

## Education Director

The Farmers Union Education Director has a special role in the organization because education is one of Farmers Union's three main principles. This person is charged with training our children in the Farmers Union way and is responsible for the educational needs of both mid-career farming professionals and early career farming professionals. The Education Director oversees our organization's future and posterity for its members--adult and young members alike.

The division's Education Director is responsible for:

### **Youth Programs:**

- Encouraging our Farmers Union youth in their work in your division's youth education program. This can include positive incentives such as awards, recognition in newsletters and other communication, scholarships, and the opportunity to present at various events.
- Preparing an annual calendar to achieve the division's objectives. See Potential Annual Farmers Union Program Schedule in the Appendix.
- Keeping accurate and up-to-date records of progress made by each individual participating in the programs. For an example, review the Sample Youth Education Records of Progress in the Appendix.
- Recruiting youth to participate in summer camps and help plan and operate the camp programs if camp is part of the planned activities. If your state does not offer a camp program, reach out to a neighboring state with a camp program. They may have vacancies that can be filled by youth from your state.
- Encouraging your fellow Farmers Union officers to have youth members participate regularly in Farmers Union activities in a leadership role. This can include serving as a camp counselor, volunteering at Convention, leading a local meeting, or participating in a lobby day.
- Coordinating your efforts with the Public Relations Director to publicize all youth activity in your community and recruit new members.
- Attending national youth leader meetings and seminars, such as the FFA Next Generation conference and the American Camp Association conference.
- Encouraging your Farmers Union youth to take an active role in your division by identifying opportunities that play to their strengths.

### **Adult Programs:**

- Coordinating public education campaigns on trending issues relevant to your division. Public education campaigns give you the opportunity to share with members and non-members all the work your division is doing, to discuss issues affecting farmers and to provide resources that will help strengthen farm businesses. Campaigns can include in-person seminars or webinars hosted on platforms like Zoom. Topics can include policies before your state Congress that

affect farmers, changes being made to the Farm Bill, food safety training, new USDA programs and ways to get involved at the local co-op.

- Coordinate with the NFU Education Director if you need assistance hosting a webinar or managing an in-person event.
- Working with the Program Director to determine topics of interest to address at division meetings and assist, when necessary, in finding appropriate speakers.
- Bringing valuable information and educational materials to the attention of members, including books, pamphlets, articles, videos, government reports and bulletins or recent division and national Farmers Union publications.
- Encouraging members of education programming to take an active role in your division by identifying opportunities that play to their strengths.
- Tracking registration for education programming and sharing contact information with the Membership Director for follow up communication. The Membership Director will be able to keep participants informed on upcoming events and membership benefits.
- Surveying education program participants on the success of the program to help identify gaps that need to be addressed or areas of interest for future program topics.
- Coordinating with Legislative Directors to design and implement leadership training that will prepare members to be delegates at Convention or lobby days.

### **Helpful Hints for the Education Director**

- Many of the lessons in the How to Handle A Meeting section in the Appendix can be helpful when planning education programs. When planning for events, be sure to give yourself, members, hosts and possible speakers enough time to prepare. When possible, plan programs at least six weeks in advance to allow for time to coordinate travel, invite presenters and advertise the event.
- Explore state, regional, and national funding opportunities to financially support education programming. For example, consider partnering with National Farmers Union if interested in federal funding opportunities or cross-state collaborative opportunities.
- Encourage youth over 16 years to run as delegates to Farmers Union conventions and lobby days.
- Recruit new adult and youth leaders to help with programming. When possible, offer incentives such as travel assistance and stipends.
- Plan an awards program for the youth once they have passed steps in the program. Many states offer a Torchbearer or Youth Advisory Council program. Reach out to the NFU Education Director for more information.
- Get young people involved in other activities such as publicity for the division, working in the Farmers Union booth at the state fair, etc.
- Have youth who participate in camps or conferences give a report on the event at the next regular Farmers Union meeting. This will help strengthen their leadership skills and provide members with some insight into youth education programs.
- When developing youth and adult education programs, be sure to include an opportunity for

networking. This includes mealtimes and fun activities such as farm or co-op tours.

**Stay Connected**

- Connect with other Education Directors to find how they have leveraged special partnerships, grants, or sponsorship opportunities to expand outreach and financial sustainability.
- Reach out to Emma Lindberg to receive the Zoom link for the bi-monthly Education Directors call. This call is hosted on the 3<sup>rd</sup> Friday of every other month at 11:00 am ET.