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Creating Inclusive Agricultural Youth Organizations

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Currently, there are no formal, accessible non-discrimination policies within governing documents of the National FFA Organization, and only five (5) out of fifty-two (52) associations have a policy within a governing document like constitutions, by-laws, or policy manuals. Research and best practices show that policies are instrumental to creating behaviors and cultural norms within organizations, which after an extended period of incorporation and action in an organization, create more policies that are related to those cultural norms. Adopting non-discrimination policies in a formal governing document helps guide standards for access to organizations for potential members. Additionally, adopting formal inclusion-based policies and trainings help shape ally behaviors for members, and help welcome and proactively include minority and diverse students in an organization. Research was conducted to determine the presence, consistency, and availability of non-discrimination policies within all fifty-two (52) FFA associations, and non-discrimination and inclusion policies, trainings, and implementation recommendations were developed based on the findings and supplementary literature review on the relationship between policy and organizational behavior/norms. A letter advocating for the formal adoption of these policies and trainings was drafted and addressed to the National FFA leadership. The letter included recommendations and policy templates for the FFA to utilize when pursuing this request. Past FFA members were asked to sign the letter, and to date (4/15/19), fifteen (15) past members have signed onto the letter. The ultimate goal is to have all fifty-two (52) associations adopt similar policies into their governing documents, and Congressional legislation be passed requiring the adoption of non-discrimination policies into governing documents for all federally funded youth organizations in the United States.

Policy Ask: Implement federal requirements that all federally funded youth organizations adopt non-discrimination policies within their organization's governing documents.