

County Plan of Work Overview

The development of the county's five-year plan of work begins in the final year of the current plan. The process starts with a community needs assessment designed to identify the programmatic thrusts for focus in the coming years. Those programmatic thrusts, or **County Emphases**, will form the basis for the new 5-Year Plan of Work - a series of annual plans, linked together in a five-year cycle.

In the spring of the current plan's final year, the new plan of work will be submitted. This will kick off the next five-year cycle, starting on July 1. In each of the four subsequent years, the plans will be updated to include new activities and events based on the accomplishments of the previous year as well as to include new or emerging issues.

It is important to realize that some programs and activities in the current plan may carry forward. The community needs assessment process will help determine if current programs are still on course and will identify new issues which have emerged as important. If the situation in a county requires it, current programming may continue. However, the new plan of work should result in at least some new program direction or change of emphasis.

What is to be included in the Plan of Work?

County emphases should represent major program thrusts identified through needs assessments and discussions with local advisory councils and stakeholders. Since the plan of work will take a focused approach by targeting programs to specific audiences, all agent activities may not appear in the plan. However, a significant portion of work should be defined in the plan, then reported under the appropriate concentration.

Developing Your Five-Year Plan of Work

The format and template for the plan aligns to the basic logic model structure. Steps in the process include:

- 1) Identify the current situation.
- 2) Identify outcomes that you would like to achieve. For each of the county's emphases, specify desired long-term, medium-term, and short-term outcomes.
- 3) Generate a list of the educational experiences that will be conducted that are directly related to accomplishing the desired outcomes, as well as a list of resources required.
- 4) Define the evaluation methodologies and indicators to be used to track progress.

Identifying the County Situation – Provide a brief description of the situation to highlight why it's an issue. Is this something that Extension can play a role in resolving effectively? Through situation analysis, the County Extension Council and program councils examine the community for issues, problems, and opportunities which can be effectively addressed through Extension programming. The three major sources of information useful in conducting a situation analysis are **existing data**, **resident perspectives** and **current research and knowledge**. Agents bring forth information to stimulate initial discussions and then challenge leadership to more fully explore and discover programming opportunities in their communities. The county situation description should incorporate **relevant community assessment data** and/or **secondary data sources that demonstrate need**. Overarching situation statements from state-level logic models may provide relevant content to aid in drafting the county-level situation description.



Identifying Outcomes - Identifying outcomes guides the program development process. Start by looking at the long-term outcomes our programs can achieve. Then, determine what people must do differently to address this issue. Finally, decide what people need to know to change their behavior. This will help plan educational events for the appropriate audiences.

For each emphasis in a county plan of work, you should identify short-term, medium-term and long-term outcomes. As you begin drafting your plan of work, review the publication titled [Identifying Extension Program Outcomes](#) for detailed descriptions of each level of outcome and practical examples.

Short-term Outcomes - It is unlikely that a person will change behavior unless they possess the knowledge and skills required to do so. Furthermore, people must believe that it is in their best interest to perform the behavior before the desired change will be performed on a regular basis. Consequently, many Extension programs focus on knowledge gain. Identify the specific changes in knowledge, opinions, skills, or aspirations which are expected to result from this program's efforts.

Medium-term Outcomes - What will people do differently as a result of participation in these Extension programs? Usually, changes in social, economic, or environmental conditions only occur when people do things differently or change their behaviors after gaining knowledge. Therefore, desired practices are those behaviors or actions which people must perform if the targeted social, economic, or environmental conditions are to be achieved.

Long-term Outcomes – Long-term outcomes describe the social, economic, or environmental conditions that are anticipated to result from work related to each county emphasis. No matter how distant such outcomes may seem, we must be able to identify the “bottom line” or “the big picture outcome.” What difference will this program make toward improving the community or enhancing quality of life?

Learning Opportunities – To maximize effectiveness, Extension programming should include repeated contacts with an identified audience using an array of educational activities or methods to achieve the desired outcomes. The selection of these methods is based upon the subject matter to be taught, intended audience, and available resources. This section of the plan of work will list educational experiences to be conducted which are directly related to achieving the desired outcomes.

For each educational experience listed, identify the audience, then select the activity, content or curriculum to be used, the inputs needed to facilitate the activity and the date or time of year it will be conducted. In many cases, the agents involved in the activity will also list their initials as a sign of commitment to the activity. For example:

Audience: Unemployed or underemployed adults and teens
Project or Activity: Employability Skills Series
Content or Curriculum: Real Skills for Everyday Life
Inputs: FCS agents, high school partners
Date: October 2025

Evaluation - The impact of a program needs to be evaluated with pre-determined indicators of program effectiveness. In this section of the plan, agents will identify the indicators they will use to determine if the desired outcomes have been achieved. This is done by targeting one or more identified outcomes and developing a plan to measure knowledge gained, practices changed and/or longer-term results, such as dollars saved or a change in local conditions.

Agents are encouraged to focus on medium-term outcomes. This shows that our clients have taken action, and it may be possible to assign dollar values and social modifications to these outcomes. It is also important that the plans for measuring impact listed are as specific as possible. For each indicator, agents should describe plans for measurement, timelines for measurement and the audience that will provide the data. Evaluation plans should be developed for each activity or outcome incorporated in the plan of work. Indicators should be selected from the state-level logic models to the greatest degree possible, and evaluation plans should draw from state-level evaluation tools when applicable. For example:

Outcome: Adoption of personal health protection practices appropriate for their life stage.

Indicator: The number of program participants who adopt at least one personal health protection practice for at least four weeks.

Method: Data will be collected using a follow-up questionnaire.

Timeline: Questionnaire will be mailed to graduates of the course six weeks after the final session.

Submitting Your Plan of Work

Draft versions of the plan will be submitted to the Area Extension Director (AED) on paper or electronically, as determined by the AED. Area Extension Directors will communicate any specific preferences they may have regarding the format of the draft.

An electronically fillable Plan of Work template is located on the Extension web site and available for writing each county emphasis. Save the template on a computer locally and then create additional electronic copies as needed.

Since this is a new plan of work, no content from the current Plan of Work will automatically roll forward in the system. The new Plan of Work will need to be entered in its entirety. The worksheet is formatted to allow counties to copy and paste information into the online submission form once the plan is final and approved.

Other Relevant and Related Information:

Linking to a Defined Concentration

This year you will be asked to correlate each emphasis in your county plan of work to one or more state-level concentrations. The same concentration should also be selected when submitting your activities, contacts and success stories in the Kentucky Extension Reporting System (KERS). These correlations are necessary to align our efforts to our federal plan of work and to support the process of compiling and summarizing statewide data for required state and federal reporting. This reporting is crucial in demonstrating accountability for the funding received to support Extension.

Report to the People

Highlighting programming efforts and successes in the county Report to the People shows local clientele how grassroots determined programming is planned and carried out for the benefit of local citizens. The annual Report to the People should connect back to one or more emphases in the plan of work.

County Affirmative Action Plan

The County Affirmative Action Plans include specific goals, strategies for reaching those goals, and reporting progress toward identified goals. The Affirmative Action template is organized to reinforce the document's use as a county plan for action and resource for local educational efforts. The goals and strategies established in the Affirmative Action Plan should connect with the emphases in the Plan of Work. Counties are asked to specifically report on their efforts and accomplishments in this area.