



COUNCIL LEADERSHIP

21st Century Programs, Governance & Membership

What Is the Council's Role in Evaluating and Reporting Program Outcomes? *Council Handout*

The purpose of University of Missouri Extension is to improve people's lives through educational programs and science-based information. Programs are designed to enhance economic viability; build strong individuals, families and communities; and create and sustain healthy environments. County extension councils, faculty and staff can evaluate the local extension program and report the outcomes to stakeholders. This module will help extension council members understand the importance of:

- Evaluating local extension programs
- Reporting program outcomes to stakeholders
- Using program outcomes to build support for extension.

Companion modules — “What Is the Council's Role in Setting Priorities for Program Development?” and “What Is the Council's Role in Program Implementation?” — provide additional information on the extension council's role in educational program development and delivery.

State Statutes

262.557 Formulation and administration of extension program

The university may formulate an extension program in the counties of the state and shall be responsible for the administration and execution of the extension program in each county.

262.587 Where council established, university to hire employees and consult with council on programs

In counties in which there is a council the university shall:

- (2) With the advice and counsel of the (county) council, formulate extension programs in the county and it shall be responsible for the administration and execution of the extension program in each county.*

262.590 Recommendation by council-administration of county share of costs-council to receive property

The council in any county shall have the right and duty to:

- (1) Make recommendations and suggestions to the university concerning the extension program;*

262.617. Annual report to county commission

At the close of each calendar year the council, through its secretary, shall make an annual detailed report to the county commission, covering all receipts and expenditures, together with a summary of work undertaken and results accomplished. The report shall be filed with the county commission not later than February first, following the close of the year or portion of year covered by the report.

The Extension Program

The extension program referenced in Section 262.557 of the state statutes is the county's overall plan for meeting residents' educational needs across program areas. The current statewide program areas are:

1. **Agriculture and Natural Resources** — Agriculture education gives farmers 21st century tools to enhance profitability, strengthen communities and protect the environment.
2. **Business Development** — Business development education assists business start-ups, helps businesses remain competitive and prosperous, and creates more wealth for the community.
3. **Community Development** — Community development education helps citizens tap into local strengths and University resources to create communities of the future.
4. **4-H Youth Development** — Youth education connects parents and youth with the latest research and best practices to help young people be valued, contributing members of their community.
5. **Human Environmental Sciences** — HES education provides Missourians with research-based programs on such topics as health, nutrition, parenting, aging, divorce, personal finance, housing, consumer action and more.

The local educational program is developed through a process in which extension council members and regional faculty identify and prioritize local educational needs. The extension council is the public body officially designated to work with the University of Missouri to:

- Identify concerns in the community
- Make recommendations about needed programs to the University
- Ensure educational program access to residents, groups and organizations in the county.

An educational program is a sequence of learning activities or events that addresses a locally identified educational opportunity or need. Educational programs focus on specific, desired outcomes. An educational program may be comprised of several meetings, activities or events. The overall goal is to improve people's lives through the practical application of research-based knowledge and resources.

Extension council members provide invaluable insight into the range of issues and educational needs of the county and region. As extension councils make recommendations about program



priorities, they must consider local needs; social, environmental and economic trends; and the potential impact of educational programs offered to community residents.

Evaluating the Extension Program

Evaluation is the key to success for current and future programs. Simply put — program evaluation provides concrete evidence on what works and what doesn't work. Through evaluation, the extension council and the University can:

- Assess the effectiveness of local activities implemented to address a specified need
- Determine if the investments made by the council and the University provide social, economic or environmental value to the community.

Program evaluations are conducted by University faculty members. The extension council's role in program evaluation is to ask critical questions:

- How was the program developed and delivered?
- Did our investment make a difference in people's lives? How? If not, why?
- What changes would improve the program?

Answers to these questions help the extension council make informed decisions in setting priorities and implementing programs. Evaluations can measure short-term outcomes — learning, medium-term indicators — action, or long-term impact — change in condition. The full measure of impact for many educational programs is a long-term process that can take months or years. Extension faculty can assist council members in understanding evaluations and the outcomes they measure.

Note: Program evaluation differs from individual performance appraisals. Program evaluation focuses on program quality and effectiveness. Performance appraisals focus on how well individuals do their jobs.

Reporting Program Outcomes

Program evaluation provides important information about a program's value to the community. The outcomes of program evaluation should be provided to stakeholders and key partners, including legislators, county commissioners, community leaders, learners and program partners. Stakeholders are more than observers or participants; they have a vested interest in the outcomes of the programs they support. Because of their investment, stakeholders assume some ownership for programs and their outcomes. Stakeholders vary by program, but they, too, are accountable to others. Program outcome reports help them be accountable for the resources they manage.

Program outcomes can be a powerful tool for marketing the local extension program and securing resources to further support local educational goals.



Ways to Use Program Outcomes

Evaluation data, showing how extension has improved people's lives, can be used in many ways:

- Include in the council's annual report.
 - Share with local print and broadcast media. Provide names of participants (with permission) who can give a personal account of the program's impact on their lives.
 - Use in promotional materials to demonstrate program benefits to potential participants.
 - Share during speaking engagements with local civic groups and organizations.
 - Include in local extension newsletters.
 - Share with local legislators.

Additional Resources

1. **County Annual Report Guidelines and Checklist**
(<http://extension.missouri.edu/extcouncil/annreport.html>)
2. **County Annual Report Template** (*Share Drive: s://swregion/greene/swnews*)
3. **Program Logic Model** (<http://extension.missouri.edu/staff/programdev/plm/index.html>)
4. **University of Missouri Extension FY05 Named Programs**
5. **CYFAR (Children, Youth and Families At Risk) Evaluation Web site**
(<http://extension.missouri.edu/fcrp/evaluation>)

Adapted by:

Sherri Kempf, *Vice Chair*
Central Missouri Regional Extension Council
Dennis Grisham, *Chair*
Greene County Extension Council
Jamie Frakes, *Past Member*
New Madrid County Extension Council

Al Black, *West Central Region Director*
Tony DeLong, *Coordinator of Membership and Marketing*
Rick Mammen, *Interim Southwest Region Director*
Sandy Stegall, *Extension Communications Coordinator*
John Tharp, *Community Development/Water Quality Specialist*
Eileen Yager, *Extension Communications Officer*
University of Missouri Extension

Vim Horn, *Associate Director, Institute for Human Development*
University of Missouri-Kansas City





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Trainer Notes and Council Activity

The purpose of University of Missouri Extension is to improve people's lives through educational programs and science-based information. Programs are designed to enhance economic viability; build strong individuals, families and communities; and create and sustain healthy environments. County extension councils, faculty and staff can evaluate the local extension program and report the outcomes to stakeholders. This module will help extension council members understand the importance of:

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Tips for facilitating

The following tips can assist trainers and council members in getting the most out of the “*What Is the Council's Role in Evaluating and Reporting Program Outcomes?*” training module:

1. Determine who will be the presenters (council member, specialist, county program director).
2. Review “*What Is the Council's Role in Evaluating and Reporting Program Outcomes?*” handout, PowerPoint presentation with speaker notes, council activity and “*Council Affiliations*” worksheet.
3. Review resources identified in module.
4. Prepare materials needed for council activity.
5. Place “*What Is the Council's Role in Evaluating and Reporting Program Outcomes?*” on the council agenda. Involve Regional Council Leadership Team in training as needed.

Council Activity

Preparation time: 1 hour or less

Presentation time: 30-45 minutes

What is needed? (Note: Online resources may be used if Internet access is available.)

- “What Is the Council’s Role in Evaluating and Reporting Program Outcomes?” PowerPoint presentation with speaker notes
- Computer, projector and screen
- Copies of :
 - “What Is the Council’s Role in Evaluating and Reporting Program Outcomes?” handout
 - Staff Resources Web site (<http://extension.missouri.edu/staff/>)
 - Missouri Extension Council Web site (<http://extension.missouri.edu/extcouncil/>)
- Newsprint/flipchart, markers, easel and masking tape

Note: “Deliberative Groups” (<http://extension.missouri.edu/about/fy00-03/delibgroups.html>) can be used to assist trainers in conducting the council activity.

At the Meeting

1. **Introduce “What Is the Council’s Role in Evaluating and Reporting Program Outcomes?” training module.** (5 minutes)
Deliver PowerPoint presentation with speaker notes.
2. **Distribute and review module materials.** (10 minutes)
Discuss the importance of program evaluation and reporting outcomes.
3. **Lead Activity** (15-30 minutes)
 - 1) Using the process below, ask each participant to answer the following questions:
 - a. Whom did the extension program serve? How did the participants benefit?
 - b. Whom could we serve? How can we improve access?
 - c. How do we report the outcomes of the extension program? How can we improve that reporting?
 - 2) Write responses on the newsprint.
 - 3) Repeat process until most participants have no more responses.
 - 4) Review the list, combining related topics. Ask participants if the meaning/intent is preserved.

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