



Making a Difference

2015 – 2016

Community Development Program Focus Team Master Community Facilitative Leadership

Grand Challenges

K-State Research and Extension: providing education you can trust to help people, businesses, and communities solve problems, develop skills, and build a better future.

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Kansas State University
Agricultural Experiment
Station and Cooperative
Extension Service
*K-State Research and Extension
is an equal opportunity
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Situation

Most extension professionals have experienced being the expert and sharing their expertise with intended learners. However, in Facilitative Leadership the facilitator and group share the responsibility of achieving the outcomes of the group. Extension professionals had a chance to practice being facilitative leaders when K-State Research and Extension collaborated with the Kansas Water Office and the Kansas Department of Agriculture to facilitate water-related conversations across Kansas. This was a new role for many agents and they quickly realized the need to enhance their facilitation skills.

What We Did

To prepare agents and volunteers to lead conversations related to the five grand challenges locally, regionally, and state wide, Community Development PFT members developed a peer reviewed curriculum for facilitative leadership then used that curriculum to conduct the following trainings:

- “The Art of Extension” for 24 seasoned extension professionals.
- New agent training for 28 new extension professionals.
- A four-hour workshop for 18 Kansas county commissioners during their annual meeting.
- “The Art of Extension” type training for 50 employees of Kansas Department of Commerce and Kansas Farm Bureau.

Outcomes

- New agents are more aware of the different roles they can play during community conversations and the duties of and tools available for each role.
- Extension agents across the State are being asked to lead critical community conversations that result in action.
- Extension agents as well as other community development professionals are using new decision making tools to address community issues.
- Community development professionals and local officials are more aware of the role that K-State Research and Extension plays in community vitality and growing tomorrow’s leaders.

Success Story

New agents have contacted the community development unit for assistance in selecting appropriate facilitation and decision making tools to use with community coalitions that they are chairing – even during their first year of employment. One agent shared that the past chair of a coalition told her: “This was the most productive meeting that the coalition has had in the past five years!”