THE JOY OF CORDUROY

State Officer Candidate Guidebook
2020 Edition

Thank you to the Oregon, Montana, New Mexico, Arizona and Nebraska FFA Associations for their help and use of written materials in forming this guide.
TO: Potential 2020 State Officer Candidates  
FROM: Abbie DeMeerleer, FFA Executive Director  
RE: Candidate Information  
DATE: January 1, 2020

On behalf of the Washington FFA Association and current State Officers, I commend you on your initiative to apply for State FFA Office during this very busy time in your high school career. Serving as an officer can be a very rewarding experience, however, there are many things to take into consideration as you prepare to run for state office. This resource booklet is designed to give you some critical information to not only prepare you prior to convention, but to also prepare you in the case that you are elected as one of the six to serve the Washington FFA Association. It is important that you realize that if you are elected, you will be serving the members and the association. With that commitment comes responsibility, sometimes sacrifice, and in the end...a feeling of contribution to something bigger than yourself that cannot be fully explained.

Be sure to have clear, open conversations with your family and advisors about your intention to run for state office. This guide includes information that they might have questions about – schedule/calendar, what is/is not covered by the Association, what agreements/standards you will be held accountable for. As a state officer, a great deal is expected of you. Many people – including state staff and, most of all, FFA members – will require your time and talents. During this year of service there will be little time left to call your own. Midnight bedtimes and early mornings become part of your everyday life. It will be a challenging year full of joys and discomforts – with the joys far outweighing the discomforts. Decide now if you are up for the challenge. If you would rather live the life of a college student – following your own schedule, seeing your friends or watching TV whenever – state office is not going to be a good fit for you.

If – after reviewing all this information, hopefully talking to our current and even past state officers, and getting clear about your “WHY” for running - you are still excited and motivated to run for state office, be sure to fill out the application and all its components and turn it in on or, better yet, before the deadline.

Congratulations on your decision to run for a Washington FFA State Office. It will be a unique and gratifying experience where you can develop new friendships, learn more about yourself, and potentially embark on a truly unforgettable year.

Always,

Abbie DeMeerleer, M.Ed.
Washington FFA Executive Director
Lifetime FFA Alumni Member
Past National FFA Officer
Past Washington FFA State Officer
THE FIRST STEP

You are about to begin, or have already begun, studying for what may seem to be the most life changing week you have ever experienced. For some it may be something you decided on this year, and for others it may be a dream you’ve had for as long as you can remember. As you study, memorizing names and facts about agriculture and FFA, remember one very important thing…

Know yourself!

*Know why you desire to serve nearly 12,000 FFA members in Washington, not why you think your advisor, parents, or even the nominating committee wants you to serve.*

*Know why you want to spend a year of your life traveling around the state, communicating a message of agriculture and youth leadership to thousands.*

It’s not all about wearing a jacket that has “Association” printed on the back...it’s much more. Search your heart, know its desires, and be passionate about your yearning to truly serve.

Your life up to this point has been your true preparation for these few days at the State FFA Convention. And your life, what you do say and how you look, will be the message people hear following that week and throughout the rest of your life.

Being a state officer means you are willing to put FFA first for a year. That means time away from your family and friends. It means not having other job demands or school obligations. It means driving, a lot, staying in different places – sometimes every night of in a week, and always being “on” – even when you are tired. It also means you get to give back to an organization you are passionate about by meeting and encouraging members; it means you get to see and learn about agriculture around the Evergreen state – first hand; and it means you get to be on a team with 5 other incredible Washington FFA members.

So, are you in it for the right reasons? If so, we look forward to having you as a candidate!

DID YOU KNOW?

- One third of state officers report interacting with more than 500 FFA members per month.
- 96% of state FFA officers have, or plan to pursue, the American FFA Degree—the highest level of membership that an individual can achieve in the organization.
- 64% of state officers identify as female.
MORE THAN A TITLE

What is a Washington FFA State Officer?
The role of the Washington State FFA Officer might best be described as someone who facilitates member success. What is that? The role of an officer is to help promote FFA on a state-wide basis and act on behalf of all members at FFA and other agriculture related activities. State Officers can be found doing (but not limited to) the following:

- Provide a state officer team Program of Activities
- Attend executive meetings and play a role in determining the current scope and advancement of the Washington FFA Association
- Motivate members across the state through leadership workshops and events
- Participate in Business and Industry tours and visits
- Promote FFA, Agricultural Education and Agriculture whenever possible
- Articulate the value of FFA, Agricultural Education and Agriculture in Washington and the United States
- Plan and carryout activities for state convention
- Provide current information on agriculture, agriculture issues, state FFA activities to members and others via AgEd Update, WAFFA Facebook, WAFFA Instagram, WAFFA Twitter, WAFFA website blog, etc.
- Support state-wide contests and events
- Provide workshops for other CTSOs and youth groups

Everything you wanted to know about being a state officer

Maybe you've had the goal of running for state office in the Washington FFA Association since you were a freshman. Or maybe a current State Officer recently inspired you and that brought about a desire to take a chance and do something that will be a positive risk for you, no matter the outcome. Or maybe your ag teacher told you to run. At any rate, here you are, chasing a dream to serve with five other individuals for 365 days as a State Officer in the FFA.

But do you really have a grasp of what State Office is really about? You've seen and talked with many past officers, maybe had them in your homes, seen them in action facilitating in your classroom or on leadership tour. But there is a lot more to the position of “State Officer” than meets the eye. Hopefully this will enhance your understanding of what a State Officer actually does, and what a State Officer should do.

Every year – every team – has a little different experience, but the fundamentals are always the same.
How much time does a State Officer spend “on the road”?

Officers can expect to spend about 200+ days away from home. Here is a projected outline of what officers can expect during their term as an officer.

MAY: Convention/election – Blue & Gold breakfast

JUNE: Cornerstone, BaseCamp, WAAE Summer Conference, Board of Directors Meeting
      Est. Days: 10

JULY: Checkpoint Training, DOT & Prep, Summit, SPC, Fairs
      Est. Days: 15-18

AUGUST: Fairs, State Dairy Cattle CDE, Evergreen Development
      Est. Days: 15-18

SEPTEMBER: Fairs, Foundation B&I Tour, Evergreen Prep, Evergreen Leadership Tour, District Camps,
            Chapter Visit Development
      Est. Days: 25

OCTOBER: Chapter Visits, Board of Directors Meeting, National FFA Convention
      Est. Days: 30

NOVEMBER: Chapter Visits, Service Project, State Potato/Tractor CDEs, Commodity/Support Groups
           Annual Meetings
      Est. Days: 22

DECEMBER: Chapter Visits, State Apple CDE, Winter Retreat
      Est. Days: 22

JANUARY: Chapter Visits, Legislative Bootcamp, CTSO Engagement Day, Board of Directors Meeting
      Est. Days: 10-12

FEBRUARY: Chapter Visits, Legislative Advocacy, EMERGE Conference, Checkpoint Training, FFA Week
      Est. Days: 18-20

MARCH: Chapter Visits, EMERGE Conference, District Events, State Agronomy CDE, State Floriculture &
       Nursery Landscape CDEs, WSU Convention Planning Meetings, Foundation B&I Tour
      Est. Days: 28

APRIL: Convention Scripts & Prep, State Ag Mech CDE, State Horse CDE, State Forestry CDE, State ENR CDE,
       State Poultry CDE, State Agriscience Fair, Board of Directors Meeting
      Est. Days: 30

MAY: Convention Prep, State Convention, State Livestock CDE, Chapter Banquets
      Est. Days: 15

There will be other events that you will attend, and often you will be asked to do so with very little notice. “Off
time” is spent doing work and activities for the organization (press releases, expense reports, contact reports,
etc.) or activities as deemed necessary by your fellow officers, or by state staff. Officers will have block time
for holidays (one week for Thanksgiving, three weeks for Christmas/New Year) and may request other time
“off” however it is not guaranteed so should not be counted on until the Executive Director has approved the
request and put it on the official calendar. You and your parents should be prepared for the amount of time
you will be away from home – similar to if you left for college – and if you haven’t discussed this with them, you
need to immediately.
**When State Officers travel, where do they stay?**

Most often, chapters are expected to host officers by providing housing with other FFA members. Officers stay at hotels during certain events as coordinated by the Executive Director. Officers also stay with state staff, at teammate’s or past state officer homes.

**Do State Officers have an expense account?**

During the 2020-2021 year State Officers are reimbursed up to $4000 for meals, fuel and other pre-approved expenses (detailed in the State Officer Handbook). Reimbursement will only be made when receipts are provided and must be done monthly. In addition, state officers have the following either paid for or reimbursed by the Association:

- Official FFA Jacket (3 during term of service – June, October, April)
- Official dress components (3 white button-down shirts, 3 skirts/pants)
- Business Professional attire (1 polo, 1 button-down, 1 pair khakis/dress pants)
- Lodging and/or flights for:
  - Cornerstone/Basecamp
  - Business & Industry Tours (Foundation coordinates)
  - DOT
  - Evergreen Leadership Tour
  - National FFA Convention
  - Winter Retreat
  - State Convention
  - EMERGE

**What are the important qualities a State Officer should possess?**

Officers should be clean, neat, and keep themselves and official dress immaculate when representing the FFA. For those identifying male, this means being clean-shaven with hair that is groomed in a professional manner (trends aren’t necessarily professional). For those identifying female this means conservative, professional hair and makeup and if choosing to wear the skirt for official dress (team must be consistent in this) it must be at least kneecap length and not overly form-fitting. How you present yourself at the time of election is what needs to be maintained throughout the year.

Officers are utilized frequently for public speaking so should be comfortable and capable in this capacity. They should also be willing to seek out students who aren’t readily engaged and encourage them by expressing interest in their activities and projects.

State Officers should be punctual and always ready to work on the task at hand. They should be well-organized and always act in a courteous manner. They should be objective, fair, honest, helpful and never exaggerate.

Good health is imperative to a State Officer as the year and all the travel can be grueling – little sleep and exposure to a lot of unfamiliar environments. If you do not have a background of good health, you may want to consult your medical professional, as well as discuss with your family the potential implications that may arise. When an officer becomes ill and misses events, then the members miss out too.
Who do the State Officers work with?

It depends on the situation. The majority of the interaction will be with the State Executive Director. The position is in charge of the daily operations and processes of Washington FFA, its activities - including state officer management and trainings, chapter visit assignments and schedule, personal & team development.

The State FFA Advisor is an employee of the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction and is the specialist in Agriculture Education. The primary function for this individual is the curriculum in ag education, including how/where FFA fits. The State Advisor primarily works with the agricultural instructors and CTE directors, but has contact with the State Officers on certain projects and is a valuable resource to the officers.

The Foundation Director oversees fundraising that benefits the Association and its members. The Foundation Director conducts some training with the officers on sponsor/supporter engagement. State Officers will travel with the Foundation Director to conduct business & industry tours and presentations.

FFA Advisors can be helpful to State Officers. Many have been around longer than you have been a member so have great perspective to share. Although they might sound critical at times, they are teachers who are trying to help you grow and make sure you are providing a good learning opportunity for their students. Don’t hesitate to call upon a trusted advisor for help if you need it.

Do State Officers dictate the policies of the FFA?

The Association is run according to the constitution, bylaws and policies set by the board of directors and state staff as necessary to accommodate the rules and regulations. State Officers have voting positions on the board of directors and serve as a liaison between the student members and the actions of the board.

Then what does a State Officer really do?

State Officers serve several important functions - most of which involve serving as a role model for other members and students, carrying out the constitution, bylaws and rules set by the governing bodies, representing FFA in both public and private forums, and being goodwill ambassadors for agricultural education and the industry of agriculture. They provide leadership to the members, but have very little to do with the daily operations of the organization as their schedules don’t permit it.
CONVENTION & ELECTION

An Overview
Arriving by a designated time Wednesday, as a state officer candidate, you basically “hit the ground running.” Immediately you’ll meet other candidates and begin making amazing friends. It’s the beginning of a few days that will change your life, whether you receive an office or not. The week will begin with a written test. Then there is a time in which you meet all of the candidates, nominating committee, state advisor and executive director, as well as the Candidate Process Coordinator. During this time, the current state officer team may also come to speak with the candidates. The coordinator will explain the interview process and functions that you will attend.

The Selection Process
Read on for a more detailed view direct from the Washington FFA Constitution and Bylaws.

Section C: Successful State FFA Degree candidates who are juniors or seniors, or members who have been out of school one year or less who have previously received the State FFA Degree and who have submitted a state officer application by March 1 will be considered for office in the state association. The number of candidates selected to run for office will be determined by the number of applications received. Candidates will be selected from the top 30 applications if 46 or more are received. Candidates will be selected from the top 25 applications if 45 or less are received. Each chapter will be limited to a maximum of two candidates for state office.

Section D: Each officer candidate will undergo written examinations and interviews at the state convention. Written examinations are: knowledge of the FFA and knowledge of parliamentary law. Interviews are given by a Nominating Committee comprised of 7-9 individuals representing the following stakeholders: current FFA members, agricultural educators, FFA alumnus/past state officers, agricultural industry representatives.

Section E: The state officer process shall be scored using the following guidelines:

- Application: 100 points
- Knowledge Exam: 100 points
- Parliamentary Knowledge Exam: 100 points
- Stand & Deliver: 250 points
- Personal Interview: 250 points
- Comprehensive Interview (Agricultural issues, FFA, CTE/Agricultural Education, Situational): 400 points
- Committee’s Choice (Call Back) – no points awarded
- Top Ten Speech: 400 points

Total: 1,600 points

Section F: The top ten high-scoring candidates will be nominated as follows:

1. The top ten candidates will be named, in random order, to the delegate assembly at the evening session before the day of election.

2. Any officer candidate currently enrolled as a junior in high school will be allowed to participate in the state FFA officer election process but will be officially dropped from the election process prior to announcement of top 10 candidates.
3. A special drawing for speaking order and placement on the ballot will be done at the close of the evening session.

4. The Secretary, upon request of the President, shall place before the convention the names of the nominees. Following this, the President will give each candidate an opportunity to speak, based on the order of the drawing at the evening session.

5. Additional nominations are not permitted from the floor of the assembly.

Section G: There will be one vote by each official delegate for the full slate of state officers, with the person placed on the ballot as president to receive six points; vice president, five points; secretary, four points; treasurer, three points; reporter, two points; and sentinel, one point. Each top ten candidate’s speech score will be totaled and divided by the total number of points available. The total number of points available for the top ten speech is calculated by multiplying the number of voting delegates by six. The resulting decimal will be multiplied by 400, the maximum number of points available for the top ten speech. This process normalizes the top ten speech score to no more than 400 points.

When the ballots are counted and top ten speech points normalized, the total points from the Top 10 speeches will be added to the 1,200 points from the election process. The six candidates with the highest total points are elected. The person receiving the most points will be named president; second, vice president; third, secretary; fourth, treasurer; fifth, reporter; and sixth place, sentinel. In case of a tie, the Board of Washington State FFA officers and the State Advisor shall vote to break the tie.

Process Components
Learn more about each step of the state officer selection process.

Knowledge Exam
The exam will contain questions related to state and national:

- FFA History and Knowledge
- FFA Actual Workings
- Agricultural Issues and Knowledge

Be familiar with:

- Official FFA manual (online version)
- FFA Student Handbook
- FFA New Horizons
- American Farm Bureau Farm Facts
- Washington Farm Bureau Farm Facts

Know the basics. It’s almost impossible to learn it all. Learn what was the most important to you first. Learn the history and the people first. Yes, the rules are important. So, know the basics that relate to typical FFA meetings. Put yourself in the place of an FFA member, agriculturist, or someone who has never heard of FFA asking a state officer a question.

By doing this, it’s obvious that you need to focus most of your energy on the FFA timeline, current FFA events, and common knowledge of agriculture issues.

Parliamentary Knowledge Exam:
The exam will contain questions that could also be found on the Conduct of Chapter Meetings CDE exam. Robert’s Rules of Order will be the governing resource.
INTERVIEWS

The rounds will vary in length and how many committee members you will be talking/presenting to. The areas listed below will most likely be included in some form at convention, so be prepared!

Personal Interview

The committee may ask a series of questions pertaining to your application, SAE, State FFA Degree application, and personal questions. Be sure that you can give information about yourself in short but informative answers, as the time limit does not allow time to ramble about your accomplishments.

Agriculture in Washington and the World Today

The nominating committee can ask about current agriculture issues. The situation may be one in which you have to give a small extemporaneous speech to an audience who knows little about agriculture, or they can ask you questions. There's no way to know everything. But here are a few examples of questions:

- What are two major agricultural issues facing the world globally? In Washington?
- Why does the United States have the safest food in the world?
- What do you think, that is in existence today, will have the greatest influence on the future of agriculture?

In preparing for this interview area, keep up-to-date on current agriculture issues and be informed. There is no way you can know every fact about every agriculture issue. The nominating committee doesn't expect that either. Pick out a few ag issues and know them well. Write down facts on each issue and summarize what your feelings are on those topics, then seek out new information about those particular issues. It's better to know a lot about a few things than to know little or nothing about everything. They just want to see that you know about the industry of agriculture.

Agricultural Educational/FFA Issues

Once again, it's important to know a lot about a few issues. Pick a few issues in education that you feel are the most important and do the same thing with them that you did with the agriculture issues. These topics are affecting us as FFA members, and we need well-informed, concerned leaders. These are rounds to demonstrate your love for agriculture and education.

Example questions:

- Will there be a future for agricultural education?
- What is the Local Program of Success?
- Is there a place for home-schooled students in agricultural education?
- Will a voucher system work? How will it affect agricultural classes?
- How can an agriculture program remain viable in a school with block scheduling?
- What are three top issues facing our education system and what can we do to combat these issues?
- How can a strong local program be built?
- How do you develop sound relationships with partners?
- Explain the Perkins Act is and how it affects Agriculture Education and FFA.

Stand and Deliver

You will have one Stand and Deliver round. The round will involve a theme such as agricultural issues or agricultural education/FFA and that theme will be provided to candidates prior to convention.

Basically, this is a situation in which you’ll plan and present an idea, comments, explanation or summary to the nominating committee who acts as your audience. It’s important to know what you’re talking about, present your idea clearly, and to insert facts to make yourself credible in your presentation, but that is not the most important issue here. This is a round where the nominating committee wants to see how well you do in an impromptu situation – something that state officers frequently encounter.

The round can be anything from planning a camp skit, bringing remarks on behalf of the Association, to preparing for a workshop. Here are a few examples:
• You are given a box of props and can use what you want to present a workshop that explains the basics of FFA to people living on Mars.
• You have to present a state convention workshop on national and international FFA opportunities using one sheet of poster board.
• Motivate a chapter officer team with a presentation including duties of officers and ways to become more involved.
• Prepare a skit having to do with goal-setting for a leadership camp.
• Informing the Washington Legislature about FFA and the National FFA Convention.
• Convincing a school board to implement an agriculture education and FFA program in your local school system.
• Explaining the benefits of FFA to a state government who wants to cut the funding for the program.

It's important that you communicate the basics of FFA into your stand and deliver scenario. As a state officer, this will be a common duty.

Committee’s Choice (Call Back)

This round is completely open, usually done on an individual basis. However, it is up to the committee if they need this round and who they need to see. These are generally very open-ended questions asked to see more of you as an individual if that wasn't apparent in the previous interviews, remember this is the committee's choice so it may be done on an individual basis or with questions only. A few questions might be:

• Name the three things you value the most in order of importance, without an explanation.
• How can you influence student’s lives without youth organizations?
• What does FFA mean to you?
• Name each member of the nominating committee and one fact about each member.
• Who are you?
• You have 10 minutes to tell us whatever you want us to know. Go...

This is your last chance to tell them what you’ve wanted to tell them but haven’t had the chance to yet. This is your final impression. Pour your heart out. Don’t leave this round without laying it all on the line. Don’t leave without the committee knowing exactly who you are and why you desire to serve. Let them see you...one last time. This round could be the deciding factor in your opportunity to serve thousands as a State FFA Officer. If you are in this interview, leave with no regrets! Know you gave it your all and if you fit the makeup of the team, great!

Top Ten Speech

As specified in our constitution and bylaws, the top scoring candidates are provided an opportunity to address the delegate body. In response to a motion from the delegates to the 89th Washington FFA Convention, the Washington FFA Association Board of Directors voted to amend the constitution and bylaws to restrict the value of the Top Ten Speech to no more than 25% of a candidate’s total score in the election process.

This was in an effort to ensure that the Association elects officers who have demonstrated their hard work and dedication to FFA in myriad ways, not only those who are able to deliver a flashy speech. So don’t spend all your time preparing your top ten speech. Instead, focus on preparing for your interviews and tests. Meet with many people of different backgrounds to prepare you to work with fellow candidates. Brush up on FFA history and learn a wide range of information about agriculture.

Top ten speeches are for senior candidates only, and the order of speakers is scheduled by a random drawing. The top ten speeches will be presented during the morning Saturday session before the final session when officers are elected. Speeches are limited to two minutes and 30 seconds (2m 30sec). No props of any kind may be used.
GENERAL INFORMATION

Official dress do’s & don’ts

Follow all official dress guidelines in the current ONLINE official FFA Manual

- Black skirts should be at least knee length for WA FFA; conservative in appearance
- Black jeans or Carhartt-type pants are not acceptable

Black closed-toe dress shoes

- If in black skirt, wear moderate heels (~1-1.5-inch heel) with black panty hose
- If in black slacks, black socks must be worn

Hairstyles and/or make-up should complement the candidate, not detract from their appearance

- For those identifying male, this means being clean-shaven with hair that is groomed in professional manner (trends aren’t necessarily professional).
- For those identifying female this means conservative, professional hair and makeup (trends aren’t necessarily professional) and if choosing to wear the skirt for official dress (team must be consistent in this) it must be at least kneecap length and not overly form-fitting.
- How you present yourself at the time of election is what needs to be maintained throughout the year.

Use perfume/cologne/body spray/scented lotion with extreme moderation

The area where you and the other candidates are located may be warm. If you are someone who sweats easily, you might want to bring some Febreeze or other fabric refresher to keep your jacket smelling good! Strive to look professional and represent yourself and the FFA in the best light possible.

Basic information to be familiar with:

Know the meaning of the following FFA Acronyms/Programs:

ACTE Association for Career & Technical Education
ALD Advanced Leadership Development Conference
AAAE American Association for Agricultural Education
BLAST Off Building Leaders and Strong Teams of Officers
CDE Career Development Event
CTE Career and Technical Education
CTSO Career and Technical Student Organization
DOT District Officer Training (WA)
EDGE Experiencing Discovery, Growth and Excellence
EMERGE Washington FFA In-state Leadership Conference
ILSSO International Leadership Seminar for State Officers
LPS Local Program Success
NAAE National Association of Agricultural Educators
NASAE National Association of Supervisors of Agricultural Education
The Council National Council for Agricultural Education
PAS National Postsecondary Agricultural Student Organization
NCF New Century Farmers
NFA New Farmers of America
PALS Partners in Active Learning Support
SPC State Presidents’ Conference
SAE Supervised Agricultural Experience Program
WAAE Washington Association of Agricultural Educators
WA-ACT Washington Association for Career & Technical Education
WLC Washington Leadership Conference
WSU Washington State University
Know who the following people are:

Sonny Perdue          Secretary of Agriculture, USDA
Dr. James Woodard     National FFA Advisor
Cheryl Zimmerman     National FFA Executive Secretary
Buddy Deimler         National FFA Treasurer
Dennis Wallace        Washington FFA State Advisor/Ag Education Supervisor (OSPI)
Abbie DeMeerleer      Washington FFA Executive Director
Jesse Taylor          Washington FFA Foundation Executive Director
Ricardo Ibarra        Washington FFA Alumni President
Kolesen McCoy (OH)    National FFA President
Kourtney Lehman (OR)  National FFA Secretary
Yomar Roman (PR)      National FFA Southern Region VP
Mamie Hertel (MT)     National FFA Central Region VP
Tess Seibel (VI)      National FFA Eastern Region VP
Lyle Logemann (NM)    National FFA Western Region VP
Henry Groseclose      Father of the FFA
Gus Litner            Inventor of the FFA Jacket
E. M. Tiffany         Writer of the FFA Creed
Derek Sandison        Director, Washington Department of Agriculture
Chris Reykdal         Washington Superintendent of Public Instruction
Rebecca Wallace       CTE Executive Director, OSPI

Members of the Washington FFA Board of Directors

Members of the Washington FFA Foundation Board of Directors
Questions for Preparation

Here are some questions to ask yourself along the journey of preparation for the candidate process. No, they will not all be asked. Perhaps some will, maybe some won’t. But these will make you think. They’ll make you evaluate who you are. And they’ll give you a deeper understanding of yourself and why you are running to serve hundreds of Washington FFA members. Journal (write your thoughts) about them. Answer them in front of a mirror. Think about them. Question yourself and know yourself so that you can answer in clear concise answers, practice them with someone else. You will be more at ease in the interviews if you have practiced!

**NOTE:** These are sample questions that might represent questions you might encounter during the state officer selection process. These are in no way the only questions or situations that might be discussed.

**FFA Knowledge & Fundamentals**

- What is the place of FFA within the program of agricultural education?
- Why was the FFA organized?
- What are your responsibilities as a State FFA Officer?
- What is a POA and how is it developed?
- As you look back over your experiences in the FFA, why did you join the organization and how does this reason compare to what it has meant to you?
- If a sponsor of the FFA who was also a supporter of the 4-H asks you, “What is the difference between the FFA and the 4-H,” how will you respond?
- What is the purpose of the National Chapter Award Program?
- Name one national scholarship sponsor? One state scholarship sponsor?
- What are the official colors?
- What is the FFA Motto?
- What is the mission of the FFA?
- When was the FFA founded?
- When was the Creed adopted?
- When was the National FFA Foundation started?
- In what year was the FFA granted a federal charter?
- When did the FFA, and NFA merge?
- When were females admitted to membership?
- When was the National FFA Alumni established?
- When did FFA change its name?
• When was the National Convention moved to Indianapolis?
• What is the web address of the National FFA?
• What is the web address of the Washington FFA?
• What are the parts of the FFA emblem?
• What is the official publication for FFA members?

Alumni
• When was the FFA alumni chartered?
• Why was the FFA alumni organized?
• How do you organize or charter a local FFA alumni affiliate?
• Do you have to be a former FFA member to be a member of the Alumni?

Issues that you may encounter as a State Officer:
• How can officers develop more interest and enthusiasm among members?
• In electing state officers, is it best to have a nominating committee or to run a campaign?
• How can a member develop self-confidence?
• How can a chapter/state increase membership?
• How do you have an SAE in an urban area?
• What advice would you give a Greenhand who wants to become a state FFA officer?
• What are chapters doing for fund-raising activities?
• How is the FFA financed?
• A member has just been defeated in running for chapter office; what advice would you give him/her?
• What is the difference between the FFA & 4H?
• What is the FFA? FFA means, Future Farmers of America, right?
• FFA is just for someone who wants to be a farmer isn’t it?
• What’s in the FFA for me, I don’t want to just learn about farming?

General Agricultural Education
• What benefits are there to being enrolled in agricultural education classes?
• Currently, what are some of the issues facing agricultural education in Washington?
• Does agricultural literacy or illiteracy play a role in the perception of agricultural education?
• Is there a future for agricultural education in Washington?
• What role do State Officers play in promoting agricultural education?
• What do you feel is the biggest challenge facing Washington agricultural education programs?
• How can the State Officers better inform the public about agricultural education and what it has to offer?
• Why do you think agricultural education belongs in the public-school system?
• Aside from FFA, what was the best experience you have had in your agricultural education classes?
• Where do you think agricultural education is headed in the future?
• What did the Smith-Hughes National Vocational Education Act first establish?
• What year did the Smith-Hughes Act come into existence?
• What are the 3 major components of Agricultural Education?
• What are the 4 areas that an SAE might cover?
• Name the CDE’s for Judging and/or Leadership.
• Name all of the current State Officers and where they are from.

General Agriculture
• What are some of the topics covered in the current Farm Bill?
• What are Genetically Modified Organisms?
• Do cloning and genetic engineering benefit agriculture?
• Are diseases such as Foot and Mouth, Bovine Spongiform Encephalopathy, and Chronic-Wasting Disease a concern to agriculturists? Why?
• What impact do the prices of crops or livestock have on the agricultural economy?
• What is food safety? Is the US food supply safe?
• What does PETA stand for? How does PETA impact the agricultural industry?

**Washington Agriculture**

• How does the wolf reintroduction affect ranchers in Washington?
• Many people are moving to Washington from non-rural or non-agricultural lifestyles, does this affect Washington agriculture? Why?
• Which industry is more important to Washington, agriculture or tourism?
• How will forest fires, lack of moisture, and other environmental factors affect Washington agriculture?
• What are some of Washington's top commodities? Where are they produced?
• What agriculture industries can be found where you live?
• How are you involved in Washington agriculture?

**Personal FFA**

• How did you become involved in the FFA?
• Who has been your biggest inspiration as an FFA member?
• What is the hardest challenge you face as an FFA member at your high school?
• Have you ever thought about not being an FFA member? Why or why not?
• What is your biggest personal achievement in the FFA?

**What Would You Do? and What Do You Think?**

• If you were to have a song written about your FFA career, what would the title be?
• What do you feel is the most important attribute a State Officer can possess?
• If you had the opportunity to create a new CDE, what would it be and why?
• National FFA wants State Officers to come up with the criteria for a new award for members. What would you suggest and why?
• If you could come up with a new program that would address an issue facing agricultural education in Washington what would it be and why?
• During a chapter visit, a couple of students help themselves to all of the candy that you have brought for prizes and rewards. How do you handle this situation?
• While flying to National Convention your luggage is lost, what do you do?
• You are on your way to speak at a chapter banquet when your car breaks down and there is no way that you will make it on time, what do you do?
• Before you get to your first chapter visit, while dressing that morning you find that your tie/scarf is missing, what do you do?
• You arrive at a chapter visit, however the FFA advisor forgot that today was a teacher in-service day so there are no students at school. What do you do?
• An FFA member asks you to attend prom with them. How would you handle this?
• You haven’t been home in a week, your laundry is piled up, and you get a phone call asking you to come to a FFA function for a chapter that is across the state. What do you do?
• At a local fair you are working in the animal barn when you notice a group of fair-goers making a loud scene near one of the animals. They are claiming FFA is cruel to animals. How will you engage in the situation?
• During the EMERGE conference, you notice several members using tobacco products. What can/should you do about this?
• A blind person approaches you to give a description of a CDE at State Convention. They have never seen any of it before, which contest do you tell them about, and what do you say?
• Wildland and forest fires have become a common occurrence - do you think that Federal and State governments should be responsible for helping those who have lost homes/ranches/animals in such fires rebuild?
• If you had the choice to live one day as a. A) National Officer, B) a Chapter Advisor, or C) a Greenhand member... which would you choose and why?
• What is your biggest FFA related pet peeve, and why?
• Describe the perfect:
  • Saturday
  • CDE
  • Ag teacher
• Who is a sponsor of the National FFA?
• Who is your biggest role model and why?
• If you could be anyone for a day - who would you be and why?
• Who has been the most influential person in your FFA career?
• Do you think a state officer should have boyfriend or girlfriend during their term in office?
• What is your best/worst quality?
• Who is a State Officer’s biggest fan?
• What do you hope to accomplish as State Officer if you are elected?
• How will you spend your free time while you are a State Officer?
• What roles do State Officers play in the eyes of members?

Behavioral Questions

• Describe a situation in which you were able to use persuasion to successfully convince someone to see things your way.
• Describe a time when you were faced with a stressful situation and how you dealt with that.
• Give me a specific example of a time when you used good judgment and logic in solving a problem.
• Give me an example of a time when you set a goal and were able to achieve it.
• Give me a specific example of a time when you had to conform to a policy with which you did not agree.
• Tell me about a time in which you had to go above and beyond the call of duty in order to get a job done.
• Tell me about a time when you had too many things to do and you were required to prioritize your tasks.
• What is your typical way of dealing with conflict? Give me an example.
• Tell me about a time you were able to successfully deal with another person even when that individual may not have personally liked you.
• Give me an example of a time when you had to make a split second decision.
• Tell me about a difficult person you’ve met in the last year.
• Give me an example of a time when you tried to accomplish something and failed.
• Give me an example of when you showed initiative and took the lead.
• Give me an example of a time when you motivated other people
• Tell me about a time in which you were forced to make an unpopular decision.
• Describe a time when you set your sights too high or too low.
• Describe a time in which you felt it was necessary to modify or change your actions in order to respond to the needs of another person.
• Describe a situation in which you were able to positively influence the actions of others in a desired direction.
• Tell me about a time when you took a public stance on an issue and then had to change your position.
• Describe a really tough time and how you dealt with the situation.
• Relate a personal story in which you persuaded someone to do something that initially did not appeal to them.
• Tell me about a time when, if it hadn’t been for teamwork, your goal might not have been achieved.
• Describe a time in which you took initiative rather than waiting to be told what to do.
• Describe a project or goal that has caused you frustration.

Other possible questions

• Who are you? (Your likes/dislikes, morals/values, faith)
• What do you stand for? (How do you feel about alcohol, sex, drugs, abortion, death penalty, education, the future, diversity, etc.)
• Where did you come from? (Family, community, farm/non-farm, college, high school, friends, activities)
• What makes you happy?
• What makes you sad?
• What do you enjoy?
• What are your strengths and talents?
• What are your weaknesses?
• What has been your most traumatic and/or sad and/or worst experience and how did you react?
• What has been your happiest and/or best experience and how did you react?
• What is your favorite quote and why?
• How would you describe yourself?
• If you could describe yourself in only 3 words, what would they be?
• What do you want to accomplish in your life?
• Where are you headed in life?
• Who and/or what do you credit for your success?
• Why do you want to run for state office?
• Who is your biggest role model and why?
• What is your best and worst memory in FFA?
• Why do you deserve to be a state officer over the other candidates?
• Describe your SAE.
• How has your SAE helped you in your life?
• What is the one thing you would change about Washington FFA?
• How can you help members?
• What will you be remembered for?
• What is your purpose in life?
• If you were going to be on the television show “Survivor”, what one item would be your luxury item?
• Which of your strengths do you think will help you the most this year?
• What are your hopes for the year?

List of Sources

These are provided for your benefit, they are not comprehensive nor all-inclusive and may not be current links.

• Washington FFA: www.washingtonffa.org
• Northern Ag Network: http://www.northernag.net/AGNews.aspx
• Agrigator Index of Agricultural & Related Information: http://gnv.ifas.ufl.edu/www/agator/htm/ag.htm
• American Farm Bureau: www.fb.org
• Washington State Farm Bureau: www.wsfb.org
• National Cattlemen’s Beef Association: www.cowtown.org
• National Corn Growers Association: www.ncga.com
• United States Department of Agriculture: www.usda.gov
• United States Department of Education: www.usde.gov
• Chicago Board of Trade: www.cbot.com
• Today’s Market Prices: www.todaymarket.com
• Food Safety Consortium: www.uark.edu/depts/fsc
• Institute for Agriculture and Trade Policy: www.iatp.org/iatp
• Center for Ag & Rural Development: www.ag.iastate.edu/card
Other Things to Keep In Mind

The key to a successful personal interview is to pretend that you are at a job interview. The members of the nominating committee are basically “screening” you for the position a State Officer which IS comparable to a full time job. The following are the most important tips to remember when preparing for an interview:

Repeat the question in some form, this way you are giving more of a complete and grammatically correct answer. For example: If your question is “Who is your biggest role model and why?” Your answer should sound something like this: “My biggest role model is my grandmother, because she taught me the importance of high morals, strong family ties, and to always believe in yourself.”

At the end of your entire interview, please make sure to say thank you.

If you do not know the answer or don’t have one that’s ready to give yet - ask them to please repeat the question - this gives your brain a few more seconds to formulate an appropriate answer.

You can always take a guess at the question - but don’t make it seem that way. If they ask you a question, and you give an answer you are not certain is correct - make it correct in your mind. The more you believe your answer is correct, even if it isn’t - will score you higher in personality points.

Never say anything offensive in your answers. For example – If you cannot think of an answer and feel that you need to say something DO NOT say that you are “…having a huge brain fart,” – the Nom Com might laugh for a minute, but after a while they will see the inappropriateness of your answer. This shows absolute immaturity and detracts from the qualities you have.

ALWAYS be yourself! This is the most important part of the interview - even more so than the knowledge portion itself. The members of the committee are looking for someone who is at ease under pressure and can make others laugh and carry on a conversation. If you are nervous because you don’t know the answers to the question - ignore that feeling and make them like you for who you are.

When you prepare your Official Dress - remember to have your jacket dry-cleaned if it needs it, have your blouse/shirt, skirt/slacks pressed, shoes polished, and the correct number of pins on your jacket, and black hose or socks. This is a time when you are extremely close to the committee. They will notice if your skirt is too short, if your jacket is dirty, or if you are violating the rules of proper Official Dress.

When you enter the room - SMILE! Let them see that although you may be nervous, you are friendly and excited to share your personality with them. Greet the committee by introducing yourself to them or saying “Good Morning/Afternoon/Evening.” Remember, this is a job interview - would you shake your prospective boss’ hand? If so, then shake their hands and then sit - when THEY tell you to have a seat. If you know the
Advisor’s name - say hello to them by last name while shaking their hand. For instance if your judge is named Joe Agteacher - shake his hand and say “Nice to see you Mr. Agteacher” or “Nice to meet you Mr. Agteacher.” Also, greet the members by their names. This shows your attention to detail and dedication to remembering their names.

When you sit down - try not to fidget. It is best if you sit somewhat at an angle, and cross your feet at your ankles. It is a more comfortable position than keeping your feet directly in front of you. Place your hands in your lap palms upward, cradling each other to aid in fluid gestures. Remember to sit up straight and keep eye contact with the committee to show interest.

During the questioning session - remember to answer truthfully and completely. If they ask “What do you think is the most important leadership quality you possess?” answer them in a way that makes a complete sentence. For example: “I think that my most important leadership quality is honesty, because no matter the situation, I can walk away feeling good about myself.” Have a sense of humor, but remember to not go overboard.

Never leave your chair until they tell you to - remember that they are in charge. Also remember - that even though they are in charge - members of the committee are regular people just like you, and most often are just as nervous as you. Their job is to make you feel a bit of pressure - but if you just relax and talk to them you can find out more information often about them - which is great to assist you in the rest of the process.

Think like the committee when preparing. Ask yourself:

- If I were one of the Nom Com members - would I have answered the questions correctly and kept an easy conversation going?
- Was I confident in my answers even if they weren’t correct?
- Did I sit properly and keep good eye contact?
- Did I sound responsible enough to carry out my duties if I am elected to State Office? Did I show that I am knowledgeable of FFA, Agriculture Education and Washington?
- Was my official dress in order? Did I pay attention to detail?
- Did I make myself stand out?

Realize that the committee wants to see the REAL you. The person you always are, and make sure to show those qualities during this time. If you are funny, then use that, but don’t stress if you don’t always have a joke. Being your true self, and showing that person to the Nom Com, is 100-times more important.

10 Tips for Preparation and Practice = Strong Performance

1. Check your motive
   - Ask yourself, “What is my motive for saying or writing this?” If your motive isn’t positive or productive, you cannot expect any other response.

2. Get to the point
   - If you cannot summarize your message in 60 seconds, you may not understand it well enough to communicate it in more detail.

3. Stick to the point
   - Make it clear where you are going with your communication and stay with it. People do not like to be kept in the dark unless it’s a mystery movie.

4. Remember that your body speaks volumes
   - The majority of communication is visual. When you speak, your listeners are watching to be sure that you facial and body clues match what you are saying.

5. Check your tone
   - The written word, in particular, is often much more harsh than intended. Let important written messages sit for a day before you send them and read them for tone as well as content.
• People, while trusting by nature, are very perceptive and can find any hint of insincerity or lack of credibility.

7. Listen first for understanding. To listen effectively you must CARE for those you’re listening to:
   • Concentrate - focus on the speaker
   • Acknowledge - through body language - nod your head
   • Respond - ask questions for clarification and interest
   • Empathize - share in their emotions and feelings.

8. Practice, practice; practice
   • Writing and speaking, as arts, improve with study and practice.

9. Get help with tough communications.
   • Bounce your ideas off your advisor, friends and/ or family. They can provide a clarifying perspective for you.

10. Speak from the Heart
    • Along with being yourself and showing that to the members of Nom Com, also give answers that have meaning, and show your passions and character.

Managing Your Nerves

Like competing in the Olympics, facing the Nom Com whose scores on your “performance” could change the course of your life is an understandably nerve-wracking experience. It’s a one-shot deal and you’ve got minutes to win the panel over. Indeed, NOT being nervous would be the real surprise.

The pressures of being a state officer candidate, possibly in competing in state CDE’s, and just being at State Convention can be especially tough on your confidence and ability to concentrate. The most effective way to conquer such point-losing jitters is to prepare beforehand.

Keep in mind that members of the committee are real people. Like anyone, they work long hours with SAEs, get the flu during judging season, and have car trouble. So, when you are hit with the shakes, sweaty palms, and rapid breathing, remember to relax and treat them as regular folks. It is a matter of keeping the experience in perspective. It is just a conversation with people - they mess up and make mistakes, they are not perfect, and they know that you are not. This will be your time in the spotlight. Why be nervous? Let it be fun! If you have your mental attitude right, it’s usually not too stressful.

Keep Your Composure

In any competitive situation the unexpected can occur: a candidate trips walking into the room, knocks over the table as they sit down, or calls a Nom Com member by the wrong name. Because mishaps do happen on any level of competition, remember that no disaster is so calamitous that you can’t handle it with poise. Always keep your composure. When the unexpected occurs, turn it to your advantage with honesty, humor, or wit.

Should the unexpected occur, turn the incident to your advantage by keeping your composure and handling it in a relaxed, down-to-earth manner.

Indeed, while the prospect of being grilled by a panel of judges can be unnerving, the actual experience of meeting with the Nom Com should be an enjoyable opportunity to let them to see your finest qualities.
**AFTER THE FACT**

Wow, preparing for state FFA office is an incredible journey in which you really get to know who you are, what you believe in, and what’s really important to you. It’s a time of preparation that goes far beyond studying facts. It’s a reflection of your life.

While it’s easy to get caught up in the “right things to say” and the “best way to dress/appear”, it’s not about that. Don’t smile and be positive because you think you have to. Do it all because you want to. There’s only one you, and it’s not worth it to try to be a carbon-copy of someone else, because you never will be.

The selection process is a time of emotional interviews, thoughts, and questions about yourself. It doesn’t matter if you answer the questions perfectly or if your shirt is without a wrinkle at all times. What matters is that you are yourself… a person defined not by a state officer jacket but by a heart full of love and a desire to help others.

It’s a stressful time. It’s something you’ve worked extremely hard for. It is a time in which you have to put forth your very all in order to hopefully achieve a goal. You’re there with many other amazing people who are there to achieve the same goal. Get to know them. Get to know people at convention, just as you would any other year.

Through interviews, tests, and observation, the nominating committee will nominate a team to dedicate a year of their life to FFA. Many more than those six are well qualified. All you can do is your very best. It may be your purpose to spend a year meeting with FFA members across the state, sharing hopes, dreams, passions, and growth. On the other hand, you may be needed elsewhere to share that same love for life and people. There are people everywhere that need help, and if that’s your reason for running, then no matter what the results are, you’re in the right place upon the announcement.

You won’t leave from convention the same person. It’s a week of incredible growth. There will be great times and there will be a few disappointments along the way, but whatever happens, happens for a reason. Remember that.

You’ll meet friends to last a lifetime. You’ll learn more about yourself than you ever thought possible. And you’ll risk so much, with so much gained in return. Live it up, and be content knowing the best is yet to be.

*Good luck!*
Personal Views of being a State Officer Candidate or Committee Member:

“I had a good experience this week! Running for State Office is more about the process than the position, and I am walking away feeling very good about this week.”

“If I were to give any advice to future candidates the number one thing I would tell them is to get to know who they are. You must know who you TRULY are, not who you think a state officer should be. When they go into the interviews...be themselves because no one can act like a “state officer” for a whole year. They must be themselves no matter what, but that doesn’t mean they shouldn’t work on their habits, lifestyle, mannerisms, knowledge, appearance, etc. Once the candidate discovers who they are, work on their knowledge, be a well-rounded person. That’s really the best advice I could give anyone.”

“I can tell you that the main goal of the committee is to choose the best individuals who will come together to make a well-rounded team. In the interviews the committee is looking for who you are. Be yourself, let your strengths shine through, don’t try and compensate for weaknesses because that will take away from your strengths. Other than that, know why you want to serve as a state FFA officer. That is really all of the advice I would have to give. My best piece of advice to state officers is to remember that the members are the reason for them being there, and get ready to experience a ton of growth.”
The following is a copy of the agreement that all state officer candidates must sign as part of their application.

**STATE OFFICER AGREEMENT**

The following items are commitments required of all Washington FFA state officers:

1. Be dedicated and committed to FFA and the total program of education in agriculture.
2. Willingly commit my entire year to state officer activities - FFA shall be my #1 priority - which will require a hiatus from academic and/or work endeavors.
3. Forego all alcohol, tobacco, marijuana, and illegal substances at all times during the year of service to FFA.
4. Avoid places or activities that in any way would raise questions regarding my morals, character or conduct.
5. Forego dating/physical relationships (real or perceived) with current FFA members/state officers.
7. Wear the FFA jacket and official dress as described in the Official FFA Manual.
8. Maintain proper dress and good, professional grooming for all occasions.
9. Be willing to take and follow instructions as directed by those responsible for FFA.
10. Use wholesome and appropriate language in all speeches and informal conversations.
11. Regularly and on time write all thank you notes, emails, and other correspondence which are necessary and desirable.
12. Show caution and care when taking part in social media in order to portray a positive image of myself & FFA.
13. Maintain and protect my health.
15. Though preparation and practice, develop myself into an effective public speaker and project a desirable image of FFA at all times.
16. Strive to improve my ability to carry on meaningful and enjoyable conversations with individuals of all ages and walks of life.
17. Treat all FFA members equally by not favoring one over another.
18. Conduct myself in a manner that commands respect without any display of superiority.
19. Maintain my dignity while being personable, concerned, and interested in contacts with others. Periodically evaluate my personality and attitudes making every effort to improve myself.
20. Serve as a member of the team, always maintaining a cooperative attitude.
21. Work in harmony with fellow FFA officers, and not knowingly engage in conversations detrimental to other FFA members, officers, and adults.
22. Become knowledgeable of agriculture, FFA, industry and Ag education. Keep myself up to date on current events.
23. Avoid expressing personal opinions regarding political or controversial subjects when representing the Washington FFA Association.
24. Be punctual and prepared for all assignments and activities.
25. Be unwed, nor be the father or mother of a child at the time of serving as a state officer; further understood that I will resign my office if there are any changes in marital or parenthood status.

I have read and understand the intent and spirit of the State Officer Handbook and the items listed in the Agreement above. I have also read and understand the Washington FFA Constitution and Bylaws that guide our state association. If elected to office I commit to the handbook, agreement and procedures outlined. I recognize that if I do not satisfactorily follow these established standards or that breaking the agreement/policies may result in limitations being set on my roles as an officer or the possible removal of office by the State Advisor and/or Board of Directors.