

County Extension Agent Development System

Phase II: Core Training

Over the first year of employment, agents will participate in three core curriculum training sessions, each focusing on a different theme. The sessions are held at various locations across the state and range from two to three days in length. The topics for the five sessions are **individual and organizational development, management skills, and program development**. The order in which new agents participate in these three sessions will vary according to the date of initial appointment.

1. Individual Development and Organizational Development

This training session includes components on individual development and focuses on the agent's role as a leader and change agent. Agents will better understand how they can effectively interact with others and to help them gain practical leadership skills that can help them on the job. Agents will learn several definitions of leadership, explore how leadership skills are acquired, learn about leadership styles, and participate in a self assessment of leadership tendencies.

The Cooperative Extension Service is based upon the fundamental assumption that the programs it develops and conducts are based on needs identified by local people. This session will assist agents in building strong, effective advisory groups and ensuring volunteer participation in program determination, planning, implementation, and evaluation. This training will also help agents develop advisory councils that are representative of the population they represent. The development and management of volunteers will also be explored.

Topics at this session will include:

- ***the concept of leadership***
- ***roles people play in groups***
- ***professionalism***
- ***becoming a change agent***
- ***developing leaders in the community***
- ***completing a self-assessment and exploring implications for relating to others***
- ***building strong and effective councils and boards***
- ***empowering volunteers for expanded roles***

2. Management Skills

Successful agents are effective managers of resources. Resources include time, money, and human capital. This session will help agents get the most out of resources used to provide leadership to the county Extension program.

The first part of this training session will focus on priority setting and time management. We can set programmatic priorities and we can set personal priorities. The ability to work within and manage both types is crucial to professional success and personal satisfaction. Agents will also learn how to structure their work environment to be of the greatest benefit.

A portion of the program will also be devoted to helping agents value differences as they work with a wide array of individuals.

Youth Protection and Community Development are also a part of this session which is always held at Kentucky State University in Frankfort.

Topics at this session will include:

- ***managing time effectively***
- ***principles of priority setting for programmatic and personal contexts***
- ***conflict management and team building***
- ***managing Extension funds***
- ***civil rights and affirmative action legislation and its impact on Extension***
- ***program development for diverse audiences***

3. Program Development

Program development is a deliberate process through which representatives of the public are involved in designing, conducting, and evaluating educational programs that address issues or needs they identify. The process of program development is the common thread that links together everything we do. This core training session will introduce agents to the 6 stage model for program development used by the Kentucky Cooperative Extension Service and will help agents operationalize that model through our planning and reporting system.

Rationale for the involvement of the public in program development will be discussed. Discovering your community, building linkages within the community and situation analysis to set program priorities will be a part of this session. This will also be a "hands on" program for modifying the plan of work.

The session will also help agents gain a greater understanding of the linkages between program development and accountability. How sound program development practices can be used to help us reach previously underserved audiences will be explored.

This training session also discusses effective learning experiences based on the subject matter to be taught, the target audience, and other situational variables. The differences in the ways adults and youth approach learning and the implications those differences have for how we design learning experiences will be emphasized.

Topics at this session will include:

- ***a rationale for involvement of people in program development***
- ***conducting a situational analysis and needs assessment***
- ***participating in a community inventory***
- ***setting programmatic priorities***
- ***designing educational experiences***
- ***putting your plan of work on paper***
- ***evaluation and accountability as linked to program support***
- ***principles of program development to help us reach new audiences***
- ***designing educational programs to address desired outcomes, subject matter, and audience characteristics that affects the design of educational programs***