

Developing a Partner List

The first step in getting connected to partners is to determine who they are. Every program's list of partners will vary, but essentially these are people who can say either "yes" or "no" to your agricultural education program. Administrators and principals are partners because they can say yes or no to budget requests. School board members are partners because they have the ultimate say in whether or not your program exists. Guidance counselors are partners because they can steer students toward your program or away from it. The same is true for parents. Every community has leaders—official and unofficial—whose opinions and actions carry a lot of weight. Do not forget to include these people on your partner list. Write the names of your key partners on the next page. You may also want to visit the National FFA Homepage (www.ffa.org) and download an easy-to-complete database template so that you can develop an electronic ready-to-use list of partners.

Once you have identified your key partners, the next step is to understand them. Personal success author and speaker Stephen Covey stresses the importance of "seeking first to understand, then to be understood." If you don't understand your audience, you may not "connect" that audience to your program. Understanding each group and the challenges it faces is critical to appropriately positioning your program.

By asking questions and listening to answers, you can learn what they think about your program, how you and your program can provide them with solutions rather than challenges, and some key points to share with each group. The next three sections provide brief information about some of the key partner groups with whom you will need to work and helpful hints for positioning your program.

The following Partner Matrix will be an excellent way to identify the key partners in your community. It is suggested that you develop an electronic database to organize your contacts for even more efficient use.



Partner Matrix

School	Contact Name	Address	E-mail	Phone Number
Superintendent				
Superintendent's Secretary				
Finance Director				
Other Key Central Administration Staff				
Principal				
Principal's Secretary				
Assistant Principal(s)				
Middle School or Jr. High Principal(s)				
Guidance Counselor(s)				
Middle School or Jr. High Counselor(s)				
State Counselor Association				
Vocational Director				
State Vocational Director				
Elementary School				
Principal				
Counselor				
Teachers				
District Secretary (Finance)				
(Attendance)				
(Activities)				
(Other)				
School Board				
Chairman				
Board Members				
State Association				
Activities Director				
Coaches				

Partner Matrix

School	Contact Name	Address	E-mail	Phone Number
Directors of other Student Organizations				
(DECA, band, etc.)				
School Newspaper				
Key Teachers (Science, math, etc.)				
Support Staff				
Transportation				
Maintenance				
Local Community	Contact Name	Address	E-mail	Phone Number
Mayor				
City Manager				
Key City Council Members				
Chamber of Commerce				
Local County Agent(s)				
Local Newspaper				
Local Radio Station				
Local Television Station				
Community Improvement Groups				
Agricultural Businesses				
Other Key Businesses				
Advisory Committee				

Partner Matrix

Local Community (cont.)	Contact Name	Address	E-mail	Phone Number
Game Warden				
Natural Resources Commission				
Agriculture Associations				
Local FFA Alumni Contacts				
Economic/Financial Leaders				
Insurance Agents				
Real Estate Agents				
Parent/Teacher Associates				
Key Long-Term Residents				
Key Parents				
Key Students				
Social/Service Organizations:				
Kiwanis				
Lions				
Rotary				
Jaycees				
Moose				
Elks				
American Legion				
Eagles				
Veterans of Foreign War				
Beautification or Garden Clubs				

