

Client Contact Reporting

for K-State Research and Extension professionals

To showcase the efforts of extension professionals to local, regional, state, and federal stakeholders and to comply with federal reporting requirements, it is important that we report in a uniform manner.

Required:

- All agents, specialists and administrators are required to complete the Quarterly Effort Reports within the Program Evaluation and Reporting System (PEARS). The Quarterly Effort Report is to be completed by the 5th of the month following the completion of the quarter – January 5, April 5, July 5, October 5.
- KSRE agents and specialists will record race, gender and ethnicity information based on information reported by participants and/or partnering organizations and not from visual estimates.
- KSRE agents and specialists will utilize the Program Activities module in PEARS to record **direct education contacts*** from an educational event or activity that is offered to a group of people. Direct education contacts recorded in a Program Activity should be auto calculated into the Quarterly Effort Report. Individual educational contacts such as phone calls and emails will be reported directly into the Quarterly Effort Report.

***Direct Education Contacts** are when both the extension professional and the client/receiver are linked together at the same time and/or place for educational purposes. Examples include:

- Individual consultations in the field or office
- Face-to-face interactions in group meetings, workshops, virtual meetings, field days, classrooms, etc.
- Individual correspondence by letter, email, or telephone

Strongly Recommended:

- KSRE agents and specialists should utilize the PEARS Indirect Activities module to record **indirect education contacts*** through mass communications, community events, interviews, advertisements, and material distribution that are not considered direct education.

***Indirect Contacts** preclude interaction. Newsletters, radio, TV and social media are typically considered an indirect contact because you don't know who is actually viewing or reading your information. For example, you can send newsletters to 1000 people, but you can't be sure it is being read by everyone.

Kansas State University Agricultural Experiment Station and Cooperative Extension Service
K-State Research and Extension is an equal opportunity provider and employer.

Collecting Race/Ethnicity/Gender (REG) Data

The collection of demographic data from program participants is an important and mandated aspect of all K-State Research and Extension programming staff efforts. USDA's National Institute for Food and Agriculture (NIFA) Equal Opportunity unit has communicated that collecting race, ethnicity, and gender (REG) data via visual observation is no longer an acceptable collection method. The data must be reported from participants and/or partnering organizations and collected by extension staff. It is essential that K-State Research and Extension staff use one of the following strategies for collecting REG data which will be reported in PEARS.

The following methods can be used to collect REG data:

At time of registration:

If you collect registration electronically, REG data can be collected when the participant registers. Demographic information should be collected exactly as it appears on the [K-State Research and Extension Program Participant Data Collection Form](#). It is important that this information be kept private and secure during the collection process.

Events that don't require registration or that accept walk-in participants require that you offer to collect this information on site by using paper forms or electronic polls or a survey. In addition, please ask all participants if they filled the information out when they registered to avoid reporting duplicate data. Some people are not comfortable filling out information before they've made a connection with an actual person. Though they may have opted out initially, now that they have met a KSRE faculty or staff member in person, they may feel more comfortable filling out the paper form.

On paper forms during the program/activity:

Use the [K-State Research and Extension Program Participant Data Collection Form](#) to collect REG data at your program. You may collect this information at any time during your program, although research suggests that collecting the information during the middle of the program results in the best participation. Each participant should fill out a form. Refrain from collecting this information via a sign-in sheet or pass-around form in order to protect participants' privacy.

Electronically during the program/activity:

You may ask program participants to provide the information by completing an anonymous poll during your meeting or event. Ideally, this would be done through a stand-alone poll. When using the stand-alone poll, it is critical to have a mechanism for recording the data so that it can be accessed and reported later.

When it makes sense, the required demographic information can be asked as part of program evaluations. For example, it would be appropriate to collect demographic information when paired with questions measuring program impacts, as that would allow the comparison of impacts across different groups.

Check out the following resources for more information:

- [PEARS Support pages](#) for videos, step-by-step instructions, and screenshots for completing Program Activities and Indirect Contacts modules.
- The ES-237 Reporting Overview

Frequently Asked Questions

General Data Collection

Q. Why do we collect this data?

A. We collect this data because we are required to report it annually to the federal government, who is one of our primary funders. In addition, we need this data to see who is attending our programs and to adjust our methods until the demographics of those who attend our programs match the demographics of all the people living in the area.

Q. Is the observation method an acceptable way to collect this data?

A. No. It is not acceptable to collect this information by observation. The data must be collected from the participants or partnering organizations.

Q. Who should use the Program Participant Data Collection Form?

A. All KSRE Extension faculty and staff members providing a program offered to the public must attempt to collect information related to race, ethnicity and gender (REG) using this form.

Q. When should I collect this data?

A. Experience tells us that it is best to collect data midway through a class, training or meeting. This gives you an opportunity to form a relationship with participants. By leaving the task to the end of the session, you run the risk of participants not taking the time to fill out the information. REG data can also be collected at the time of registration or combined with program evaluation.

Q. Is this the only form we should be using?

A. Yes, it is important that we have a level of uniformity with the forms used to collect this data. If you used other forms in the past, please begin using this updated form immediately.

Q. Can I use this form to include additional information like name, address, email or other contact information?

A. It is a best practice to collect this information separately.

You should not add questions for any of the following reasons:

- You are curious to know something about your participants.
- Questions that would make the process of collecting information too long and possibly impact the return rate of this form.

Q. Should each program participant get their own, individual demographic data collection form to complete?

A. Yes, this information is confidential, and each participant must be given their own form to fill out. This includes members of the same family. Refrain from collecting this information on sign in sheets.

Q. Should youth be asked to complete the demographic data collection form?

A. Youth between the ages of 13-17 may fill out the demographic data collection form. In the case of programs or activities involving participants who younger than 13, legal guardians should be asked to provide the REG data. It is suggested that you collect REG data at time of registration for youth programs. If the program is delivered in a school setting, it is appropriate to ask the teacher for REG data for their classroom.

Q. Is it mandatory that program participants fill out this form?

A. No, this form is not mandatory for program participants to fill out, it is strictly voluntary. However, it is mandatory that you offer all participants an opportunity to provide this information.

Q. Can I collect this information through online registration forms?

A. Yes. If you are collecting electronic registrations, you may collect this information at point of registration. However, events that don't require registration or that accept walk-in participants require that you offer to collect this information on site. In addition, please ask all participants if they filled the information out when they registered. Some people are not comfortable filling out information before they've made a connection with an actual person. Though they may have opted out initially, now that they have met a KSRE faculty or staff member in person, they may feel more comfortable filling out the paper form. To prevent duplicates, be cautious that participants do not fill out the form twice.

Q. I collected demographic data as part of the online registration process, but several participants who registered did not actually attend the meeting. How should I count the educational contacts?

A. Only those who actually attend an educational program should be counted. It is recommended that you use an attendance sheet to record who registered vs who attended so you will know which contacts to report. A registration report can also help you to identify which participants may not have provided demographic information when they registered. Those that didn't provide REG data at registration should be provided with an opportunity to do at the event.

Q. Can I collect the required demographic information on or with an evaluation survey?

A. The required demographic information can be asked as part of program evaluation. For example, it would be appropriate to collect demographic information when paired with questions measuring program impacts, as that would allow the comparison of impacts across different groups.

Q. I am unsure of how to approach an audience about completing the KSRE Program Participation Form.

A. Consider using the sample script below.

Sample Script:

"Thank you for participating in today's program. In just a minute, I will be passing out our K-State Research and Extension Program Participant form. Please take a few minutes to help us by sharing some information about yourself, if you desire. By answering the questions below, you help us to provide a snapshot of who participated in our program, support our commitment to providing programs to all segments of our community and help us to maintain continued funding for programs like the one you participated in today.

*Providing this information is **voluntary**. The information that you provide will not be used in any way to identify you personally but rather as a member of a group that participated in this program. These forms will be kept separate from any other information related to the program you participated in and only the race, ethnicity and gender data will be shared with the United States Department of Agriculture as part of our civil rights requirements. The form provides you with the option of providing information related to race, ethnicity, gender, age, and your county of residence. You can fill the form out completely or choose to respond to different sections at your discretion. We appreciate your participation in filling out this form. I am available to answer any questions or concerns you might have."*

Counting Contacts

Q. How should we count program participants in a workshop series?

A. *NEW*: The new guidance from NIFA indicates that a workshop series (such as Master Gardener Volunteer basic training) is considered a distinct activity and should only be counted once regardless of the number of sessions. If those same individuals participate in a different MG session outside of the basic training, it would be considered as another distinct event.

Q. What if more than one extension professional is presenting a session at a day-long workshop? Who counts the numbers?

A. Only the lead agent/specialist should report the direct educational contacts in a PEARS program activity record. The program activity module allows for the lead agent/specialist to add “Collaborators” to give credit to other KSRE extension professionals that were involved and to describe their contribution.

Q. How do we report statewide educational events at which multiple staff provide shorter educational sessions?

A. Direct educational contacts connected to a statewide event should be entered only once by the primary organizer of the event using the Program Activities module. This helps to eliminate duplicates within the system. When you report a statewide event, include everyone who contributed and their role in the Collaborator field. Enter the names of the individual sessions in the Program Activity Comments box. A summary report of program participants by local unit should be uploaded as a file attachment to that record.

Example: The statewide event coordinator for Discovery Days will complete the Program Activity in PEARS and include all the KSRE extension professionals that had a role in the event (presenter, organizer, chaperone, etc.) as a collaborator. As a collaborator, you will have access to the event information -- such as the number of youth from your local unit that participated -- to include in your monthly board report.

If you participated in a statewide event and have additional narrative reporting you would like to do, please do so in the comment box of the Quarterly Effort report or in a Success Story.

Q. As a state specialist, I am often invited by a local unit agent to present a portion of the program. Should I count those contacts or should the agent that invited me to make a presentation count the contacts?

A. If the local unit agent is involved, only they should report those contacts using the Program Activity module. The agent should list additional presenters and collaborators to give credit to other KSRE extension professionals. If the local unit agent isn't involved, the specialist should report those contacts.

Q. I am a state specialist and often provide training to extension agents. Do I report that in PEARS?

A. While providing professional development/training for Extension staff is of great value to our organization, this would be considered an internal audience and not counted as a direct educational contact. As an alternative, include that information in the Comments section of the Quarterly Effort Report.

Q. As the local unit director, I am responsible for working with county/district board members. How do I report those contacts?

A. Contacts related to Extension business (non-educational in nature) between extension staff members or between extension staff members and volunteers are considered to be internal contacts and should not be reported. Examples include board and PDC meetings, staff meetings, Master Gardener Advisory

Committees, 4-H Council meetings, etc.

Q. What about Master Gardener or Master Food Volunteer training? Is that considered a direct education contact?

A. Extension staff providing subject matter training such as Master Gardener, Master Food Volunteer and 4-H Project Leader training would be considered direct education contacts and should be reported in PEARS.

Q: What if my participants did not completely fill out the form?

A: All participants have the right to not provide you with this information. The important part is that you've asked. If forms were not filled out completely, count the incomplete answers as "unknown".

Q. It is my experience that many individuals of Hispanic origin will mark Hispanic as their ethnicity, but they do not check a box for race. How should I report these contacts?

A. Race and ethnicity are separate categories. If an individual reports their ethnicity but not their race their race would be listed as unknown.

Q: What if I did not collect or acquire from partners the required information?

A: Extension professionals are expected to make reasonable efforts to collect demographic data. However, in a few circumstances it may not be possible. In that case you would list REG as unknown.

Q. How do I report contacts for fairs or similar large community activities?

A. Direct educational contacts would include judges who attend an orientation session taught by staff or discussions with individuals who have questions about 4-H. Youth engaged in conference judging can be reported as volunteer contacts. Neither the total attendance at the fair nor the number of individuals who walk through the exhibits should be reported as direct education contacts.

Q. My job is 100% administrative; do I need to complete a Quarterly Effort Report?

A. Yes, even though you may not have any contacts to report, it is important to report the percentage of your time toward the Grand Challenges.

Q. Our Extension office offers an agriculture awareness program every year to the local elementary schools. It is an outside event that involves over a thousand youth. Since I have no way of collecting the demographic information, how do I report this?

A. Individuals under the age of 13 should not be asked to complete the demographic self-report form. Schools have data on the cumulative demographic make-up of their student body that they should be willing to share with you. Otherwise, report these contacts as unknown.

Q. How should I report soil tests, radon test kits, etc.?

A. If you provide the recipient with educational information about their test results, you can count each of those instances as a direct education contact. For direct contacts, race, ethnicity and gender are recorded as unknown unless you have already collected REG for that individual during another educational program.

Q. Should we count the number of phone calls from clientele asking about the time and place of events?

A. If a client is asking for the date and time of an extension program, information on how to sign up their child for 4-H camp or to find out the telephone number of another organization in your community, the contact is considered of a business nature and should not be counted as a direct or indirect contact.

Q. I'm not comfortable asking for race, ethnicity, and gender information over the phone or when I meet with a walk-in client. Do I have to collect this information on phone calls and walk-ins?

A. Although considered a direct contact, it is not recommended to collect REG data on phone calls and walk-ins. REG is recorded as unknown unless you have already collected REG for that individual during another educational program.

Q. What if I teach via Zoom – is that considered a direct contact?

A. Yes, your zoom meeting/webinar would result in direct contacts. REG data should be collected through registration, an electronic poll during the program or survey at the conclusion of the program. If no REG data is collected, all contacts would be reported as unknown.

If you upload a video of your webinar to YouTube or Facebook, the number of views for the recording would be posted as an indirect contact.

Q. What about reporting social media contacts and website analytics?

A. Social media and website views are considered indirect contacts. KSRE Communications Solutions has developed "[Indirect Contact Reporting Guidance](#)" with information about how to count social media, radio, television, and newsletters.

Q. Like agents, my 4-H program assistant conducts educational programs. Should they record their direct education contacts in PEARS and will those contacts be connected to me?

A. Yes, the 4-H program assistant should report direct education contacts in PEARS. In order to connect those contacts to the agent, the agent needs to create the program activity – fill out the required fields to create the program activity such as name, reporting period, program area, site, etc., on the first page and then add the program assistant as a collaborator and give them permission to view and edit the data. Once that's done, the program assistant can add the demographic data.

Q. As an office professional, I often provide customers with KSRE fact sheets to help answer their questions when the agent isn't available. Is that a direct contact and should I report that in PEARS?

A. Yes, that would be considered a direct education contact. There are two ways for those contacts to be reported. Office professionals can provide the total number of direct contacts for that quarter to an agent to report in PEARS or the office professional can record those contacts directly in PEARS as long as they have a user account. REG is recorded as unknown unless you or an agent has already collected REG for that individual during another educational program.