

# Earning Government Credit through the FFA



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## Table of Contents

Overview.....	2
Goals, Objectives & Benefits.....	3
Sample Student Plan.....	4
My Student Plan.....	5
Student Contract.....	6
Meeting Verification Form.....	7
Student Log.....	8
Community Service Activity Sheet.....	9

# Overview

In 1988, the State Education Department established a policy enabling students to use a program of selected activities in an occupational education student leadership development organization to fulfill the ½-unit requirement for Social Studies IV: Participation in Government. This guide outlines the procedures by which credit is granted.

To make use of this option, a student must:

1. Be a member of one of the FFA
2. Plan a program of activities with the assistance and approval of the chapter adviser
3. Perform the duties and responsibilities of the office for which they are elected
4. Serve on at least one standing committee
5. Perform a minimum of 15 hours of community service
6. Prepare a student plan, document progress throughout the student plan and evaluate it upon its conclusion (prior to course completion)

A Student Plan which includes activities in Leadership, Political Process and Community Service must be prepared jointly by the student and the chapter adviser.

1. A total of 20 activities must be completed.
2. Weekly evaluation and monitoring will reveal whether the student is completing the activities in a timely and satisfactory manner.
3. The student, their parent/guardian and the adviser should sign a contract, which spells out the student's commitment to completing all of the activities specified in the Student Plan.
4. A log documenting participation in appropriate activities must be submitted to, and approved by, the chapter adviser.

# Goals, Objectives & Benefits

The goals and objectives of Social Studies IV: Participation in Government, listed below, should be incorporated into the student's program of planned activities.

## Goals

1. To gain knowledge of how public policy is formed, implemented and evaluated at all levels in a democratic society; and
2. To gain knowledge of how citizens can directly or indirectly interact with the public policy process.

## Objectives

1. To create opportunities for students to refine and develop skills necessary for participating in a democratic society.
2. To make students aware of the role of the citizen in the decision-making process.
3. To provide opportunities for students to engage in civic action.
4. To encourage students to accept responsibility for their roles as citizens.
5. To provide students with an opportunity to use skills and knowledge learned in other social studies courses and from their overall educational experience.
6. To provide students with an understanding of how public policy decisions are made.
7. To encourage students to work cooperatively in the analysis of public issues.
8. To make students aware of the complexity involved in the formulation of public policy.
9. To help students understand how a person's values affect his/her decision-making processes.
10. To enable students to make informed judgments concerning public issues.

## Benefits of This Format vs. Traditional Class

### For the student

- builds leadership skills
- teaches students to direct and manage their own activities
- enriches high achiever
- gives scheduling flexibility
- integrates academic and occupational education
- provides practical experiences in the democratic process
- helps identify and increase personal abilities which can be used in the community
- encourages the student to be a lifelong contributing member of society
- gives understanding of how the community functions
- builds self-esteem through interaction with community leaders
- involves student in school life, especially after school
- provides individualized instruction

### For the school and the community

- establishes a partnership between the school and the community
- demonstrates to the community what students have to offer
- enhances school image by having students active in the community

# Sample Student Plan

Every Student Plan must include activities in these categories: Political Process, Community Service, and Leadership

EACH student plan must complete the projected “completion date column” before approval and the “date completed” column must updated throughout the year.

Activity	Projected Completion Date	Date Completed
<b>Political Process</b>		
1. Attend the Farm Bureau Governmental Awareness Institute.		
2. Assist with the voter registration drive conducted by my chapter.		
3. Identify and track a bill through the State Legislature then write a letter of support or opposition.		
4. Attend a meeting of the school board, county legislature and town board and report on them to the chapter.		
5. Serve as a voting delegate at the State FFA Convention in May.		
<b>Leadership</b>		
1. Participate in the Environmental Leadership Program at Oswegatchie		
2. Serve as a chapter officer (OR Chair a standing committee). Meetings must use parliamentary procedure.		
3. Make a presentation on the merits of belonging to my student organization.		
4. Participate in the public speaking competitive event on the district level.		
5. Use problem-solving techniques to identify a solution to the problem of lack of recycling in the classroom		
6. Conduct a session on membership recruitment ...		
7. Participate in the Prepared Public Speaking Career Development Event	February 15 <sup>th</sup>	
8. Help organize orientation for incoming students to the program.	June 1 <sup>st</sup>	
<b>Community Service</b>		
1. Assist in the chapter’s blood mobile project.		
2. Deliver meals to the elderly one-day a week for six months.		
3. Participate in a State-sponsored community service activity.		
4. Assist the Key Club with its annual Fun Fair.		
5. Adopt-a-highway program		
6. Serve as a committee chair for the Superior Chapter Award .		

# My Student Plan

*Instructions: Complete the first two columns, get your Advisor's approval and put in your portfolio under the "P.I.G." Tab. Update as you complete the activities. EACH student plan must complete the projected "completion date column" before approval and the "date completed" column must updated throughout the year.*

Student: \_\_\_\_\_ Advisor Approval: \_\_\_\_\_

Activity	Anticipated Completion Date	Date Completed
<b>Political Process</b>		
<i>*Attend the Farm Bureau Governmental Awareness Institute and discuss #2 with your representative)</i>		
<i>*Identify and track a bill (related to agriculture or the environment) through the State Legislature then write a letter of support or opposition.</i>		
<i>*Attend a meeting of the school board, county legislature and town board and report on them to the chapter.</i>		
<i>*Serve as a voting delegate at the State FFA Convention in May.</i>		
<b>Leadership</b>		
<i>*Participate in the Environmental Leadership Program at Oswegatchie</i>		
<i>*Serve as a chapter officer (OR Chair a standing committee). Meetings must use parliamentary procedure.</i>		
<b>Community Service</b>		

# Student Contract

## Using FFA Activities for Participation in Government Credit

*Instructions: Complete and sign this contract. Then share your "Student Plan" with your parents and advisor. Obtain approval by asking them to sign below. Place signed contract behind the "P.I.G." tab in your portfolio.*

I, \_\_\_\_\_, will be an active in the T-S-T New Visions FFA Chapter during the 2008-09 academic years to fulfill the Participation in Government requirement for graduation. I understand that the activities in my Student Plan MUST be completed on schedule so that the ½-unit of Social Studies credit can be granted and graduation can take place.

I understand that this is a commitment that MUST be completed according to the timeline on my Student Plan.

If I am not meeting the schedule of activities by the fifth marking period, a written research project will be completed equal to the hours of this project.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Student

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Parent

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Advisor

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date





# Student Log

*Instructions: Begin documenting your activities in your SAE Journal. Place a special category heading to differentiate these entries from your work experiences, job shadow experiences or research work.*

## Sample Log Entry

**Category:** Political Process

**Activity:** Shadow the mayor for a day to learn more about the city's political process.

**Notes:**

*September 15 – called mayor's office to see if it would be possible to spend the day with her. I was asked to put the request in writing.*

*September 18 – wrote letter to the mayor explaining the Participation in Government requirement and asking to shadow her (copy attached).*

*September 25 – received letter from the mayor. October 6 at 9:00 a.m. is the day.*

*October 2 – met with adviser to plan for my shadowing day.*

*October 5 – called the mayor's office to confirm date.*

*October 6 – arrived at 9:00 a.m. Sat with her while she went over the day's schedule with her secretary, discussed correspondence that needed to be taken care of, and since it was Friday discussed weekend events that the mayor would participate in. At 10:30 a.m., we went to the opening of a small shopping mall. The mayor welcomed the stores to the city and then talked with some of the people who had assembled. At 11:30 a.m., we went to a luncheon meeting of the Recycling Committee. The mayor made a brief speech. Then back to her office where she returned phone calls. At 1:30 p.m., she had an appointment with the chair of the Democratic Committee to discuss some things, including the November election. An emergency meeting with the chief of police was arranged at 3:00 p.m. to clear up some problems with the union. I left at 3:30 p.m. to go to my after-school job.*

**What I Learned:**

*Public officials lead very busy lives and must always be pleasant in dealing with the public, even when the people they are dealing with are not. The mayor has to know about so many things to make decisions. She also has to be careful what she says because she'll have to live with that later. I was glad I wore my blazer because I felt very professional. The mayor was interested in the leadership organizations. I told her a lot about what we do, and I think she would be willing to help us in some way if we needed her.*

*October 9 – wrote a thank-you note to the mayor. I told her we would be willing to speak to community groups about the organization and offered our help on a city project if she ever needed it (copy attached).*

# Community Service Activity Sheet

**Instructions:** Complete a copy of this sheet for each FFA sponsored community service activity that you complete. Should you participate in community service activities for another organization, they MAY be used as extra credit for the marking period in which they occur. To obtain extra credit, you must attach a post-it note marking it in your portfolio as a request for **extra credit**.

## Student Section

Student's Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Advisor's Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Advisor's Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Project Coordinator Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Organization: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone Number: \_\_\_\_\_

Date of Project: \_\_\_\_\_

Start Time: \_\_\_\_\_ End Time: \_\_\_\_\_

## Supervisor Section

Please write a brief project description of the project and the role the student played in the project.

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Was student on time:  Yes  No

Did student actively participate:  Yes  No

How many hours student contributed to this project? \_\_\_\_\_

Comments: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

## Signature Section

Student's Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Project Coordinator's Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

(Signature verifies successful completion of the project)