

# KENTUCKY COOPERATIVE EXTENSION SERVICE COUNCIL SYSTEM



**KENTUCKY STATE  
UNIVERSITY**  
*College of Agriculture,  
Community, and the Sciences*

COOPERATIVE EXTENSION SERVICE

UNIVERSITY OF KENTUCKY

COLLEGE OF AGRICULTURE, FOOD AND ENVIRONMENT

KENTUCKY STATE UNIVERSITY

COLLEGE OF AGRICULTURE, COMMUNITY AND THE SCIENCES

Agriculture & Natural Resources • Family & Consumer Sciences  
4-H Youth Development • Community & Economic Development

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## **Introduction**

The success of the Kentucky Cooperative Extension Service relies on the active participation of Kentuckians in carrying out programs. The Kentucky Cooperative Extension Service Council System involves local people and Extension staff together to ensure an effective Extension program.

Through the system of County Extension Councils, local people work with Extension agents to:

- Determine individual and community needs,
- Plan, implement, and evaluate needs-based programming,
- Identify and appropriate available resources, and
- Market and communicate the value and impact of Extension.

The Council System helps develop educational programs for Cooperative Extension that reflect the ever-changing situations in which Kentuckians live and work and the diversity of citizens in our counties.

This publication outlines the Kentucky Cooperative Extension Service Council System and how it functions at the county and state levels. See page 8 for a chart illustrating the Kentucky Extension Council System.

### **Importance of Councils**

The primary mechanism for securing input in the support and direction of local Cooperative Extension programs is the County Extension Council. County Extension Councils are critically important to the Cooperative Extension Service's ability to provide locally relevant educational programs as a grassroots organization. Strong County Extension Councils are the essential link between citizens and the educational programs and priorities of Cooperative Extension. The Council System is also vital as the Cooperative Extension Service strives toward its vision, mission, and strategic goals, determined with participation of council members, program participants, and community leaders throughout the state.

## **County Extension Councils**

The County Extension Council is an organized body of volunteer leaders. They counsel with agents and administrators, identify issues and community needs, and help develop, carry out, and evaluate non-formal educational programs that contribute to individual well-being, quality of life, and the county's social and economic development. The County Extension Council works with the county Extension staff to set goals and performs specific activities and functions to reach those goals.

### **Purposes**

Purposes of the County Extension Council are to:

1. Ensure a broad-based Extension program available to all citizens.
2. Identify issues and opportunities that serve as a basis for the county Extension program's plan of work. The County Extension Council helps determine program priorities, content areas and goals with the development of each new plan of work; reviews the priorities and goals annually; and updates plans as warranted. They participate in all phases of program development, including:
  - Needs assessments and situation analysis,
  - Implementation of the program,
  - Evaluating program impact, and
  - Communicating with local leadership.
3. Communicate and promote Extension program opportunities to the public, organizations, and governing bodies of the county.

## Functions

Primary functions of the County Extension Council are to:

1. Meet with new Extension agents for the purpose of reviewing local program needs and concerns.
2. Stay current on local community needs through informal observation, analysis and feedback and periodic formal needs assessment.
3. Work collaboratively with the Extension staff to determine programming priorities and set appropriate goals for the total county Extension program.
4. Aid the Extension staff in developing, implementing, and evaluating county Extension programs.
5. Annually review program outcomes and impacts in comparison to priorities and goals, identifying opportunities to expand and enhance programming.
6. Promote an appropriate balance of Agriculture and Natural Resources, Family and Consumer Sciences, 4-H Youth Development, and Community, and Economic Development programming.
7. Ensure the necessary volunteer leadership for conducting county Extension programs.
8. Sponsor and conduct county-wide programs and activities.
9. Interpret the resource needs to the Extension District Board\* (or to the County Fiscal Court if no Extension Board exists) and other local bodies which may appropriate funds for Extension programming.
10. For counties with an Extension District, the duties of the County Extension Council include:
  - Nominating individuals for consideration as Extension District Board members,
  - Counseling with the Extension District Board in making and adopting rules and regulations for transacting Extension District business,
  - Cooperating with the Extension Service and Extension District Board in planning and conducting the county Extension program, and
  - Advising the Extension District Board in the preparation of the county Extension budget.
11. Advocate for state and federal legislative support as needed.
12. Increase public awareness of Extension programs.
13. Form committees as deemed necessary to function effectively and efficiently.
14. Participate in and/or identify members for Extension committees as requested.

*\* The Extension District Board is comprised of the County Judge/Executive and six citizens nominated by the County Extension Council and selected by the County Judge/Executive. The District Board is a body corporate, serving as an agency of the state to manage the affairs of the Extension District. It enters into a memorandum of agreement with the Kentucky Cooperative Extension Service and the District with the County Extension Council's advice. (See KRS 164.605 to 164.675 for more specific details on membership, organization, powers and duties, relations to other organizations and Extension Service and directives to the Board).*

## **Organization**

The county Extension staff, with guidance and leadership from the Area Extension Director, is responsible for organizing and maintaining the County Extension Council.

The membership shall be composed of not less than 15 and no more than 40 citizens of the county as specified in KRS 164.625. In counties with Cooperative Extension District Boards, each Board member shall, by virtue of membership on the Board, become a member of the County Extension Council. This membership on the County Extension Council may be in addition to the maximum of 40 as prescribed above.

## **Membership**

- a. Members should be carefully selected by a Membership Committee in consultation with the Extension staff and should represent all segments of the county, including:
  - i. Each major program area:
    - Agriculture and Natural Resources,
    - Family and Consumer Sciences,
    - 4-H Youth Development,
    - Community and Economic Development,
    - Horticulture (if applicable), and
    - Community Arts (if applicable).
  - ii. Each major geographic area of the county.
  - iii. Organizations affecting and affected by Extension programs.
  - iv. Underrepresented audiences, including each major socioeconomic group in the county.
  - v. Membership inclusive of the racial and ethnic diversity of the county.
  - vi. Additional at-large members with a major interest in Cooperative Extension Service programs (leaders in the professions related to program areas, business, industry, education, civic and religious organizations, local government, etc.)
- b. The membership of councils is important because these advisory groups influence the nature of Extension programs. Unless traditionally under-served audiences are represented in council discussions and needs identification sessions, educational programs may fail to meet the needs of all target audiences. The under-served may have a completely different perspective on what programs are needed. With their input, decisions on program priorities, methods of presenting materials, and the location and timing of how programs are delivered might result in quite different conclusions. Without their counsel, we are likely to continue doing things the way we have in the past because it satisfies those who are presently on the council.
- c. Extension staff should not be members but should act as resource people or advisors.
- d. County Extension Council members may serve three years, subject to reappointment for only one succeeding three-year term before rotating off the council. Rotation of council members is a must to ensure a membership that is broad based and diverse to give value to changing program needs. (District Board members will have their term extended on the Council to cover their term on the Extension District Board, if necessary).
- e. All members shall be selected and shall function as a part of an organization authorized to provide educational programs and related services to all people regardless of economic or social status and will not discriminate on the basis of race, color, ethnic origin, national origin, creed, religion, political belief, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, pregnancy, marital status, genetic information, age, veteran status, or physical or mental disability.

## **Officers**

- a. Officers will include a president, vice-president, secretary, and other officers as needed.
- b. Officers will be selected from the membership during a fall meeting, based on recommendations from the Nominating Committee, and shall begin terms no later than January 1<sup>st</sup>.
- c. Officers of the council will also comprise the Executive Committee.

It is suggested that officers be elected for a two-year term and that no officer succeed himself or herself in the same office.

## **Constitution and By-Laws**

A set of By-Laws providing for County Extension Council operation and terms of membership shall be adopted and observed. A sample constitution and by-laws can be found on the Program and Staff Development web site. (<http://psd.ca.uky.edu> - select Advisory Councils, then see the Extension Advisory Council Educational Resources.) Changes to the by-laws should be addressed through the By-Laws Committee.

## **Standing Committees**

As a minimum, County Extension Councils should have the following standing committees:

1. Membership - Work with Extension personnel to maintain membership rotation and recruit new members to serve on the council, working within established guidelines and parameters.
2. Nominating – Identify and recruit members to serve in council officer positions, presenting recommendations to the full council for consideration and election.
3. Public Relations/Marketing – Work with Extension personnel to market Extension programs, promote Council and Extension activities, and communicate the impact of Extension.
4. By-Laws – Periodically review council by-laws (at minimum once every five years), proposing any needed amendments and changes to the full council for consideration and approval.

Ad Hoc committees can be established as needed and should be created to accomplish a singular purpose (ex: a special county-wide program). Ad hoc committees formed for the purpose of program development should function through the entire programming cycle and involve all council members and perhaps others within the community knowledgeable of the area being addressed.

## **Relationships with Other Organizations**

### ***Extension-related Organizations***

The County Extension Council will be the primary organization representing the people of the county in direction of the total Extension program. Overall county Extension program matters to be acted on by local people are the business of the County Extension Council.

- a. The Extension District Board is an agency of the state to function with authority for making fiscal and financial decisions for the Extension District in cooperation with the University of Kentucky. The County Extension Council will provide advice, recommendations, and assistance to the Extension District Board for use in making business and fiscal matter decisions for the overall well-being of the people and communities in the Extension District.
- b. Extension Program Advisory Councils, such as 4-H Youth Development, Family and Consumer Sciences, Community and Economic Development/Community Arts, and Agriculture Advisory/Horticulture, should keep the County Extension Council well informed.

### ***Non-Extension Organizations***

County Extension Councils should establish and maintain relationships with local non-Extension organizations in keeping with the purposes and functions of the County Extension Council and the policies and procedures of the Cooperative Extension Service. Such relationships should help:

- a. Extend the benefits of Extension programs to people of the county.
- b. Obtain contributions to Extension program development, implementation, and evaluation.
- c. Promote understanding of Extension programs and procedures.

### **Ad-Hoc Committees of the County Extension Council**

#### ***Purposes***

Special program and activity committees will be formed ad hoc to help bring together those community members with the interest and knowledge to deal with educational programs in Extension. These committees may be charged with planning or carrying out specific subject matter programs, coordinating council-sponsored activities, or conducting educational events that occur at a particular time. Common examples are a field day committee, health fair committee, leader recognition committee, Plan of Work committee, etc.

#### ***Functions***

Primary functions of ad hoc program and activity committees, in conjunction with Extension staff and the County Extension Council, are to:

- a. Collect and analyze appropriate background information to determine the current situation concerning an Extension program or activity.
- b. Identify issues and problems and establish priorities.
- c. Determine short-term and long-term objectives.
- d. Develop and implement plans for reaching objectives.
- e. Evaluate efforts.

#### ***Organization***

- Ad hoc program and activity committees should be organized as required by Extension program needs.
- The County Extension Council should organize each committee after the need, purpose, and functions of each are understood and agreed upon by the County Extension Council and the County Extension staff.
- The County Extension Council should clearly describe and communicate the purpose and functions of each committee to those appointed.
- Committee purposes and functions must contribute to and be consistent with County Extension Council purposes and functions.
- Committees should be recognized as short-term and may be disbanded when their specific tasks are accomplished.
- Committee members do not have to exclusively be members of the County Extension Council; however, the committee chairperson should be a member of the County Extension Council and report to such.
- Officers of each committee will be a chair, vice-chair, and secretary. It is suggested that if a committee functions longer than two years, a new chair and vice-chair should be elected. These officers may succeed themselves for one term.

## **Program Area Advisory Councils/Committees**

Each agent\*\* will have a county program advisory council to advise and help implement programs specific to a certain program area, i.e., Agriculture and Natural Resources, Family and Consumer Sciences, 4-H Youth Development, Community and Economic Development (when applicable), Horticulture (when applicable) or Community Arts (when applicable). Program councils will be subordinate to the County Extension Council. Efforts of the program councils/committees will be coordinated with the County Extension Council. Program councils will give oversight to funds appropriated to or generated through the individual program advisory councils. Sub-committees of the various program advisory council/committee can further enhance the functioning of these program advisory groups.

*\*\*In cases where a county has multiple agents for the same program area (i.e., two or more 4-H agents, two or more family and consumer sciences agents, two or more agriculture and natural resources agents, etc.), the agents will work collaboratively with one program advisory council.*

Each program advisory council should have a constitution and/or by-laws that enables the council to have a membership that selects officers, rotates membership, ensures diversity, forms committees, and plans programs and activities within the law and the regulations of the University.

All program area councils may not have the same structure beyond the county level. Individual program areas will group into multi-county or area groups as necessary to carry out programs and activities beyond the county level. Contact agents may be assigned to groups that function beyond the county level.

Program advisory councils/committees will select representatives to be members of the County Extension Council. Issues, needs, collaborative opportunities, etc., may be communicated to the County Extension Council where appropriate. Some information flow will be necessary with state program advisory councils as well.

## **State Extension Advisory Council**

A council of Extension volunteer leaders will operate at the state level to provide the people's viewpoint in counsel with the state administrative staff.

### ***Purpose and Functions of State Extension Council:***

- To represent the Extension volunteer leadership in Kentucky,
- To review program issues and provide input related to the state plan of work,
- To be a communications/public relations ambassador for Kentucky Extension,
- To receive training and assist in providing training for those in leadership roles,
- To provide advice and suggestions to the Director of Extension and the designated administrative and programming staff on Extension programs, priorities, policies, and procedures, and
- To be an advocate for Cooperative Extension as coordinated by UK-CARET (Council on Agriculture Research, Extension and Teaching).

### ***Organization***

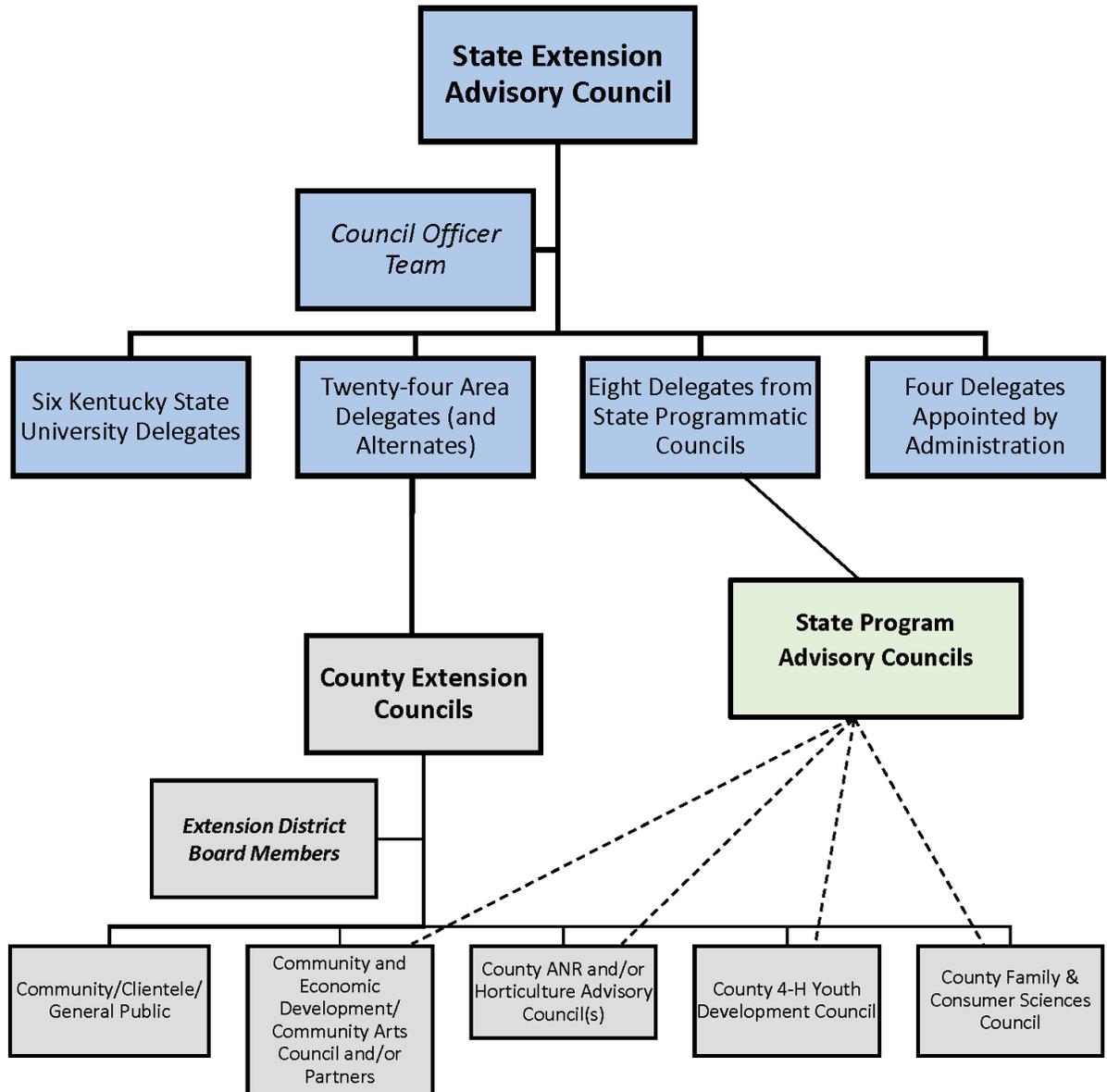
The State Extension Advisory Council will include the following.

1. One delegate from each of the twenty-four Extension areas along with one alternate delegate from each area.
2. Two representatives from each of the four primary program areas: 4-H Advisory Council, Family and Consumer Sciences Council, Agriculture Advisory Council, and Community and Economic Development Advisory Group.
3. Two Kentucky State University delegates for each of the three Extension regions.
4. Up to four additional delegates appointed by the Directors of Extension at University of Kentucky and Kentucky State University.
5. Officers including a president, vice-president and secretary elected from the membership on a three-year rotation. Officers are voting members of the Council.
  - a. Other officers may be elected as necessary.
  - b. The officers will constitute the Executive Committee.
  - c. Officers will be elected for a three-year term.
  - d. No officer shall be eligible to serve consecutive terms in the same office.
6. The immediate past president shall remain on the council in an ex officio advisory capacity for one year following the completion of the term as president and shall serve as a member of the Executive Committee.

### ***Relationships with Other Organizations***

1. The support and cooperation of other Extension committees and councils such as the 4-H Advisory Group, the Family and Consumer Sciences Council, and Agriculture Advisory Council, are vital since the State Extension Advisory Council is the state-level advisory group which covers all areas of Cooperative Extension.
2. The State Extension Advisory Council should maintain a functional relationship and communicate with County Extension Councils through the area delegates and alternates, meeting summaries and minutes, and Extension staff members.
3. Relationships with non-Extension and Extension-related organizations will be maintained in keeping with the stated purposes and functions of the State Extension Advisory Council and the policies and procedures of the Kentucky Cooperative Extension Service.

# KENTUCKY EXTENSION COUNCIL SYSTEM



## **Vision**

The Kentucky Cooperative Extension Service is the educational resource for all Kentuckians that serves as a catalyst to build better communities and improve quality of life.

## **Mission**

The Kentucky Cooperative Extension Service serves as a link between the counties of the Commonwealth and the state's land grant universities to help people improve their lives through an educational process focusing on their issues and needs.