

## Local Unit Agent Expectations

The quality of K-State Research and Extension is sustained through the dedicated, excellent and creative work of its local unit agents. As K-State faculty, extension agents are professional educators who provide a link between the university and communities across Kansas. Extension agents lead their clientele to increased knowledge and understanding and to better decision-making through proactive and intentional instructional methods and facilitating conversation about local issues in Kansas communities.

Flexibility in work time is essential for successful extension programming. Often the nature of the educational event and/or the availability of constituents necessitate faculty to work during lunch hours, evenings and weekends and outside a normal office environment. K-State Research and Extension supports agents in their role as family members and active participants in their communities and recognizes that these kinds of responsibilities may take them away from the workplace during routine office hours. In today's world, agents are rarely completely separated from their work. Consequently, agents cannot always consistently separate their work demands from their personal life. Rather, agents must often blend the two, and it is the responsibility of the agent to manage their work/life integration.

### Six Essential Criteria

The expectations listed below fall into six criteria essential to the quality of a local unit agent's work as well as the overall impact and reputation of K-State Research and Extension. The criteria include:

- Engagement
- Program Planning, Implementation, Evaluation and Reporting
- Education and Facilitation
- Program Management
- Volunteer Development and Management
- Administrative and Supervisory\*

While the relative importance of the criteria may differ among agent positions, meaningful contributions in each area are essential for an agent's success and in receiving **"meets expectations"** as a part of the annual performance review process.

### Engagement

Engagement is integral to Extension. It is the process of connecting with individuals, families, and communities to better understand their needs, develop educational strategies that address those needs and to collect evidence of program impact. An essential component of engagement is in reaching new or historically underserved audiences.

### Indicators for Engagement

- a. Actively lead or participate in an appropriate program focus team
- b. Meet with the program development committee and other potential stakeholders to get to know your community
- c. Engage in appropriate professional development to enhance core competency and subject matter knowledge (an agent should devote approximately 10% of their time to professional development)
- d. Serve on extension committees, as needed
- e. Serve on task forces identified by leadership, as needed
- f. Be a good organizational citizen and colleague to help achieve the mission of K-State Research and Extension

### Program Planning, Implementation, Evaluation and Reporting

Program planning, implementation, reporting, and evaluation is the intentional creation and continuous improvement of timely, high-quality educational programs that result in positive changes in participants' knowledge, attitudes, skills, and behaviors.

## **Indicators for Program Planning, Implementation, Evaluation and Reporting**

- a. Collaborate with the program development committee(s) and the appropriate partnering organizations to plan and implement impactful educational programming that address critical issues of the community
- b. Identify 2-3 program action plans including at least one signature program to deliver in the local unit
- c. Collaborate with other KSRE agents on interdisciplinary and trans-disciplinary programs when appropriate
- d. Implement program plans in a timely, professional matter
- e. Intentionally plan to engage underrepresented audiences and maintain appropriate documentation for civil rights files
- f. Evaluate educational programming to measure positive changes in participant's knowledge, attitudes, skills, behaviors and condition change.
- g. Prepare meaningful and significant periodic reports including annual reports to boards utilizing PEARS
- h. Communicate program/evaluation results to the board, program development committee(s) and other stakeholders to demonstrate program impact

## **Education and Facilitation**

The primary role of the local unit agent is to design and/or deliver appropriate research-based educational strategies to engage clientele. Extension education is complex because conditions must be conducive so the learner can increase awareness and knowledge and change attitudes, skills, behaviors, and condition changes.

## **Indicators for Extension Education**

- a. Demonstrate effective teaching and facilitation skills
- b. Develop/adapt educational programs to fit the various needs and learning preferences of the target audience, i.e. face-to-face, webinars, online programs, etc.
- c. Use appropriate technology in program delivery
- d. Proficiently use appropriate (research and/or evidence based) educational programs in primary program focus
- e. Write clearly, accurately and thoroughly to clearly articulate thoughts

## **Program Management**

Diverse, evolving extension programs need to be managed and delivered in an effective, efficient manner. Local unit agents may manage multiple programs at one time affecting the lives and/or livelihoods of internal and external customers.

## **Indicators for Program Management**

- a. Utilize effective strategies for organizing educational programs including promotion, selection of program sites, and registration logistics
- b. Provide marketing and outreach to yield appropriate program contacts
- c. Seek resources, such as sponsorships, user fees and grant funding to support the program
- d. Adopt at least one K-State Research and Extension signature program to deliver in the local unit
- e. Follow K-State Research and Extension and local unit policies

## **Volunteer Development and Management**

K-State Research and Extension relies on volunteer involvement in all program areas to extend the reach of our educational programs and resources. Volunteers are fundamental to many successful Extension programs.

## **Indicators for Volunteer Development and Management**

- a. Utilize volunteers as appropriate in order to expand programming. Establish clear expectations for how volunteers will assist in carrying out the extension program
- b. Implement and manage a comprehensive process for recruiting, selecting, screening, and training volunteers. Manage volunteers according to K-State Research and Extension policies
- c. Maintain a record of volunteer involvement in your extension program
- d. Provide an adequate number of training opportunities to meet the needs of participants wanting to be involved as volunteers
- e. Create a path for volunteers to grow and take on additional responsibilities and leadership roles
- f. Conduct an annual review of volunteer performance that provides clear expectations of their responsibilities and

- feedback and training to enhance their performance
- g. Determine effective strategies for volunteer recognition

### **Administrative and Supervisory\*** (this section may not apply to all local unit agents)

The purpose of the local unit director is to coordinate and direct the administrative functions including fiscal operations; personnel; and provide overall leadership for the planning, development, and delivery of a comprehensive local extension education program. Agents with supervisory responsibilities also fulfill some of these administrative functions for their respective program areas.

### **Indicators for Administrative and Supervisory**

- a. Work effectively with the local unit board and K-State Research and Extension to administer the extension program
- b. Manage the fiscal operations for the local unit including the annual budget, day-to-day expenditures, financial audit/review and reporting
- c. Effectively supervise and coach office staff, program assistants, and agents if in a district or larger county.
- d. Follow K-State Research and Extension and local unit policies
- e. Communicate impact of local extension program to board, county commissioners, legislators and other key stakeholders
- f. Provide leadership to effectively market the local extension program
- g. Provide leadership to assure that extension programming is accessible to all individuals and that reasonable efforts are being made to reach underserved audiences

### **Agent Performance Review**

The Agent Performance Review process, conducted annually in the fall, provides an opportunity for board members, the local unit director (where applicable) and the K-State Research and Extension representative to assess an extension agent's professional growth, development, and progress toward these criteria as well as their professional goals.

Specifically, the goals of the performance review process are:

- To provide agents an opportunity for self-assessment
- To increase job satisfaction and understanding
- To recognize performance that meets or exceeds expected levels
- To identify areas where development is needed
- To establish agreement on professional development plans

For more information about agent performance review, check out the [Board Leadership Module, Agent Performance Review](#).