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# EC2019 Rural Youth : Officers Training and Program Planning Manual

Frank Sibert

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# RURAL YOUTH

## OFFICERS TRAINING AND PROGRAM PLANNING MANUAL



EXTENSION SERVICE  
UNIVERSITY OF NEBRASKA COLLEGE OF AGRICULTURE  
AND U. S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE  
COOPERATING  
W. V. LAMBERT, DIRECTOR

## INTRODUCTION

In this circular are compiled the recommendations and suggestions of 350 young men and women who attended the eight district Rural Youth officers' training schools and the Rural Youth Mid-Winter Institute held in 1954.

Officers and delegates from 30 county Rural Youth organizations ate, played and worked together in an effort to find answers that young people's organizations are seeking. It is hoped that the following material will be of help to officers, program chairmen, leaders, and others who are interested in furthering youth programs in Nebraska. This is basic material which we believe could be adapted for use in working with any youth group. The material has been presented in order that youth groups will have the opportunity to share the ideas, suggestions, and experiences of the young people who worked them out.

Frank J. Sibert

Ass't. State Rural Youth Leader

# Rural Youth Officers Training and Program Planning Manual

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## Officers' Responsibility

How do you as an officer look at your job? There are different ways of looking at the jobs that you are given in an organization. Let's back away from the immediate job and ask ourselves these questions.

1. How do I look at my office:
  - a. Is it just another job to do?
  - b. Is it an opportunity for me to:
    1. gain experience?
    2. render service to others?
2. How do I work as an officer:
  - a. As an individual just doing my own job?
  - b. As a member of a team working together?
3. Whose interest do I have in mind:
  - a. My own personal desires?
  - b. The interest of the entire group and of the members we hope to attract?

Here are the findings of the workshop **groups** as to suggested responsibilities for individual offices.

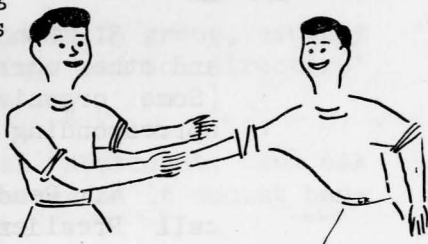
### 1. THE PRESIDENT'S RESPONSIBILITIES

1. Plan business of meeting in advance with Secretary and other officers.
2. Preside at meetings- attempting to draw out ideas from all members and keeping meetings moving and interesting.
3. Remain neutral in discussion and maintain harmony among members.

4. Appoint committees and see that they understand their assignments.
5. Delegate responsibilities so that every member has some job in the organization at one time or another.
6. Consult with other officers on program plans and the carrying out of activities.
7. Be a good example of a group member, by showing interest in the welfare of the group, and by encouraging participation.
8. Represent his organization in relationship with other organizations and in joint community enterprises.
9. Show enthusiasm in seeing that the group's decisions are carried out.
10. Keep check on finances, membership, interests of members and progress on service project.

## II. (a) THE VICE-PRESIDENT'S RELATIONSHIP TO THE PRESIDENT

1. Conduct meeting in President's absence.
2. Consults with President on plans or special work needing to be done.



3. Looks after such specific details as assigned by President.

4. May represent organization at outside meeting or conferences in place of President.
  5. May assist by helping start discussion on matters of business.
- (b) THE VICE-PRESIDENT MAY HAVE INDIVIDUAL RESPONSIBILITIES
1. May be chairman of Program Committee responsible to follow through with the program committees' set up for each meeting.
  2. May be contact man with all committees.
  3. May be assigned responsibility for some major project.

### III. THE SECRETARY'S RESPONSIBILITIES



1. Keep complete and accurate account of proceedings of meetings.
2. Keep a membership list and record of attendance at meetings.
3. Send out notices of meetings and other correspondence to members.  
(Some organizations have a separate corresponding secretary to do this.)
4. Read minutes of meetings and call President's attention to any unfinished business left from previous meeting.
5. Read correspondence directed

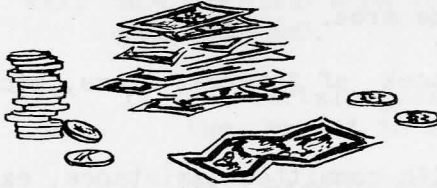
to the group and formulate replies when necessary.

6. Collect and record reports of all committees and all written resolutions.

7. Advise with President on matters of business to be taken up or upon good business procedure.

8. If affiliated with a state organization or committee, send copies of minutes to headquarters' office.

#### IV. THE TREASURER'S RESPONSIBILITIES



1. Keep an accurate record of all financial matters—monies received and expended.

2. Keep receipts and cancelled checks on file covering all payments.

3. Make regular reports to group, usually at monthly meetings and to directors' meetings.

4. Provide an annual statement, and ask for an audit of accounts if amount handled justifies it.

5. Collect organization dues, if any.

6. Pay bills only upon authorization as



provided for in the by-laws of the organization.

7. Advise other officers and members on needs and plans for raising more money.
8. May serve as chairman of a membership committee.

#### V. THE NEWS REPORTER'S RESPONSIBILITIES

1. Keep members and community informed on what group is doing- through newspaper articles- club news sheet- state paper- radio and television programs.
2. Become personally acquainted with newspaper, radio and television representatives in the area.
3. Keep scrapbook of interest items, pictures, etc.
4. Prepare with committee assistance, exhibits displays, etc.
5. Report to the public progress being made on special activities, service projects and other events through newspapers, radio and television.
6. Become familiar with the way in which news media wish to receive material.

#### VI. WHAT SHOULD BE THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN A YOUTH GROUP AND ITS ADVISORS?

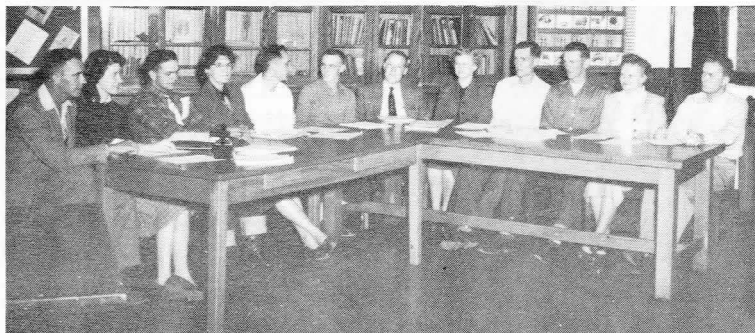


1. The advisor should be a counsellor who stays in background- assists when asked- offers occasional suggestions and points out problems which may be overlooked.
2. His most valuable contribution to the group is on matters of program planning- conduct of meetings and in developing public relations with other groups in the community.
3. Group should not expect advisor to work on details of a program, lead recreation regularly or preside at meetings.

VII. HOW OFFICERS WORK TOGETHER TO MAKE SUCCESSFUL PROGRAMS.

1. Set certain goals or objectives which they expect to accomplish.
2. Hold regular executive committee or directors' meetings to check on progress of the program.
3. Keep each other informed of duties and problems and need for assistance.
4. As individuals, each should show interest in meeting and talking to new members or visitors, helping to make them feel at home.
5. Plan to spread responsibility to all members of group through committees or special assignments.
6. Watch for new ideas-discuss them at executive committee meeting before bring-them up at a regular meeting.

7. Analyze each meeting to see where it might have been improved, and where it really clicked.
8. Attend training meetings or conferences and report back to members.



Nebraska State Rural Youth Executive Committee meeting

III. WHO MAKES UP THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE? How often should it meet? What are its responsibilities?

1. All officers and members of board of directors, if the organization has one, should be members of executive committee.
2. If certain permanent committees are appointed, the chairman of each may well be a member of the executive committee.
3. Advisors should be ex-officio members of the executive committee.
4. There is advantage in having the president from the previous year serve on the executive committee, at least in ex-officio capacity.
5. Executive Committees should meet as of-

ten as needed. A planning meeting should be held soon after the new officers are elected. It was pointed out that there may be danger in too frequent meetings as this tends to form an inner clique within the group which may be resented. A meeting every two or three months met general approval.

6. The executive committee should present to the group for discussion and approval all practical and workable plans which they believe the group should carry out. These plans include formulation of policy, arrangement of yearly program, appointment of permanent committees, planning membership drives and considering activity proposals. The executive committee should evaluate the success of each meeting- progress made toward meeting goals- and see where improvements or changes in plan should be made.

## Conduct of Meetings

"As the Meeting goes, so goes the Organization."

This is the case in most organizations. The group that has well planned meetings, starts on time, makes every one feel at home, involves all members in the meeting and has variety in the program, is the group that will have its members coming back again and again.

To bring out these points, Rural Youth-ers listed the ideas they felt were important under the following headings.

1. Plans for an Interesting Meeting
2. Using Committees

## I. PLANS FOR AN INTERESTING MEETING

An active program committee is the key to such a meeting. This committee appointed by the Executive Committee should start plans at least a month before the meeting for which they are responsible. A central theme for the meeting helps the committee tie all activities together. Four F's are considered important in a well rounded evening program:

Fellowship  
Facts  
Fun  
Food

The evening program may be divided into five major headings:

### 1. Warming Up Period

Having something planned for the early arrival such as "ice breakers", is a necessity. Nobody wants to sit around twiddling his thumbs. New members, who are timid, have a tendency to build a mental block for participating in the program if they are not brought into the activities at the very beginning. Some excellent ice breakers that may be used at the beginning of the meeting are active mixers, informal singing, table or puzzle games, and other activities that are described in various recreation manuals. This is also a very effective way to entertain any members who might arrive early. Usually fifteen to twenty minutes ~~as~~ long enough for a session of this kind.

### Cautions

It is essential that someone be respon-

sible for meeting visitors, new members or people who are going to participate in the program such as speakers. See that they meet the other folks who are present and that they get into the games, etc. Care should be used in the selection of the games used at the end of the warm-up period. Quiet games or songs tone the group down and prepare them for the business meeting.

## 2. Business Meeting

A thirty to forty minute business meeting should be ample if the business has been well planned. Start the meeting at the scheduled time, using care that the time is agreeable to the majority of the members. It is important that the meeting move along without delay or uncertainties. Need for advanced planning in your business meeting is evident. A good, snappy, business session is one of the most important things in conducting good meetings. The following is suggested for a possible order of business:

1. Call to Order by the President
2. Opening ceremony, such as flag pledge, sing America, etc.
3. Introduction of guests and new members
4. Roll call by the Secretary. Vary the response.
5. Secretary's Report
6. Treasurer's Report
7. Report of permanent committees
8. Report of Delegates to other meetings
9. Old business- report of special committees and unfinished business
10. New business- such as resolutions, motions, etc. Announcement of next meeting- such as date, place and time. Ap-

point committees who will formulate plans for the next meeting.

11. Special announcements such as coming events or action which needs to be taken on community projects.

12. Adjourn the meeting.

### 3. Educational Phase of the Program

This should be placed in the hands of the Program Committee to carry out. Thirty to sixty minutes is a good time for an informal feature. If there is to be a speaker, be sure he knows the time allotted. Find ways to involve the entire group in discussion after a talk, a demonstration or movie. Be sure that the subject selected is something which will be of interest to the majority of the members.

### 4. Recreation

This part of the meeting will be handled by the Recreation Committee. They should know for how much time to plan. One hour should usually be allowed. The



type of recreation used will depend upon the meeting place and the desires of the group. Variety is always wise in order to satisfy the wishes of all who attend. Games and activities may be selected to help emphasize the theme of the meeting and should tie into what has preceded and what is to follow.

5. Refreshments

Refreshments add an effective socializer to your meeting and also add the tapering-off influence from the peak of activity. They should be simple and easy to serve so that they won't take the time of the committee away from the major part of the meeting. Usually two items are suggested: one drink and one snack such as sandwiches, donuts, etc. Plan some way for the group to eat together, or get partners for eating.

6. Closing Ceremony

It is important that each meeting have a definite closing. The members will then know that it is time to go home. Meetings that do not have a definite closing ceremony usually end with people having a let-down feeling. The meeting should end early enough that every one is still present- not after many of the members have gone. An effective closing ceremony is just as important as the other parts of the meeting. Singing, friendship circles, etc., are effective ways to end a most enjoyable evening.



Rural Youth Committee Meeting



## II. USING COMMITTEES

The committee is an important tool in the organization's life. Too often, however, it is not used to best advantage. Above all else the committee must have a real job to do which is important to the organization. Discussion of this problem centered on the following questions.

1. WHY A COMMITTEE?
  - a. Helps spread responsibility among members.
  - b. Saves spending too much time at meetings on details.
  - c. Gives opportunity for a few interested people to study thoroughly the problem or plan or details of an activity.
  - d. Committee chairmanship is good training for group leaders.
2. WHAT ARE A COMMITTEE'S RESPONSIBILITIES?
  - a. Find out their specific assignment
  - b. Act as representative of the total membership.
  - c. Give serious study and thought to the problems at hand.
  - d. May seek expression of opinion from other members.
  - e. Prepare report including alternative suggestions with recommendation to group for discussion or action.



### 3. WHAT IS THE COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN'S JOB?

- a. Be sure he knows the assignment given his committee. If not, check with the President.
- b. Explain this assignment to committee at their first committee meeting.
- c. Seek ideas from his committee members before expressing his own personal opinions.
- d. Keep welfare of the total group in mind.
- e. Help to compromise differences of opinions which may arise.
- f. Prepare a report to present at a group meeting. See that committee as a whole approves.
- g. Inform the President before the meeting starts that he has a report to give.



## Program Development

What does your organization stand for? Have you accomplished anything? Who runs the show? Are all of your meetings the same? Do you have any fun? Can I get some new information if I belong? What do you do for the community?

Perhaps these questions aren't asked in so many words! It's a fair guess though that new members, perhaps even old members, use these questions as measuring sticks to decide the worth of the organization to them.

Work shop groups considered these questions and came up with the following ideas:

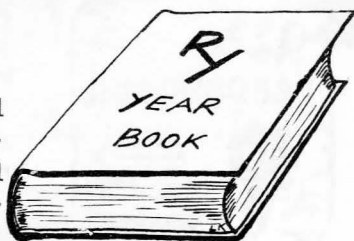
#### I. WHAT DO WE MEAN BY PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT?

- (a) It is setting objectives or purposes for group activity.

- (b) It's planning in advance the activities- projects- emphasis for meetings- relationships with other groups.
- (c) It's studying the interests and needs of the members and planning to provide them worth-while experiences through membership in the group.
- (d) It's thinking about folks who might be members and finding ways to gain their interest and make them a real part of the organization.

## II. WHOSE RESPONSIBILITY?

- (a) Every member should somehow be involved- his ideas sought and used wherever possible.
- (b) A special program committee may plan for meetings and suggest program, recreation and refreshment committees for each month.
- (c) The Executive Committee or Board of Directors should bring these ideas together and put them into final form.
- (d) The final form should be presented to all the members for their approval.



## III. WHAT ABOUT OBJECTIVES AND GOALS?

Objectives are the long-time results which we seek. They help us measure how far we have come and where we are going. Goals are stepping stones we lay down each year in our effort to reach those objectives.

Objectives suggested were:

- (a) Better human relationships- sociability,- getting acquainted- making new friends- providing own recreation.
- (b) Help members develop leadership skills and sense of responsibility for group action.
- (c) Broaden understanding and knowledge of members.
- (d) Improve home and community life.
- (e) Tackle problems and work out solutions.

Goals suggested as typical were:

- (a) Reconditioning an old schoolhouse as a community meeting place (community life)
- (b) Holding a series of meetings with county officials as speakers to become acquainted with county government (broaden understanding)
- (c) Organize a county softball league (human realations)
- (d) Sponsor home grounds improvement project (home life)
- (e) Tackle problems of providing fire protection to community (self-service)

IV. PROCEDURE FOR PLANNING A YEAR'S ACTIVITY

- (a) New executive committee meet to consider objectives- appoint standing committees- and evaluate the present status of the organization.
- (b) Secure ideas from membership at first meeting after new officers are elected-
  - (1) By using a check sheet which

lists many things that might be done.

- (2) By dividing the group into huddles of 5 to 7 members each and asking them to list suggestions.
  - (3) By suggesting a few specific projects- activities- or programs- and having members discuss them.
- (c) Committee meet and draw up a tentative program (6 to 12 months)
- (1)) Base program on suggestions made by members.
  - (2) Inject a few new and untried events or activities. Find out what has worked well in other groups.
  - (3) Suggest general type of meeting feature speaker if one is to be used, place a committee in charge. (Leave details to committee)
  - (4) Include in program the service projects to be undertaken-- tours suggested- special social events, etc.
- (d) Present tentative plans to group at next meeting.
- (1) Welcome changes or additions suggested by members.
  - (2) Secure consent of members to serve on committees.
- (e) A mimeographed or printed program
- (1) Include the approved skeleton program.
  - (2) Might add- names of officers, standing committees, names of members and advisors, statement of objectives.
  - (3) Prepare enough for all present members and prospective members.

(4) Have available to give to people who should know about the organization.

(f) End of year- have executive committee evaluate year's work so ideas may be passed on to new committee.



#### V. CONTENT OF PROGRAM

A well balanced program including information- recreation- service activities and refreshments- seemed most appealing. Suggestions under each were listed as follows:

- (a) Informational subject matter should meet the following tests:
1. Will it interest the group?
  2. Does it tie into our group's objectives?
  3. Can the members participate in presentation or discussion?
  4. Can the background factual information be presented in 20 to 30 minutes- and be pointed enough to create discussion or questions?



Program Planning Meeting Presented at  
Mid Winter Institute-1953

Method of presentation should be varied between speakers- movies- demonstrations- tours-debates and discussions, either panel, round table or huddles.

Sources suggested for informational subject matter were: members of own group- local farmers- business or professional people- public officials- individuals with travel or other experiences- foreign exchange students- agricultural or home economics specialists- farm organization leaders- extension agents- vocational agriculture or home economics teachers.

- (b) Recreation used in meeting should have a purpose:
1. First to create sociability.
  2. Develop feeling of fellowship and understanding.
  3. Further general theme of meetings
  4. Provide for the social needs of the group.
  5. Secure participation of all members in program.
  6. Provide new experiences to all members.

Suggested were- special parties such as costume or backward party- folk, square, and modern dancing- short plays- skits and stunts- community singing- musical groups, vocal or instrumental- box socials- organized sports such as bowling, softball, dart baseball, volleyball or basketball- swimming, skating, sliding, sleighride parties, etc.

(c) Community service projects were suggested as a valuable part of the program. Tests suggested for successful projects were:

1. Does it provide for participation of members?
2. Does it challenge members' interest?
3. Does it give recognition to the group in the community?
4. Can the results of the projects be readily recognized by members and community?
5. Does it develop good inter-group relationship?
6. Does it have publicity value?

A few of the many suggested project were: Roadside Improvement- Park Improvement-Charity Drives- Entertainment at Hospitals-- Painting Mail Boxes- Help for Needy at Christmas- Marking Town Roads- Raising Money for Scholarships- Assistance at Fairs and Picnics-Sponsor Recreation Leadership Training Laboratories- Assist in Community or County Wide Special Activities.

(d) Refreshments: Though considered important, there was little suggestion as to what to include. It was said: keep refreshments simple, easy to serve and not too expensive. If



group is not too large, they may occasionally like to help with refreshments. (Make own sandwiches)

Other Suggestions for New Program Ideas-

1. Plan for more inter-county group meetings.
2. Consider joint county activities such as sports events, drama festival groups.
3. News letter exchange between individual groups.
4. News letters from State Organization or from Agricultural extension Service.
5. Continuation of district or regional meetings for representatives of local groups.