



# NEWS RELEASE

## 95TH FLORIDA FFA STATE CONVENTION & EXPO

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## Florida Legislature Provides Support for FFA Programming Statewide

GAINESVILLE, Fla. – On behalf of nearly 29,000 FFA Members and more than 70,000 students enrolled in school-based agricultural education in Florida, we are extremely humbled and grateful for the recent appropriation provided by the Florida Legislature and included in the state budget signed by Governor Ron DeSantis.

This appropriation entitled *“Preparing Florida’s Workforce Through Agricultural Education”* further emphasizes the importance of agricultural education to Florida’s future and we certainly appreciate Governor DeSantis’ support. We owe a great deal of gratitude to everyone who took the time to advocate for our cause, especially House Speaker Pro Tempore Representative Chuck Clemons, Senator Doug Broxon, Representative Josie Tomkow and Representative Chuck Brannan. We are thankful for the support given by Senate President Kathleen Passidomo and House Speaker Paul Renner. These individuals and their colleagues have worked tirelessly to advance our organization and our industry - and more than 70,000 young people representing thousands of families across Florida will benefit greatly and ultimately, Florida’s agriculture industry will be stronger, our workforce will be more robust, and our state will be better for generations to come.

### Background:

In 2012, we began working with our partners (informally known as Team Ag Ed) to build awareness and elevate the importance of Agricultural Education & FFA within the legislature and ultimately seek funding to support our efforts. While some of our annual requests have been partially funded in prior years, it wasn’t until this legislative session that our request was fully funded by the legislature and included in the state budget by the Governor. Likewise, this request fulfills a major component of the 5-year strategic plan adopted by the Florida FFA Board of Directors in 2022.

### Overview:

Ultimately, this \$1.25 million appropriation was provided to support the following three overarching areas:

- Approximately \$700,000 was allocated to extend State & National membership affiliation opportunities to every student enrolled in agricultural education for the 2023-24 school year
- Approximately \$300,000 of the funding was allocated to enhance the delivery of STEM-based programming in the areas of leadership, personal growth, and career success

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## FLORIDA FFA ASSOCIATION

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- Approximately \$250,000 of the funding was allocated to increase the ability to host leadership and career development opportunities for our members at the FFA Leadership Training Center in Haines City

### Impact:

Within the three areas of support outlined above, we anticipate a significant positive impact on local FFA chapters statewide, some of which includes the following:

- **Elimination of Membership Dues/Affiliation Fees:** All chapters in Florida will be exempt from paying State & National Membership Dues/Affiliation Fees for the 2023-24 school year. Instead, each chapter will be required to submit the names of all students enrolled in the agriculture program on the FFA roster, thus enabling membership at all levels to every student at no cost. The number of students on a local membership roster must be reflective of the student enrollment provided to Florida Department of Education.
- **Reduction and/or Elimination of Fees:** FFA chapters throughout Florida will benefit from the reduction and/or possible elimination of some fees. It is anticipated that these fee reductions will include Career & Leadership Development event participation fees, leadership conference registration fees, convention registration fees, etc.
- **Increased Capacity for Student & Teacher Participation:** Florida FFA will explore opportunities to provide an increased capacity to engage students and teachers in FFA programming – including leadership events, career development events and conferences. Additional emphasis will be on lowering costs and increasing FFA participation at the Leadership Training Center.
- **Expanded Opportunities for Student & Chapter Support:** Florida FFA will explore opportunities to provide direct support to students or chapters in the areas of premier leadership, personal growth, and career success. Potential ideas of support include scholarships, mini grants, and more robust recognition within both individual and chapter recognition programs.

While these are some anticipated outcomes, the opportunities for growth and expansion are greater than ever before. The oversight of this funding will be carried out in partnership at several levels - externally by the Florida Department of Education, internally by the Florida FFA Board of Directors and administratively by the Florida FFA Association staff. The weeks and months ahead will include directives from FLDOE and planning by the Florida FFA Board that will provide clarity and direction for next steps.

In the meantime, we remain grateful for the life-changing work and the FFA mission that continues to be carried out by agriculture teachers throughout the state. Likewise, we are thankful for the support of the agriculture industry, donors, elected officials and others who continue to see the value in helping to deliver the Blue Jacket dream.

## ABOUT THE FLORIDA FFA STATE CONVENTION & EXPO

The annual state FFA convention and expo is the highlight of Florida FFA's year. Nearly 5,000 FFA members, advisors, administrators, alumni, parents and industry partners come together to celebrate the achievements won by the past and present generations of agriculturalists, while continuing to develop their potential for premier leadership, personal growth and career success. Attendees will be inspired and motivated to take pride in our industry, serve our communities, and become leaders of the next generation.

While at the convention, FFA members and guests will experience motivational speakers, award presentations, exciting exhibits, challenging Career and Leadership Development Events, and plenty of entertaining activities. Attendees can take a stroll through the Florida FFA Expo in search of the perfect

career connection, attend a workshop to brush up on those leadership skills, or simply interact and share ideas with FFA members and advisors from across the state.

## **ABOUT THE FLORIDA FFA ASSOCIATION**

The Florida FFA Association is a premier youth, leadership organization with nearly 30,000 middle and high school student members - as part of over 300 local FFA chapters across the state. FFA members participate in nearly 50 leadership and career development events each year. The FFA mission is to make a positive difference in the lives of students by developing their potential for premier leadership, personal growth, and career success through agricultural education.

The Florida FFA Association is a resource and support organization that does not select, control, supervise or approve local chapter or individual member activities except as expressly provided for in the Florida FFA Association Constitution and Bylaws.

The Florida FFA Association affirms its belief in the value of all human beings and seeks diversity in its membership, leadership and staff as an equal opportunity employer.

## **THE AGRICULTURAL EDUCATION MISSION**

Agricultural education prepares students for successful careers and a lifetime of informed choices in the global agriculture, food, fiber and natural resource systems.

## **THE FFA MISSION**

FFA makes a positive difference in the lives of students by developing their potential for premier leadership, personal growth and career success through agricultural education.

For more information about Florida FFA and agricultural education, visit [floridaffa.org](http://floridaffa.org).

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Florida FFA thanks the Florida Strawberry Growers Association, this year's media sponsor, for their continued support of Florida FFA and agricultural education.

