

New Agent: Beginning and Building Relationships

The local extension program is a partnership of K-State Research and Extension and the residents of the county or district. Participating in a Program Development Committee (PDC) is one way local residents can provide input.

Kansas extension county and district laws require four PDCs, each focused on a single program area: agriculture, family and consumer sciences, 4-H Youth Development, or community development. Because PDCs are key groups, begin building relationships with PDC members soon after starting your position as an agent.

Recommendations

- Identify the committee chair and members for specific program area(s). The local unit staff and board members can help with this task. (Note: Reference [KSU8-4](#) and [KSU9-4](#) for a listing of PDC members.)
- Contact each PDC member within the first two months on the job. Call, email, or visit their homes or places of employment — whatever seems most appropriate.
- Items to share and learn:
 - Express your pleasure in your new position and indicate that you look forward to working with the individual and the PDC.
 - Let the PDC member know you will soon be setting a meeting date.
 - Find out what time of day and location is most convenient for meetings.
 - Ask what means of communication works best.
 - Confirm contact information.
 - Provide PDC members with your business card and develop a “member profile” for each indi-

vidual. The profile could include current contact information, place of employment, program interests, and so forth.

- Locate and review the program action plan(s) to acquaint yourself with previous programming.
- Consult with an area extension specialist to learn about local unit programming and support for working with the PDC.
- Plan to attend a PDC meeting with a mentor before finalizing your first PDC meeting.
- Communicate with the PDC chair and begin planning for an initial meeting within the first three months on the job.
- Items to review with the committee chair may include:
 - Possible meeting dates and times (Consider an electronic survey.)
 - Meeting format
 - Location
 - Agenda items (Review [PDC Suggested Meeting Topics](#).)
- Create a listserv for the PDC to simplify communication.
- With the PDC chair, finalize the meeting agenda, time, date, and location. Send a notification and agenda to members.
- Consider involving other agents, a mentor agent, or an area specialist in working with you and your PDC at some point in the program planning process.

Reference

Handbook for County Extension Councils and District Governing Bodies, PM1