



“Run Your Race”

Montana FFA State Officer Candidate Guide

Dear State Officer Candidate,

You are about to begin or have already begun studying for what may be the most life-changing week you have ever experienced. For some it may be something decided this year, and for others it may be a dream you've had for as long as you can remember. As you study about agriculture and FFA, remember one very important thing... **know yourself!**

- Know why *you* desire to serve over 5,000 FFA members in Montana, 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 about wearing a jacket that has "Association" printed on the back—it's much more. Being prepared will help you have a successful convention.

- 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 State FFA Convention.

And your life, what you do and say, will be the message people hear after that week is over and you continue on your journey through life.

Are you in it for the right reasons? If so, run your race.

What is a Montana FFA state officer?

A Montana FFA state officer might best be described as someone who "facilitates member success". The role of an officer is to help promote FFA on a statewide basis and act on behalf of all members at FFA and other agriculture related activities.

State officers:

- Attend executive meetings and play a role in the advancement of the Montana FFA Association

- Motivate members across the state, provide leadership workshops and retreats

- Participate in business and industry tours

- Promote FFA, agricultural education, and agriculture whenever possible

- Articulate the value of FFA, agricultural education, and agriculture in Montana and the United States

- Plan and carry out activities for state convention

- Provide current information on agriculture, agriculture issues, and state FFA activities to members and others in a written format, minimally 4 times per year (*Reporter duty*).

- Attend statewide contests and events

Is there a difference in officer duties on the state level?

Duties of the state officers are defined in the by-laws of the Montana FFA Association. While the by-laws define each office, there are other duties assigned during the year. As a team, state officers will decide what responsibilities they will share and which they will carry as individuals. Each state officer must be able to effectively work with people of all ages and in all walks of life. All state officers, even though they have different duties described in the constitution, are not ranked and expected to be able to perform the duties of any other officer.

The Convention in Review:

Those few days at convention will change your life, whether you receive an office or not. Arriving as a state officer candidate sometime Wednesday morning, you will “hit the ground running”. Everyone will start by taking the written test. Following the test, you will meet all of the candidates, nominating committee, and advisor chair. Coordinators also tell of the interview process and functions that you will attend. The current state officer team may also come to speak with the candidates. These events are described in detail below:

Written Exam:

This exam is divided into 4 parts; each carry the same weight.

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

Be familiar with:

- Official FFA Manual
- FFA Student Handbook
- FFA New Horizons
- Robert’s Rules of Order

It’s almost impossible to know it all. Understand the basics first—history and people. Know the essentials of a typical FFA meeting. Put yourself in the place of an FFA member, agriculturist, or someone who has never heard of FFA asking a state officer a question. Focus most of your energy on the FFA timeline, current FFA events, and common knowledge of agriculture issues. Know basic parliamentary procedure skills, and let the remaining knowledge fill up extra time you have.

Written Activity:

You will be given a scenario and asked to write something (ie: letter or thank you card) in response. You will be given a time limit in which to create your written assignment. A scenario *might* be something like this:

“You are writing a letter to thank a Representative for supporting FFA during the past year. He was instrumental in helping FFA advance with the state government.” In the letter, you want to thank him for his time and talk about things you feel are important in agricultural education and FFA. You have 1 hour.”

Here are additional situations that *might* occur:

- Declining an invitation to a banquet.
- Sending a thank-you letter to a sponsor.
- Writing an end-of-convention greeting as if you were state president to be featured in the newsletter.
- Responding to an email of a member

Make it personal, make it sincere. Let them see YOU!

The rounds are completely up to the nominating committee, but here are some pretty solid examples of how things could go. Try to be prepared for just about anything!

Personal Round (One-on-One Interview):

Think speed dating! In this round, you rotate in quick intervals to tables with nominating committee members. They ask a series of questions that could pertain to your SAE, State FFA Degree application, as well as personal questions. Be sure that you can give information about yourself in short but informative answers, as the time limit does not allow you to ramble.

Personal Interviews:

There will be individual rounds where you will interview with the entire committee. These rounds may be on agriculture issues, agricultural education and FFA issues or personal questions about your FFA career and other leadership activities and involvement. There are examples of personal questions later in this guidebook.

-Agriculture in Montana and the World Today:

The nominating committee can ask about current agriculture issues. The situation may be that you have to give a small extemporaneous speech to an audience who knows little about agriculture, or something else completely. Here are a few examples of questions:

- What are two major agricultural issues facing the world globally? In Montana?
- Why does the United States have the safest food in the world?
- What do you think will be a major impact that will influence agriculture in the future?

In preparing for this round, 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 agricultural 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 agriculture.

-Agricultural Educational/FFA Issues:

Again, you are not expected to know everything but do try to understand the major issues. Preparation for this category is very similar to the agricultural issues portion.

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?
- 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 agricultural education and FFA.
- What is the total program?
- How can we encourage students to pursue degrees in agriculture education?

These topics are affecting us as FFA members, and we need to be well-informed, concerned leaders. These are rounds to demonstrate your love for agriculture and education.

Group Rounds: Candidate Group Discussion and Interaction

Group rounds may involve a theme such as agricultural issues or agricultural education and FFA. Basically this is a situation in which you'll work with a group to plan and present an idea to the nominating committee. 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 interact with a group. As long as you get along well with others on a day-to-day basis, there is little preparation for this round. Participate and make sure your back is not to any nominating committee members. Speak up. You do not want to have long explanations for everything. Bring others and their ideas into the planning process and make sure all take part in presenting. Work together. Present together. Be a team player. Be a team!

These rounds might be something like this: with a group of people you have 15 minutes to plan and present a workshop to the nominating committee about FFA. It can be anything from planning a camp skit to preparing for a workshop. Here are a few examples:

- Present the basics of FFA to a group of people who have never heard of it
- You have to present a 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.
- You have just landed on a strange planet, your mission: explain FFA to the aliens
- Inform the Montana Legislature about FFA and the National FFA Convention.
- Convince a school board to implement an agriculture education and FFA program in your local school system.
- Explain 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 workshop/presentation scenario. As a state officer, this would be a common duty. But once again, teamwork and bringing out the best in others is the key.

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. 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. A few questions *might* be:

- Name the three things you value the most in order of importance, without an explanation.
- How can you influence students' 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. 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. Don't leave that room with any regrets.

Personal/Behavioral Questions:

Here are some questions to ask yourself along the journey. Some may get asked, some may not. They are meant to make you think and evaluate who you are. They'll give you a deeper understanding of yourself and why you are running to serve thousands of FFA members. Journal about them. Answer them in front of a mirror. Know yourself so that you can answer in clear concise answers. Practice with someone else so that you can get more comfortable.

-State Officer Behavioral Questions:

- Describe a situation in which you persuaded someone to see things your way.
- Describe a time when you were faced with a stressful situation and how you dealt with it.
- Give 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.
- 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?
- 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 one thing you would change about Montana FFA?

- How can you help members?
- What will you be remembered for?
- What is your purpose in life?
- What concerns you most about this world?
- What is the most pressing problem with youth today? What is the solution?
- Where do you see yourself in 5 years?
- What is your passion?
- What will you do if you are elected? What will you do if you aren't elected?
- Why did you join FFA?
- Name two things you consider your passions.
- Which of your strengths do you think will help you the most this year?
- What are your hopes for the year?

Basic Information:

Fundamentals of FFA:

- What is the place of FFA within the program of agricultural education?
- Why was 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 FFA, why did you join the organization and how does this reason compare to what it has meant to you?
- If a sponsor of FFA who was also a supporter of the 4-H asks you, "What is the difference between FFA and the 4-H," how will you respond?
- What is the purpose of the National Chapter Award program?

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?

State Officer Issues:

- How can officers develop more interest and enthusiasm among members?
- 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 fundraising activities?
- How is FFA financed?
- A member has just been defeated in running for chapter office; what advice would you give him/her?
- How can a team who is spread out in different areas of the state maintain communication?

List of Sources (just for your benefit):

- Montana FFA at www.montanaffa.org
- Northern Ag Network:
<http://www.northernag.net/AGNews.aspx>
- Agrigator Index of Agricultural and Related Information -
<http://gnv.ifas.ufl.edu/www/agator/htm/ag.htm>
- American Farm Bureau www.fb.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
- Futures and Options Markets
<http://exchanges.barchart.com/cme/cmeagr.htm>
- 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
- National Agriculture Statistics Service
www.usda.gov/nass
- Foreign Agriculture Service www.usda.fas.gov/
- Ag Youth Magazine www.agyouth.com
- Beef Today www.farmjournal.com/beeftoday/
- Farm Journal www.farmjournal.com
- List of Electronic Magazines
www.agpr.com/consulting/zines.html
- The Old Farmers Almanac www.almanac.com
- Successful Farming www.agriculture.com
- Progressive Farmer www.progressivefarmer.com
- Profarmer www.profarmer.com
- The Western Producer www.producer.com/
- Aurora Leadership www.auroraleadership.com
- Leadership www.leadership.com
- USA Today Education
www.usatoday.com/educate/home.htm
- CNN Interactive www.cnn.com
- U.S. House of Representatives www.house.gov
- U.S. Senate www.senate.gov
- National FFA www.ffa.org

Study Strategies:

- Notecards
- Speaking with informed agriculturalists
- Writing facts down until they're in your mind for good
- Speaking in front of a mirror
- Actually presenting workshops to FFA members
- Taking a journal with you everywhere and writing down thoughts/feelings
- Mock-interviews

Anything you can do to learn the facts and increase your knowledge of yourself!

Other Things to Keep in Mind!

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 or part time job. The following are important tips to remember when preparing for an interview:

- ALWAYS be yourself! This is the most important part of the interview, even more so than the knowledge portion itself.
- Use the question in your answer. This way you are giving a more 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..."
- At the end of your entire interview, please make sure to say thank you.
- Don't be afraid to ask the interviewer to repeat the question, this not only gives you more time to craft an answer, but also helps to make sure you know what is being asked.
- Confidence is key! If you feel the need to guess at a question don't make it seem that way.
- 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 immaturity and detracts from your qualities.
- Don't get too stressed out. Maintain a positive attitude; the members of the committee are looking for someone who is at ease under pressure. Take a few deep breaths every once in a while.
- When you prepare your Official Dress, remember to have your jacket dry-cleaned if needed, have your blouse/shirt, skirt/slacks ironed, shoes polished, and the correct number of pins on your jacket, black hose or socks. This is the 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.
- 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. Greet the committee members by their names if you know them. This shows your attention to detail and dedication to remembering their names.
- Don't 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. Sit up straight and keep eye contact with the committee to show interest.
- Have a sense of humor, but remember to not go overboard.
- 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 show that I am knowledgeable of FFA, agricultural education and Montana?
- Thank the committee when you leave and shake their hands again on the way out if you think it is necessary. At some point in the interview process, you may be asked to stop shaking hands for the sake of time; please follow those instructions!
- 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.
- 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 yourself is a 100 times more important.

Manage Your Nerves

The pressures of being a state officer candidate, possibly in 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 these jitters is to prepare beforehand.

Keep in mind that members of the committee are real people. If you are hit with the shakes, sweaty palms, and rapid breathing, remember to relax and treat them as regular folks. It is just a conversation with people. 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.

Take a few deep breaths, count to 10, and remember why you are here. ☺

Keep Your Composure

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. Mishaps do happen, but no disaster is so awful 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.

Preparation and Practice = Strong Performance

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.

Get to the point

If you cannot summarize your message in 60 seconds or less, you may not understand it well enough to communicate it in more detail.

Stick to the point

Make it clear where you are going with your communication and stay with it. Don't ramble or make your message confusing.

Remember that your body speaks volumes

Up to ninety percent 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.

Check your tone

The written word, in particular, is often much harsher than intended. Think of the way text messages can be misinterpreted. Let your words sit for a while before sending.

Say what you mean and mean what you say

People, while trusting by nature, are very perceptive and can find any hint of insincerity or lack of credibility.

Listen first for understanding. Practice active listening and really care.

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

Practice, practice; practice

Writing and speaking improve with study and practice.

Ask for help and be willing to accept feedback

Bounce your ideas off your advisor, friends and/or family. They can provide a clarifying perspective for you.

Speak from the heart

Give answers that have meaning, and show your passions and character.

Packing List Ideas

You might want to take a backpack containing the following items:

- pens/pencils (bring extras to share, you will be a hero)
- a notebook
- bottle of water or water bottle that you can refill (you will be in the hotbox forever)
- “healthy” snacks like granola bars, fruit, or pretzels (sometimes there will be snacks available to you but don’t count on them)
- breath mints, breath strips (Listerine strips), small disposable toothbrushes (Wisps). You’ll want fresh breath for interviews, but don’t chew gum, in case you forget to take it out.
- Your study resource(s)—feel free to put together a binder with important information
- FFA Manual
- Simple materials that might be useful for a workshop, (think small and light)—markers, colored paper, index cards
- Extra pantyhose (for the girls)
- Laptop

Additional Preparation Questions

GENERAL FFA

- What is the difference between FFA & 4-H?
- 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 FFA for me, I don’t want to just learn about farming?
- Name a National Scholarship sponsor? State Scholarship sponsor?

PERSONAL FFA

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

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 Montana?
- Does agricultural literacy or illiteracy play a role in the perception of agricultural education? Is there a future for agricultural education in Montana?
- What role do state officers play in promoting education?

PERSONAL AGRICULTURAL EDUCATION

- What do you feel is the biggest challenge facing Montana 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?

GENERAL AGRICULTURE

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

MONTANA AGRICULTURE

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

WHAT WOULD YOU DO? 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 Montana, 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?
- 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 ag teacher forgot that today was an in-service day. 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 homework 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 the State 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 deal with this?
- At state convention, you notice several members using tobacco products during the conference. What can 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?
- Wild land 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 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 -bus ride -ag teacher
- Who is a sponsor of the National FFA Organization?
- 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 for 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?

****Note** These are sample questions only, questions you might encounter and in no way are the only questions or situations that might be discussed.**

Knowledge

The following are categories of knowledge that you should become familiar with, it might be helpful to create a Quizlet (<https://quizlet.com/>) or flashcards

ACRONYMS AND PROGRAMS

ALD	Advanced Leadership Development Conference
AAAE	American Association for Agricultural Education
BLAST Off	Building Leaders and Strong Teams of Officers
CDE	Career Development Event
EDGE	Experiencing Discovery, Growth and Excellence
ILSSO	International Leadership Seminar for State Officers
LPS	Local Program Success
MFE	Made For Excellence
MAAE	Montana Association of Agricultural Educators
NAAE	National Association of Agricultural Educators
NASAE	National Association of Supervisors of Agricultural Education
NLC SO	National Leadership Conference for State Officers
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
WLC	Washington Leadership Conference
WEA	World Experience in Agriculture
ALC	Alumni Leadership Camp (Montana)
DLC	District Leadership Conference

PEOPLE

Tom Vilsack	Secretary of Agriculture, USDA
Dr. Steve Brown	National FFA Advisor
Ron De Yong	Director, Montana Department of Agriculture
Jim Rose	Montana State FFA Advisor
Curt Robbins	Montana FFA Foundation President
Jaime Edmundson	Executive Director
Carol Perisho	Montana FFA Foundation Development Officer
Kristen Swenson	Montana FFA Alumni President
Henry Groseclose	Father of FFA
Gus Litner	Inventor of the FFA Jacket
E. M. Tiffany	Writer of the FFA Creed

****Current National FFA Officers**

FFA Cities & Places

Mt. Vernon	Past Home of the National FFA Center
Hotel Baltimore	Place where FFA began
Indianapolis	Current site of National Convention
National FFA Center (Indianapolis)	Current home of the FFA Organization
Kansas City, Missouri	City where FFA was founded
Alexandria, Virginia	Original home of FFA
Indianapolis, Indiana	Current home of FFA
Bozeman, Montana	Montana FFA Association Office
Helena, Montana	Montana Department of Agriculture
Helena, Montana	Office of Public Instruction

FFA KNOWLEDGE

The following can all be found in the Official FFA handbook and once you find them it may be helpful to try creating a Quizlet (<https://quizlet.com/>) or making flashcards

Official colors

FFA Motto

Mission statement of FFA

When was FFA founded?

When was the FFA Creed adopted?

When was the National FFA Foundation started?

In what year was FFA granted a federal charter?

When did FFA and NFA merge?

When were females admitted to membership?

When was the National FFA Alumni established?

When did FFA change its name?

What is the web address of the National FFA Organization?

What is the web address of the Montana FFA Organization?

What are the parts of the FFA emblem?

What is the official publication for FFA members?

AGRICULTURAL EDUCATION

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?

Be able to name the CDE's for judging & leadership

Be able to name all of the current state officers and where they are from

OFFICIAL DRESS DO'S & DON'TS

Female Candidates:

- black skirt (knee length, without embellishments)
- white collared blouse
- official FFA blue scarf
- black dress shoes with a closed heel and toe
- black nylon hosiery (not tights)
- an official FFA jacket zipped to the top (displaying only 3 medals- These should represent the highest degree earned, the highest office held and the highest award earned by the member)
- Hairstyles and make up should complement the candidate, not detract from their appearance
- Use perfume with moderation

Male Candidates:

- Black slacks or pants
- white shirt with official FFA blue tie
- black shoes worn with black socks
- Official jacket always zipped to the top (displaying only 3 medals representing the highest degree earned, the highest office held and the highest award earned by the member)
- Use cologne/perfume with 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 prepare appropriately with extra antiperspirant or Febreze

Strive to look professional and represent yourself and FFA in the best light possible.

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.”

“Once you find your reason for running, everything else will follow.”

“Get to know the people you are running with—they will either end up being your best friends or your teammates, or both!”

“Being a state officer candidate was one of the best experiences Montana FFA had to offer me. It was very challenging but I believe that is what made it great. Looking back, I have no regrets about running.”

After the fact...

Preparing for state FFA office is an incredible journey in which you get to know who you truly 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 and appear,” it’s not about that.

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. 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.

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.

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 eight 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. Remember all that FFA has given you and take joy in knowing that all things happen for a reason.

Good Luck!

Motivational Quotes:

Be somebody who makes everybody
feel like a somebody -Kid President

**THE MAN ON TOP
OF THE MOUNTAIN
DIDN'T FALL THERE.**

*“Beginnings, though no one can go back
and make a brand new start, anyone can
start now and make a brand new ending”
-Anonymous*

“Leadership is an opportunity to serve. It is not a trumpet
call to self-importance” -Donald Walters

**“Success is going from one
failure to another with no loss
of enthusiasm”-Winston
Churchill**

“Great leaders do not desire to lead but to *serve*” -Myles Munroe