

California Association



State Officer Candidate Resource Guide

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Introduction

Congratulations on your interest in serving as a California Association FFA State Officer. This decision is one that you should not take lightly and should involve conversations with your local FFA Advisor as well as your Parents and/or Guardians. This Resource Guide is not intended to have all of the answers, but is simply one of many resources that may be prove valuable as you consider your decision.

Serving as a State FFA Officer is a unique experience, one that is filled with meeting industry, education and political leaders as well as many students and teachers. Although you will

have the opportunity for tremendous growth, you must also realize that there will be difficult and challenging experiences as well. To fully commit to a year of complete service, you must be willing to be part of a team and make personal sacrifices.

In reviewing the resources available, should you have unanswered questions, do not hesitate to reach out to your Regional FFA Advisor, the Assistant State FFA Advisor or the State FFA Advisor.

Commitment to Serve

State FFA office is a position of leadership. The officers are charged with the responsibility of providing leadership and direction to the California Association throughout their year of service. An officer you will be expected to 1) motivate members to achieve their highest potential, 2) promote the organization and serve as a goodwill ambassador, and 3) give direction to the work of the organization.

Characteristics of a good officer include: humility, selflessness, high morals, dedication to service, integrity, open to constructive criticism, unimpeachable character, organized, critical thinking and desire for personal growth. Leadership skills and interpersonal skills are also critical to the continued development of a servant leader.

The average state officer in California is away from home approximately 320 days per year. The headquarters of the operation and a lot of program functions and travel emanate from the FFA Center in Galt. State Officers and their activities are under the direct supervision of the Assistant State FFA Advisor, an Education Program Consultant in the California Department of Education.

Costs

Costs directly related to the functions of state office are covered by the Association. Travel, meals, lodging, and business-related expenses are reimbursed. However, the officer and his/her parents should be prepared to cover personal items, personal travel and personal meals. To ensure timely reimbursement of allowable expenses, the officers should maintain proper records. This includes receipts, claim forms, and a record of reimbursement checks.

Mental and Physical Well-Being

Physical stamina and a high energy level are important for a state officer to complete their service. Based on the schedule, state officers should be ready for working long hours developing and delivering lessons, workshops and speeches. It is in these long days that it becomes important for the officer to create opportunities to engage in exercise and to maintain a healthy environment. Officers will be given resources to help maintain physical and mental wellness.

Preparing and cooking healthy meals is important to the success of a state officer. Officers work together to build menu's and create healthy conscious choices. In addition, officers must

find time for mental rest and recuperation. With the busy schedule, finding appropriate time to take a break and create those lasting memories is important, not only to their development as a team, but also in their personal growth.

Standards to Serve By

An officer must understand that they are part of a larger community and as such, must seek to be a role-model. If a State Officer is in their FFA Jacket or simply in casual attire, they must recognize that they are a representative of the California Association FFA twenty-four hours a day. Even when returning home for visits, they are still a State Officer and under the watchful eye of students, parents and teachers.

There are certain standards by-which a state officer must agree to follow. These include:

1. Use of alcoholic beverages is prohibited at all times -from the moment following an officer's election it is inappropriate.
2. State officers do not use crude, rude, offensive language.
3. State officers do not tell tasteless jokes whether for or demeaning to certain nationalities, religions, etc.
4. State officers do not fraternize with FFA members. They are there to serve all the members and cannot afford to give special attention to one. This includes girlfriend/boyfriend relationships.
5. State officers do not "party." Not that they do not have a good time, they simply do not go out after meetings and party the rest of the night.
6. State officers do not talk about immoral, tasteless subjects. They do not spend time engaged in sexual conversation with members- both in person or over social media. They spend their time and contacts representing the organization.
7. They do not gossip.
8. They maintain the ethics of the team and do not talk outside the team about the inner workings, disagreements, etc., of the team.
9. Honesty - complete honesty - is an absolute necessity.
10. Use of illegal drugs and all tobacco products is prohibited.
11. Expressed disrespect for the authority of adults is not allowed, nor is disrespect for the opinions of any individual. In all of your work with others, whether you agree with them or not, you cannot afford to be disrespectful.

Year of Service

The activities each state officer team undertakes is unique to their year of service. However, there are traditional events that can be included in planning the year. A specific calendar will be presented based on the conditions for that year as well as the educational experiences desired for the that state officer team's growth.

In addition to planning and training meetings, typical events that an officer team may take part in during a year would include:

Advanced Leadership Academies	Sacramento Leadership Experience
Agriculture Industry Visits	Sectional Leadership Nights
CATA Summer Conference	Spring Regional FFA Meetings
Chapter Banquets	Star Award Interview Tours
Chapter Officer Leadership Conferences	State Career Development Events
Chapter Visits	State Degree Award Ceremonies
Family Barbeque	State Executive Committee Meetings
Made for Excellence Conferences	State Leadership Conference
National FFA Convention	Winter Retreat
Regional Officer Leadership Conference	

Candidate Schedule

The schedule for those who desire to serve is established by the Chair of the State FFA Nominating Committee in cooperation with the State FFA Advisor. The schedule will be released in the congratulatory email sent to all individuals who completed and submitted a state officer application.

- Applications Received
- Emails sent to each Candidate who submitted a complete application and their advisor outlining the steps in the process for that year.
- Applications reviewed and scored.
- Items as part of State Officer Candidate Experience 1 are reviewed and scored.
- Candidates are ranked by score following Experience 1 with approximately the top 50% moving forward in to the interview process.
- Interviews will be conducted. Following each round of interviews, the committee may elect to make additional decisions regarding those advancing to the next round.
- Nominating Committee will develop a list of twelve individuals who will be placed on the official ballot and provide that list to the Assistant State FFA Advisor.

- The twelve individuals who are announced for the ballot will then take part in a meet-the-candidates session.
- The Nominating Committee Secretary will announce the official report from the Nominating Committee which will include the official ballot.
- Those balloted will then be expected to engage in a performance task for delegate observation.
- Following this task, the official delegates will cast their votes for the six constitutional officers.
- The newly elected State Officers will be introduced during the final session of the State FFA Leadership Conference and will be installed into their duly elected offices.

Tips in Preparing

- FFA's Role in Agricultural Education
 - ❑ Agricultural Education's place in Career & Technical Education.
 - ❑ Three circles of Agricultural Education.
- Boards and Committees
 - ❑ State Agricultural Education Advisory Committee.
 - ❑ State Agricultural Education Staff
 - ❑ FFA Adult Board
 - ❑ State FFA Advisory Committee
 - ❑ California FFA Foundation
 - ❑ California FFA Center Starr
- FFA Fundamentals
 - ❑ Creed, Mission, History, Organizational Structure, Awards, and Etc.
 - ❑ What FFA is to you.
- Current Issues in Education and Agriculture
- Practice for the Interview Process
- Self-Reflect
 - ❑ Why you want to serve the organization?
 - ❑ What are your beliefs?
 - ❑ What are your values?

Sample Interview Questions

Serious candidates will spend countless hours in front of the mirror and with leaders responded to questions. A candidate can never be fully prepared for the interviews as each

year the committee changes. It is also important to note that successful candidates focus on who they are and do not allow themselves to fall into the trap of trying to be someone they think the committee wants. Showing who you really are is important and the most successful path to being identified as a state officer by the committee.

Some examples of questions to assist in your preparation would include:

1. Describe a time when you made a decision that caused your character to be questioned?
2. What are your top 3 values and where did they originate from?
3. What's a weakness you have worked to overcome in the past year?
4. What kind of people do you like to surround yourself with? How do you connect yourself with those outside of your circle?
5. As a state officer, what effect can you have on the agricultural industry?
6. Many politicians today are far removed from production agriculture. As an agriculturalist, why is it important to gain their support?
7. Scenario – You are a state officer on a chapter visit and the agriculture teacher has asked you to meet with the school principal to discuss why agricultural education is important. The principal wants to know why they should allocate funding to agricultural education, especially when the school has been hit with major budget cuts. Facilitate a four-minute conversation with the principal about why they should support the school's agricultural education program.
8. After meeting someone, what is the one thing you want that person to remember about you?
9. Tell us about a time you were responsible for a successful event. What can you attribute the success to?
10. Describe the integral structure of agricultural education and relate it to your personal experience in the agricultural education program.

Frequently Asked Questions

1. What assistance is provided with insurance and student status?

State FFA Office is recognized as an internship with the California Department of Education. Elected officers can request a letter from the Assistant State FFA Advisor stating the explaining the internship and requesting your insurance company continue to recognize the officer as a student.

2. What assistance is provided with college scholarship deferment?

Elected officers can request a letter from the Assistant State FFA Advisor explaining state office and requesting deferral for scholarships. Many scholarship programs recognize FFA and the opportunity State Office provides and will defer scholarships for one year.

3. What assistance is provided with college deferment?

Officers can request a letter from the Assistant State FFA Advisor explaining state office and requesting deferral of college enrollment for one year. Many universities recognize FFA and the opportunity State Office provides and will defer enrollment.

4. What if my child doesn't have a car/driver's license?

We have worked with state officers in the past who have either not had a car available for the year or haven't yet earned their driver's license. This in no way hinders their ability to serve as an officer. We work with the 6 elected officers to organize our schedule and plan accordingly.

5. What financial requirements are there to serve?

All costs directly related to the functions of state office are covered by the Association. Travel, meals, lodging, and business-related expenses are reimbursed. A student and his/her parents should be ready to cover some of his/her legitimate living expenses during the year (Personal Items, personal travel, and Personal meals).

6. If expenses are able to be reimbursed what should we do if our student doesn't have the funds to begin the year?

The California Association FFA provides a \$1,000 advance to officers if needed. The advance needs to be deposited into a checking account, and officers are able to use the funds to pay for FFA reimbursable expenses. The association then asks for the \$1,000 to be returned at the end of the year.

7. When would their year of service start?

The state officer's year of service starts immediately following the California State FFA Leadership Conference. However, there are only a few required activities until they graduate from high school or are finished with their college spring term.

8. When would they need to move in to the FFA Center?

Traditionally the State Officer move in date is in June. The date is dependent on State Officer graduation dates and is determined by the Assistant State FFA Advisor.

9. How often can we expect our students to come home during the year?

The rule of thumb is that officers get a home break approximately every 6 weeks. Most breaks are between 3-5 days. They will receive a full two week break around the traditional Christmas/Winter holiday season.

10. What should our family do regarding summer family vacation dates?

Family vacations are sometimes difficult to schedule around. A few suggestions include taking the vacation prior to the officers expected move in date, or schedule the vacation once the State Officer schedule is established, in order to schedule the vacation during a state officer home break.

11. What should we do with Fair project animals?

Summer fairs are a challenge, but not impossible for the association to schedule around. Traditionally the student is allowed to attend show day, and we make a request of the local fair board to have another chapter member walk the animal across the auction block for the officer. Most county fairs recognize the state officer program and will work with us to allow the student to participate. We will handle these on a case by case basis.

Resources

The following list of resources is recommended in preparing for the state officer candidate process.

- Official FFA Manual
- Robert's Rules of Order
- California FFA Website (www.calaged.org)
- National FFA Website (www.ffa.org)
- Farm Bureau Farm Facts Booklet (Available online at www.fb.org or your county Farm Bureau Office)
- California Department of Education Website (<http://www.cde.ca.gov/index.asp>)
- California FFA Association Constitution and By-Laws

Contact Information

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