

County Extension Council Successes

Sharing Ideas for Recruitment, Attendance and Council Projects

Counties have requested ideas related to County Extension Council membership recruitment, meetings, and programs. The information in this document was compiled through a survey of counties in fall 2022 regarding County Extension Councils with 80 county responses received. This compilation is shared to provide ideas and insights for your consideration as you work with your local advisory councils.

What is one strategy you have found effective in recruiting new members for your County Extension Council?

Personal Invitation (19 of 80 counties)

Detailed responses of note:

- Personal invitation with clearly defined objectives to use their specific skillset
- One-on-one expressing importance of their input
- Phone potential new members.
- Reaching out directly, using a mutual friend

Current Council Member Recommendations and/or Invitations (10 of 80 counties)

Detailed responses of note:

- Asking each member to bring a friend to the next meeting (3 counties)
- We have the current members tell us about someone that may be a good addition and then we go to them personally to talk about the potential of being a member.

Program Council Recommendations/Selections (9 of 80 counties)

Detailed response of note:

- Recruit from programmatic councils and have members identify potential new members through an identification subcommittee.
- We have recruited new members by adding members who are members of program councils to the mailing list and inviting them to share what is going on in their program area with their peers in other program areas.

Program Participants and Volunteers (9 of 80 counties)

Detailed response of note:

- Recruit from program participants and former 4-H members who are now adults.
- Reaching out to people who are already involved in extension programs, as well as, people who participate in programming across areas such as FCS and AG or 4-H and FCS programming.

Community Partners (7 of 80 counties)

Community partners noted include:

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| • Chamber of Commerce | • Government agencies | • Food pantries |
| • School system | • Local library | • Health department |
| • Local non-profits | • Community centers | • Farmers market |

Council Membership Committee (6 of 80 counties)

Detailed responses of note:

- We established a member recruitment committee and provided them with the county overview chart that helps members to see what the true county representation is. Our member recruitment committee worked diligently to find and invite new members to attend.
- The membership committee does a great job with this and is active in recruiting new members.

Clean Time Commitment and Expectations (4 of 80 counties)

Detailed responses of note:

- Providing them with a sound explanation as to why they are needed and valued.
- Time commitment is important - explain the number of meetings and responsibilities.

Unique Responses (only shared by one county)

- Invitation to an informational meeting and luncheon inviting several new potential members at once.
- Invitations for observation of the meetings.
- At a recent training we learned to think of different pockets of our population. Recently a foster mother was invited to be a member of the FCS Counsel. This is an important segment of the population that I had not even thought of prior to that training.
- Start a new project creates excitement.
- We requested each agent to bring 10 potential members to an introductory program where we presented the role and duties of CEC members. We then asked for commitments.



What is one strategy you have found effective in maintaining and/or increasing County Extension Council attendance?

Provide Food/Meals (33 of 80 counties)

Pre-Meeting Communications (16 of 80 counties)

Detailed responses of note:

- Reminders: Email, text, phone calls, social media, save the date cards, etc.
- We always send out minutes and agenda prior to the meeting so that people have a reminder and an idea of what is expected.
- Preparing them with a purpose.
- Adequate communication and notice.

Purposeful and Efficient Meetings (13 of 80 counties)

Detailed responses of note:

- Ensuring they know their time is valuable and not meeting just to meet.
- Conducting meetings in a manner that shows respect for their time.
- Engage members at meetings and make them feel needed.
- Making meetings efficient, with agendas and discussion points sent ahead of the meeting.

Frequency and Scheduling (11 of 80 counties)

Detailed responses of note:

- Quarterly meetings as opposed to monthly.
- We meet right after work with a light meal and have a time limit for the meetings.
- Offer meetings at noon one month and then an evening option the next month
- Having a consistent time and date for meetings. They react well to consistent scheduling.

Ownership and Engagement (10 of 80 counties)

Detailed responses of note:

- We like to have a meeting component that allows participants to have a specific "take-away" from the meeting. This is not usually tangible, but a task or a request for participation in something specific.
- They are engaged in projects and have actively participated in 1, 5, and 10 year goals.
- Having a clear and concise project to plan and implement
- Engage them in a program so they know what they do adds value

Recognition and Appreciation (7 of 80 counties)

Detailed responses of note:

- We host an appreciation dinner each year and provide a gift for them to be given at the dinner.
- Acknowledging the commitment and service of each member in small ways throughout the year. Whether it be a thank you when they attend the meeting or a banquet for council members.
- Provide promotional items to show appreciation.

Consecutive to Another Meeting/Program (3 of 80 counties)

Detailed responses:

- Attaching a meeting to another program
- Having CEC and District Board the same night
- Combining meetings with Program council meetings after County Extension Council meeting.

Invite the Whole Family (2 of 80 counties)

Unique Responses (only shared by one county)

- Highlighting one program area at each council meeting with an in-depth program report.
- We did breakfast or lunch field trips for a period to related sites, fairgrounds, stockyards etc. We provided food and a tour, but no actual business was discussed. Not a substitute for business meetings.



Please describe one project or program that your County Extension Council leads and/or sponsors.

Open House/Extension Expo (10 of 80 counties)

Detailed responses of note:

- CEC forms a committee to help plan and conduct an open house.
- Annual Extension Expo to promote Extension Services.

Field Day/Ag Day (9 of 80 counties)

Detailed response of note:

- Our CEC has an Annual Field Day every year. The event is mainly for K-8th grade students. They are bused over to our office, and they get to visit the different exhibits that we have. Those exhibits can include a petting zoo, wagon ride, drones, ATV safety, Appalachia music, quilting, and so much more. It's been headed up by the Extension office, but the council has had a lot of input. This year we are giving them more responsibility so that next year they plan it completely.

Volunteer Appreciation/Awards (8 of 80 counties)

Detailed responses of note:

- They sponsor, plan, and host the annual Volunteer Appreciation Banquet. Great way to recognize volunteer in front of their peers.
- Along with agents, members plan and implement the our annual Extension banquet to recognize all program area volunteers and hall of fame.

Facilities/Building Projects (6 of 80 counties)

Detailed responses of note:

- They are currently working with us on an Extension Creative Arts Center
- The Council has been active in the planning of the Outdoor Education Center at the Extension Office.
- Our County Extension Council sponsored and supported the building of our newly constructed Farmers' Market Pavilion.
- Our counsel has worked diligently to provide guidance and leadership with our office remodel.

4-H Support (5 of 80 counties)

Detailed responses of note:

- Fundraising for and/or scholarships for 4-H Camp.
- Community service projects for 4-H.

Elected Official/Leadership Events (2 of 80 counties)

Detailed response of note:

- Leadership Appreciation Luncheon - at this event we invite all elected officials and other important leaders from our community. We recognize a Service to Extension award recipient each year and have a short program. Typically, we also have state representative and senator give a brief update. We share the Extension Today and extension program updates with those in attendance. We have a committee from the CEC that helps plan this event, provide recommendations for award recipient and the CEC president serves as emcee for the event.

Farmers Market Events/Programs (2 of 80 counties)

Detailed response of note:

- Power of Produce Farmers' Market Youth Program
- Hosted customer appreciation events at Farmers Market

Plan of Work (2 of 80 counties)

Detailed response of note:

- Mapping out programming for each year that includes all program areas and projects to create a calendar that shows whole office impact and volunteer opportunities.

Unique Responses (only shared by one county)

- The Laurel Harvest project - increasing access to nutritious foods for limited-income people.
- They help sponsor and work our annual Community Activities Fair.
- Market in the Park. This is a community wide event offered at our local park free of charge for local vendors/crafters to set up and sale items. The CEC has been doing this for over 10 years now and it keeps growing each year.
- A small group of CEC members worked with the County Fine Arts agent to come up with a murals project titled "Paint the town with murals." After meeting multiple times, they presented their comprehensive plan to the larger CEC group.