

Introduction

Congratulations on becoming a NJHA Youth Coordinator! You have accepted a very important role in the NJHA program. During the coming year, you will be discovering many new and exciting aspects of NJHA. Therefore, you have been provided with this booklet, **The Youth Coordinator Handbook**. How valuable this handbook becomes is entirely up to **YOU!** When this booklet is used in combination with information and helpful tips you receive from the NJHA officer team, your state advisor, and your adult leaders, we are sure that you will be successful in your endeavors. Good luck!



The NJHA Creed

We are growing, living parts of this earth.
We are conscious of our desire to cultivate our horticultural abilities
And find comfort in sharing this knowledge,
We make our way together, each on a separate path,
Yet all in the same direction
We are the National Junior Horticultural Association, and
We accept the challenge of being the horticultural leaders of tomorrow.

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Youth Coordinator Responsibilities and Duties

1. Record Keeping

The most important aspect of this booklet is that you should keep it up-to-date and share with other new Youth Coordinators (YCs). This will insure a continuing program, versus one in which new YCs must start from scratch.

To keep this handbook up-to-date, you should place it in some type of three-ring binder and add anything related to your NJHA activities during the year. This booklet, *The Youth Coordinator Handbook*, should appear at the front of the binder, and it can be followed by any, or preferably all, of the following.

- Address lists of the NJHA officer team, youth coordinators, state leaders, and regional program chairs for the year (provided by the NJHA Vice President or Executive Secretary)
- Copies of official correspondence with NJHA members, officers, leaders, and groups
- Copies of *The Executive* and regional newsletters, which allow you to keep informed about regional and national events, along with copies of state, regional, and national news
- Copies of the NJHA publication *Going and Growing*
- Programs and other materials from the national convention, state contests, workshops and other activities
- A promotional section that may include personal tips, suggestions, experiences, photographs, newspaper clippings, etc.

All materials should be brought to the National Convention, where ideas and plans can be discussed with fellow Youth Coordinators. During this time, the record books of those interested in competing for the National Youth Coordinator Award will be judged by the National Officer Team.

2. Correspondence

Just as it is important to keep records, it is equally important to report any activities and progress to the national officers so that they can obtain a picture of what participation in all of the states looks like during the year. For example, you might report any new interest or participation within your state, the number of people that attended a state retreat or workshop, or just say hi!

Although it would truly be appreciated if you made contact with all six of the officers, the two that you should be most concerned with are the Vice President and your specific

Regional Director. The Directors are in charge of organizing the YC activities at the national convention; therefore, they need to hear from you during the year in order to get an idea of your work and NJHA background.

So, how many letters or e-mails does this add up to? Well, that's up to you, the YC, but **TRY TO MAKE MONTHLY CONTACT** (facebook, email, phone call, postal mail, etc.) **WITH BOTH THE VICE PRESIDENT AND YOUR REGIONAL DIRECTOR.**

In addition to these letters or emails, you should send at least one article a year to your regional director to be published in the regional newsletter.

A great way to keep up-to-date between conventions is to pay close attention to the NJHA YC facebook group, the Newsflash section of njha.org (<http://www.njha.org/news.html>), and any emails that you receive from the Vice President or your regional Director.

A) Notes on Correspondence

Here are some tips to help you in your record keeping:

- Try to answer all correspondence within a week, including email.
- Include a sheet documenting your correspondence throughout the year, including the date sent if possible.
- Keep a file of important people and contact information with whom you have met for possible future use.

3. Convention

A) Assisting the Officer Team

As a Youth Coordinator, you are greatly encouraged to attend the National Convention as a representative of your state. If you cannot attend the convention, try to keep in touch with other YCs afterwards to see how the convention went and share ideas for next year.

The Vice President will coordinate various youth coordinator meetings during the convention which you should make every effort to attend. At those meetings, you will be given instructions about performing various tasks, which may include the following.

- Act as room hosts; greeting speakers and presenters, monitoring rooms during presentations
- Act as bus monitors; keep count of amount of bus riders before and after each tour stop
- Assist with specific duties and tasks at the officer team's discretion and request

The officer team relies heavily on youth coordinators to complete this part of the convention program as it is evident that seven people could not possibly do all of the work on their own. Without youth coordinators, the entire National Convention would be impossible.

B) Creating State Displays

Each year at the NJHA Convention, an area is set aside for state displays. This provides each state the opportunity to construct a tabletop display featuring horticultural foods (apples, fruit drinks, oranges, peanuts etc.), information, and/or give away items indicative of their home state. All YCs are encouraged to contact their state leader to see if your state will have a display at the convention. You should contact your state leader early in the year and see if they have ideas and/or plans for a display. If they have one, you may want to volunteer your help. If your state does not have a display, you may want to contact your state leader and encourage them to take part in this show of state horticultural pride. For more information about state displays, visit http://www.njha.org/projects_statedisplay.html.

C) Participating In the Flag Ceremony

Flag ceremonies are a fundamental part of each National Convention. These involve a Youth Coordinator from each state carrying the state flag in a processional set to music before the both opening night and closing night of the convention. (Practice sessions are conducted beforehand in the banquet facility.) YCs are encouraged to make sure your state has a flag and a flag stand for ceremonies. Contact your leader well before the convention to see if your state group has a flag. If they don't, you should encourage your leader to secure one by contacting the following organizations.

- Secretary of State
- Area Chamber of Commerce
- Local Schools
- Extension Office
- Civic Clubs
- 4-H, FFA, FHA, or Grange Clubs
- State Loan Programs
- State Senators or Representatives

D) Being a “Hi-I’m-Glad-To-Meet-You” Delegate

Even with the other convention duties mentioned here, it is most important for a Youth Coordinator to be outgoing and friendly at the convention, mingle with the crowd, and make friends. **Remember a convention memory is only what you make it, so have a great time and make sure that others do as well.**

4. Outstanding YC Award

Each year the officer team selects and recognizes a few outstanding youth coordinators for their accomplishments. In selecting these individuals the officer team uses a point system to assure that the selection is objective and fair. The team also looks for sincere interest and initiative in NJHA. Each year the point system may be altered to accommodate new assignments for the current convention. Below is a list of possible points that can be attained.

2 points:

Demonstration of spirit, YC workshop, contests, bus monitor, banquet hall set up, donation of eye opener gifts, submitting pictures for convention slide show

4 points:

Articles for *The Executive* or regional newsletter, letters to officers, contest room host/monitor, office work, flag show

10 points:

Competing the YC Handbook and turning it in to the Vice President

5. Keeping NJHA “Going and Growing”

A) State Organizations

A Youth Coordinator, as a state coordinator and youth leader, helps organize state activities. Specific duties in state-related events will vary depending on the individual state involved. In some states there is virtually no organization, and in these areas a youth coordinator must work at building a state chapter from scratch. In other states, there are organizations that need to be revitalized or improved, which also includes important jobs for the coordinators in those states. Finally, some states have well run programs. Here a youth coordinator’s job is insuring the continued success of their organization. For more information on starting and continuing a state organization, [see Starting and Maintaining a State Junior Horticultural Association, available on njha.org or the Yahoo YC group.](#)

B) Spreading the Word about NJHA

1. Increasing Membership and Project Participation

After an organization has gotten started it is important to keep it growing. If you start out with ID/judging and demonstration contests, then you should branch out to include speaking contests, essay contest, and the various Young America projects. People for these contests can be drawn quite easily from existing 4-H and FFA programs. For example, look at the public speaking contests for both of these organizations; if a person is giving a talk on farm crops or horticulture production, invite him or her to your state contest to deliver his or her talk and perhaps represent your state at the National Convention. More than likely, the following year, you will find the NJHA speaking contest filled with participants. In the same way, essay contestants might be found by finding your local 4-H newsletter and seeing if anyone has written articles pertaining to horticulture or agriculture. If you don’t know if your area has a 4-H newsletter, you can check with your local county cooperative extension.

Young America contestants are perhaps the easiest to find since they can be recruited by you personally. Simply talk to the younger people in your 4-H club, your local Boy Scout troop, or your local elementary school. If a large number of kids know about the contests,

then chances are that they will want to participate in them. You might also enlist a teacher or 4-H leaders to help you “spread the word” about the various opportunities offered.

2. Presenting NJHA to other Groups

If you are asked to give a talk on NJHA, be sure that you are familiar with the NJHA information and plan your presentation thoroughly before you visit. Follow your preplanned outline, but don’t hesitate to let discussion drift into other areas of interest. Although it is best to leave some time for discussion and questions, you should expect ahead of time that possibly no one will ask any. A good technique is to ask some questions yourself so that the guests may then be inspired to ask some of their own.

A good presentation can begin with general information on the NJHA and end with comments on how the NJHA is beneficial to its members. If you have a hard time recalling the NJHA information just keep in mind the acronym HYCEL. By remembering that this “word” stands for Horticulture, Youth, Careers, Education, and Leadership, you will be able to provide your audience with a great deal of information about NJHA.

Preparation and follow up activity can be your greatest help in giving a presentation. Know the situation for the group you are addressing. Get advance information and talk to as many people as possible when you arrive at the function. After the talk, a short thank-you note to the group would be appropriate. This serves not only to show your appreciation, but acts as a follow-up as well, reminding them of your presentation on NJHA.

3. Working with the Media

Many times as a Youth Coordinator you will be asked to appear before the media in one form or another. If it becomes your responsibility to present the NJHA picture in total, here are a few helpful hints.

- When dealing with the newspaper, you contact them, not the other way around. You’ll get a lot better results and more in the paper.
- Newspapers are always interested in youth stories and events and are willing to send photographers to youth events. Make sure to tell them who, what, when, where, and why.

In addition to the promotional techniques previously mentioned, you could create table-top displays or booth exhibits for showing at county and state fairs, giving information about the NJHA, and how to become more involved in your state group. Such displays have the potential of reaching hundreds of interested youth and leaders. You could also write letters to horticulture related groups that are not currently part of your state organization and invite them to participate in your contests and activities. Even if just one more group is added each year, you are on your way to having a “going and growing” organization.

6. National Contests

NJHA has a variety of contests and recognition programs that its youth and adults can participate in at convention. Below is a list of these contests and programs. If you are interested in acquiring more information on any of these events contact your state leader or visit <http://www.njha.org/projects.html>.

- Demonstrations
- Environmental Awareness Project
- Experimental Horticulture Project
- Horticulture Connections
- Essay Contest
- Horticulture Identification and Judging Contest
- Photography (Still Film and Digital)
- Poster Contest
- Production Project
- Speaking of Horticulture (Illustrated talk, Prepared Speech, Extemporaneous, and Performing Arts)
- State Display
- State Spirit (Spirit Stick)
- Young America Projects
- Outstanding YC Award

Scholarships:

- Jack and Pauline Armstrong scholarship, A.K.A. Achievement and Leadership
- Alumni scholarship

For more information about scholarships, please visit <http://www.njha.org/scholarships.html>.

7. Running for National Office

Are you interested in finding out how NJHA is run, gaining valuable leadership skills, and having fun? You can experience all of this and more in any of the positions on the national youth leadership team. If you are interested in running for a national office, feel free to find more information in [Running for National Office, available on the Yahoo YC group or NJHA.org.](#)

The officer application form is available at <http://www.njha.org/pdfs/offnom.pdf>.

8. Contact Information

Do you need more information about NJHA? Do you want to contact a Program Chair or regional Director? In addition to the wealth of information at <http://www.njha.org/>, here are some contacts that you can make that will have information to help you out.

NJHA Executive Secretary:

Carole Carney
15 Railroad Avenue
Homer City, PA 15748
carole@njha.org
Phone 724-479-3254
Fax 724-479-3254

NJHA Advisors:

Debbie Gegare
376 Elm St.
Milton, WI 53563
debgegare@yahoo.com
Cell phone 608-921-8510

Mike Ensor
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Parkton, MD 21120-9608
Cell phone 443-416-3754
Home phone 410-357-0315

Addendum

This handbook was compiled by the NJHA National Officer team of 1983-1984 and revised by the National Officer teams of 1989-1990, 1990-1991, and 1998-1999. Also, it was revised and put into digital form by the Nebraska Junior Horticultural Association team of 2004-2005 and the NJHA National Officer Team 2004-2005. Most recently it was revised by the 2010 National Officer Team. Contents printed herein are representative of a collection of writings and literary works from many and varied sources. We would like to thank the contributors of articles, ideas, and suggestions for this handbook.

Running for National Office

1) General guidelines

Applications must be filled out by all youth wishing to run for a national office and sent to the advisor(s) no later than the set deadline. This also includes youth who currently hold a national office and wish to run for a position at the coming convention. Application forms may be obtained at <http://www.njha.org/pdfs/offnom.pdf>.

- When feasible, no more than two youth from the same state may hold national office in the same year.
- The president may be 22 years old in the year that he/she is elected.
- An individual running for president must be willing to serve an additional year as past president.

2) Youth Officer Duties

President:

Represent the organization and lead the officer team into new heights in planning and implementing the coming convention. Other duties include:

- Preside at all meetings of the Association
- Chairman of the Executive Committee
- General supervision of association affairs
- Voting member of the NJHF (National Junior Horticultural Foundation) Board of Trustees
- Recommend and execute duties for Executive committee
- Year-round communication with members, youth coordinators, all other officers, and state leaders
- Appreciation to donors from officers, youth coordinators and youth
- Ambassador to organizations such as National Grange, FFA, 4-H

Vice President:

Organize, encourage, and lead the Youth Coordinators while involving them in the convention and horticulture related activities either on the internet or at their local level. Other duties include:

- Assume duties of the President in the event of the latter's absence.
- Voting member of the NJHF Board of Trustees
- Coordinating Youth Coordinator communication and activities throughout the year and at convention

- In charge of opening and closing banquet Flag Shows at convention
- In charge of the closing banquet slideshow at convention
- Make and distribute *The Executive* newsletter

Secretary:

- Record minutes of the annual meeting and Executive Committee meetings
- Submit all copies of these minutes to all members of the Executive Committee, Board of Trustees and NJHF Historian
- Voting member of the NJHF Board of Trustees
- Coordination of banquet information at convention (banquet agendas, etc.)

Regional Directors (3: Eastern, Central, and Western):

- Gather articles and information for 2 annual regional Newsletters
- Attend all NJHF Board of Trustees meetings
- Specific and personal correspondence to Youth Coordinators (YCs) in region
- Offer information, encouragement and advice to YCs about promotion and activities in NJHA
- Communicate officer and YC activities to State leaders.

Past President:

Assist with and offer guidance to incoming officers and help officers with tasks and responsibilities. Other duties include:

- Recruit and support active members, YCs, and state leaders in inactive states
- Voting member of the NJHF Board of Trustees

General Duties for All Officers:

- Attend Youth officer team (Executive Committee) meetings.
 1. At adult advisor's home in December/January following election
 2. At hotel site of coming convention in June following election
- Attend annual NJHA Convention.
- Personal purchasing of officer uniform (official jacket and tie provided).
- Promotion/representation of NJHA
- Write an article for every *Going and Growing* newsletter.

Expenses paid for travel and accommodations for above mentioned meetings and for other approved expenses (postage, copying costs, etc.) pending availability of funds.

3) **Nominating Committee**

The Nominating Committee shall interview each candidate that has applied for to be considered as a national officer/regional director and shall nominate one candidate for each office. The slate shall be presented at the annual meeting; additional nominations may be made from the floor. Delegates nominated from the floor must have applied for a national office and been interviewed by the Nominating Committee. Officers shall be elected annually by a majority vote of the members present. A quorum must be present. Voting shall occur.

The nominating committee for the national officer team will consist of: the advisor(s), Past President, President, Executive Secretary, and others appointed by the advisor(s).

In the event that a position on the youth officer team becomes vacant, the position will be handled as follows:

- The position of the president will be filled in by the vice president.
- The position of past president, vice president, secretary and the regional directors will be filled by an individual appointed by a committee consisting of the president, adult advisor(s), and executive secretary.