encouragement. These experiences have given me lifelong friendships, invaluable life lessons, and the confidence to embrace challenges head-on. Every day brings a chance to grow, learn, and make a difference. To anyone pursuing a leadership position, I encourage you to lead with authenticity, stay true to your values, and remember that your passion and purpose will always shine through!"

Josie Kelly

2023-2024 North Central State Vice President

ABOUT THE INTERVIEWS

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 of the Iowa FFA Leadership Conference.

WHAT KINDS OF QUESTIONS ARE ASKED?

The majority 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 including president candidates. 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

INTERVIEW ROUNDS

Round #1 – Personal Round One

• 3 – 5 Q's • 6 minutes • 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 with the personal growth questions and sample 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/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 • 3-4 Q's • 4 minutes •

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

Tips: Set up mock interviews. Practice with the personal growth questions and sample 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. Practice with the personal growth questions and sample interview questions.

POST-INTERVIEW PROCEDURES

After the interview process, the Nominating Committee will set the ballot. At the delegate business session of the State 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 PROCEDURES

The Iowa FFA Leadership Conference is adjourned, the clean-up crews have begun their work in Hilton Coliseum, and the 7,000 conference attendees are exiting to return home. The new Iowa FFA State Officer Team will begin its term of serving more than 20,000 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, with collegiate agricultural groups, PAS 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 2025-2026 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 2026-2027 Iowa FFA State Officer Team.

INTERVIEW STANDARDS (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 others, 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%

Standard Description: 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.)

Competencies: Non-Verbal Skills, Listening Skills, Writing Skills, Presentation Skills, Conversation Skills

#2: TEAM PLAYER – 20%

Standard Description: 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.

Competencies: Work in Teams, Acceptance of Differing View Points, Team Before Self, Commitment to FFA, Time Management and Planning, Prioritization and Initiative

#3: AREAS OF KNOWLEDGE – 20%

Standard Description: 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)

Competencies: Agriculture Knowledge, FFA Knowledge, American Education, Problem Solving/Critical Thinking, Conducting Research/Lifelong Learner

#4: CHARACTER – 20%

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

Competencies: Reliability/Integrity/Trust, Adaptability/Flexibility, Positive Attitude, Sincerity/Compassion, Maturity, Work Ethic

#5: INFLUENCE – 20%

Standard Description: 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)

Competencies: Mentors and Coaches Others, Member Representation, Self-Confidence, Energetic, Commitment to Service

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?

SAMPLE INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

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

Provide answers using the STAR method (Situation-Task-Action-Result). The Nominating Committee will see many people throughout the interview process. Providing clean answers that are easy to follow and process will be important.

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?

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 5 – Round Robin.' All 3 topic areas will be used in 'Round 3 – Writing Exercise.'

American Agriculture

- Public Perception and Understanding of Agriculture
- Status of the Farm Economy and Financial Outlook

Agricultural Education

- Agriculture education instructor recruitment and retention
- Integrating technology into the agriculture classroom

FFA

- Impact of FFA on student career success
- Pros and Cons of Affiliation/100% Membership

Below is a checklist of things to include in both your essay and speech for 'Round 3 – Round Robin,' 'Round 5—Writing Exercise' and 'Round 6 – Advocacy Stand & Deliver.' These bullet points are items that you will be evaluated on.

- 2 - 3 Statistics (with source cited)
- Explain career advantages and disadvantages of the hot topics
- Articulate how the facts and issues are impactful
- Recall one relative historical event
- Promote agriculture's/FFA's/agricultural education'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.

SUGGESTED REFERENCES

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.

AGRICULTURE

- Iowa Ag Facts (by Iowa Farm Bureau): 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

AGRICULTURAL EDUCATION

- CASE (Curriculum for Agricultural Science Education): www.case4learning.org
- NAAE (National Association of Agricultural: <https://www.naae.org/>
- NAAE Teach Ag: <https://www.naae.org/teach-ag/why-teach-ag/overview/>
- 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, Professional Agricultural Students of Iowa, Iowa FFA Alumni
- Association for Career & Technical Education: <http://www.acteonline.org/>

FFA

- Iowa FFA Association Website: www.iowaffa.com
- National FFA Organization Website: www.ffa.org
- Iowa FFA Social Media
- FFA Student Handbook (latest edition)
- Official FFA Manual (latest edition)

LEADERSHIP AND PERSONAL GROWTH RESOURCES

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

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.