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**Advisory Council Handbook**

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**Council Member**

## **Handbook Contents**

### **Section 1: County Advisory Council Meeting Materials**

- Agendas
- Minutes
- Handouts
- Event Calendars

### **Section 2: County Extension Directories**

- County Staff Directory
- CAC Member Directory
- Specialized or Program Committee Directories

### **Section 3: County Guidance Documents**

- CountyAdvisoryCouncilMemberRoleDescription
- County OperatingGuidelines
- County Plan of Work
- County Environmental Scan
- Other Related Documents

### **Section 4: NC State Extension Advisory Leadership System**

- Overview
- Mission, Vision, Purpose
- Land Grant Connection
- Understanding Cooperative Extension

### **Section 5: Organization Charts**

- CountyOrganizationChart(CountyGovernmentandCountyExtension) NC
- State Extension Organization Chart
- NCSU College of Agriculture and Life Sciences Organization Chart

### **Section 6: Miscellaneous Resources**

- Common Acronyms in Extension
- Website Resources
- Fact Sheets



Section 1  
County Advisory Council Meeting Materials



## Section 2 County Extension Directories



## Section 3 County Guidance Documents

## NC Cooperative Extension Volunteer Role Description (SAMPLE)

**Title:** County Advisory Council Member

**Major Objectives:**

To advise County Extension faculty and to advocate for support of Extension programming.

**Major Responsibilities:**

Attend scheduled County Advisory Council meetings.  
Assist in identifying programmatic needs as well as groups from whom to collect input.  
Support Extension activities by attending and actively participating.  
Promote the value of Extension utilizing personal and professional networks.  
Identify and procure resources to support Extension work.  
Market Extension programs in the community.

**Qualifications:**

Oral and written communication skills  
Knowledge of county and its unique needs, challenges and assets  
Ability to work with others of diverse demographics and backgrounds to achieve common goals.

**Training and Preparation:**

Participate in Orientation to Advisory Council  
Learn about Extension's history, programming, funding sources, connection to Land Grant universities, and philosophy  
Participate in additional training available via Extension faculty

**Time Requirements & Location:**

Meet quarterly for up to two hours; additional meetings may be necessary for committee assignments. Preparation time will be required between meetings and will vary.

**Length of Commitment:** Three-year term; renewable for one additional term

**Benefits:**

Engage with other community leaders to help establish priorities for Extension programming  
Participate in quality training events and activities  
Contribute to community improvement by ensuring relevant programs

**On the Job Supervision:** County Extension Director

I have reviewed this position description with the Supervisor and/or Program Director, and I accept these responsibilities as presented.

Volunteer Signature

Date

Supervisor Signature

Date

# **NC Cooperative Extension County Advisory Council Operating Procedures**

## **Section 1 – Name**

The name of this organization shall be NC Cooperative Extension County Advisory Council (CAC).

## **Section 2 -- Philosophy and Purpose**

The NC Cooperative Extension County Advisory Council is established to provide leadership for the county's advisory leadership system. Extension experts address local issues with research-based knowledge and resources, creating opportunities and empowering people to collaboratively solve problems. It is the purpose of the advisory council to ensure that these local issues are reflected in educational programs and that educational resources are available to address the identified needs.

The purpose of the County Advisory Council shall be to:

- Function as a valuable partner to NC Cooperative Extension
- Maintain grassroots connections
- Help Extension remain relevant, responsive and focused
- Provide linkages and communication to key groups
- Expand resources
- Assist with programming – design, implementation and evaluation
- Build and nurture relationships with key leaders, citizens and elected officials
- Market Extension programs in the community

## **Section 3 – Membership**

Membership should be representative of the county and will be appointed with attention to multiple factors of diversity, including though not limited to age, educational level, gender, ethnicity, race, occupation, geographic interest, and subject matter expertise. The County Extension Director will make appointments based on input and recommendations from staff members, Extension volunteers and current or previous council members. Members will serve year terms and may be asked to serve a second term. Members will not be asked to serve more than two consecutive terms. The County Extension Director will work in partnership with the Executive Committee of the CAC (Chair, Vice- Chair and Secretary) to appoint individuals to fill any unexpired terms.

## **Section 4 – Officers**

County Advisory Council officers are Chair, Vice Chair and Secretary

The Chair shall preside at all meetings, serve on the Executive Committee and assume responsibility for affairs of the council, including appointment of committees.

The Vice Chair shall preside in the absence of the Chair, serve on the Executive Committee, and fulfill all other duties the Chair is unable to perform or chooses to assign. Under normal circumstances, it is assumed that the Vice Chair shall ascend to the office of the Chair.

The Secretary shall assist the Extension staff in the preparation of notes or minutes from Council meetings and shall coordinate correspondence of the Council with assigned staff member(s).

Term of Office: The term of office is one-year. Officers may be asked to serve a second term when continuity of projects or activities supports a second year for completion of responsibilities. An officer shall serve no more than two consecutive terms.

Election: The members shall select officers of the Council. The Chair of the Council shall appoint a nominating committee of three members at the summer meeting. The committee shall work with the County Extension Director to present a slate of officers for election at the fall meeting. Nominations from the floor will be in order and accepted. A majority vote will be required.

Official Year: The official year for the Council shall be from January 1 through December 31. This shall delineate terms of appointments and terms of office.

## **Section 5 – Meetings**

The Council shall meet at three times annually. The Executive Committee and County Extension Director shall cooperatively plan agendas for each meeting and set the calendar of meetings for the year. Meetings will routinely be held in a face-to-face setting, though discussions and information gathering may be handled utilizing telephone and internet conferences when deemed appropriate.

## **Section 6 – Committees**

The Council shall have an Executive Committee and a Nominating Committee. Other committees may be appointed as the need arises. The Chair will appoint committees, except the Executive Committee, which shall be comprised of the Council officers.

## **Section 7 – Quorum**

A quorum shall consist of those members present. This quorum policy shall include all face-to-face meetings, prescheduled internet or phone conferences and email responses to specific proposals.



## **Section 8 – Amendment**

These operating procedures may be amended or modified by the duly appointed members of the Council at any regularly scheduled meeting with the concurrence of the County Extension Director.

## **Section 9 – Attendance**

Active participation of members is very important and valued. County Advisory Council members should notify the Chair and/or County Extension Director when they cannot attend the meeting. Two consecutive, unexcused missed meetings shall prompt a discussion between the member and the Chair and/or County Extension Director to evaluate the member's availability to fulfill the role. Members may also resign by informing the CAC Chair or County Extension Director in writing if duties of the role cannot be fulfilled. Final decision on membership will be from the Executive Committee.

## **Section 10 – Disposition of Funds**

Should dissolution of the County Advisory Council occur, any funds held on behalf of the Council shall be distributed appropriately among Extension program funds.

## **Section 11 – Equality**

N.C. Cooperative Extension prohibits discrimination on the basis of race, color, national origin, age, sex (including pregnancy), disability, religion, sexual orientation, gender identity, genetic information, political affiliation, and veteran status.

## **Adoption and Amendment Dates**



Section 4  
NC Cooperative Extension Advisory Leadership System

## **Overview of the NC Cooperative Extension Advisory Leadership System**

The Advisory Leadership System (ALS) supports programming and advocacy at every level. The NC State Extension State Advisory Council (SAC) and the NC A&T Strategic Planning Council (SPC) lead by advising statewide administration in establishing programming priorities and in serving as advocates for Extension statewide. District Advisory Councils represent counties to ensure a regional voice in programming and advocacy. Both state and district council members serve as liaisons to the county advisory councils and assist in providing training for Extension staff members and for volunteer council members. At the county level, additional support is provided by program and specialized committee members. These groups help Extension agents with program design and implementation, which may include identifying resources to support programs, tailoring content to specific audience needs, and marketing programs to identified audiences and communities.

### **Specialized Committees**

A specialized committee usually focuses on a specific component of a larger program. For example, within the 4-H program, the agent working with school-age child care might want to have a specialized committee to focus on specific issues or needs within that program area.

Members on specialized committees usually are recruited for their knowledge of a very specific area of expertise. This committee focuses on the total programming process from planning through program design, implementation, and evaluation.

### **Program Committees**

Program committees function as advisors and advocates for categories of Extension work within the county. For example, many counties have a Family and Consumer Sciences Program Committee, which may work with several Specialized Committees (i.e. Food Safety, Local Foods, Healthy Lifestyles). The program committee members represent constituent or stakeholder groups and reflect the diversity of the county. Members may be asked to assist with a variety of program support functions and to represent and advocate for the program with the County Advisory Council.

### **County Advisory Councils**

County Advisory Council members are selected to represent the diversity of program areas, geographic areas, emerging issues and populations in the county. These volunteers are typically influential in the county and may or may not have been involved with Extension programming prior to service.

Advisory council size varies from county to county, depending on the diversity of the county, geographic size of the county, and scope of programs.

These councils are often involved in conducting environmental scans or needs assessments. They may also assist with marketing, resource development, advocacy and other locally specific tasks. Often county advisory councils assist in preparing for and presenting at farm-city week events and reports to the people. They may be asked to assist with educational tours for elected officials, helping host town hall meetings with Extension staff members, sharing success stories in appropriate venues, and many other similar assignments.

### **District Advisory Councils**

District Advisory Councils serve under the administration of the District Extension Directors. These council members are recruited from County Advisory Councils and invited to bring their experience and expertise to serve at this next level. These councils often host a district training and development event where Extension professionals and advisory volunteers work together to improve skills in resource development, advocacy and marketing. Volunteers serve as liaisons to their county advisory councils and link the work of the State Advisory Council to the individual counties.

### **NC State Extension Advisory Council**

The NC State Extension Advisory Council is led by the NC State Extension Director and functions on behalf of NC State Extension to advocate with government and community leaders, to market program impacts, to promote development of resources, ensure relevance of programming to meet local needs, and to serve as a liaison between County Advisory Councils and state Extension administration. SAC members assist with environmental scans, set priorities for educational programs, advocate for Extension, help with program design, implementation and evaluation, and market programs to target audiences and communities. Members are expected to attend meetings and to actively engage as a committee member within the structure of the council. Additionally, members are expected to be visible in articulating support for Extension, to use personal networks to promote Extension's needs and roles, and to remain informed on Extension programs and impacts.

The State Advisory Council is made up of 6 representatives from each of the 5 districts, 5 state level appointees, and one NC A&T State University Strategic Planning Council Liaison for a total of 36 volunteers. Each member serves a three-year term and is eligible for a second three-year term for a maximum of six years of continuous service.

The SAC meets twice per year in person to align with the NC Legislature functions. Additional meetings are held bi-monthly online as needed.

Advisory leaders at every level expect the following:

- A director who leads both the Extension program and the advisory council.
- Faculty who are actively involved with the advisory system.
- Committed members who are well trained, passionate about Extension, and willing to go beyond meeting attendance in completing their duties.
- Meaningful work for advisory volunteers.
- Enjoyable, well-organized meetings,
- Diversity of membership on the council, coupled with trust and open communications.
- Involvement in processes concerning new programs, staffing changes, budget cutbacks, and other issues of importance to the Extension program.

### **NC A&T State Extension Strategic Planning Council**

Section 1 – Name The name of this organization will be North Carolina Agricultural and Technical State University Cooperative Extension Strategic Planning Council (SPC).

### Section 2 – Philosophy and Purpose

Cooperative Extension at N.C. A&T Strategic Planning Council was established to help guide and direct Cooperative Extension toward realizing its mission, vision, and goals. Cooperative Extension's educational programs are primarily planned and delivered at the county level where local advisory councils and committees identify needs and develop educational programs. Cooperative Extension must reflect these needs, plus meet the demands of regional and national levels. More specifically, the purpose of the Strategic Planning Council is to:

- Provide leadership for advisory leadership system involvement with needs assessment and scanning trends and environment.
- Review current program initiatives and make recommendations to program leaders.
- Recommend program priorities and directions that reflect statewide needs.
- Link N.C. A&T and NC State University with county advisory leadership groups, other county groups, government, and organizations.
- Promote and market Extension programs with key leaders and elected officials.
- Provide leadership for advisory system involvement in advocacy initiatives.



## NC State Extension Advisory Council Mission, Vision and Goals

### Mission

The NC State Extension Advisory Council on behalf of the NC State Extension Service:

- Advocates with government and community leaders
- Markets program impacts
- Promotes development of resources
- Ensures programming meets local needs
- Serves as a liaison between County Advisory Councils and State Administrators

### Vision

The State Advisory Council, through strong advocacy, communication efforts, committed advisory leadership and engaged citizens, will help to ensure that every community in the state participates and claims ownership in NC State Extension programs.

### Goals

The State Advisory Council will:

- Work with local Extension Centers to develop and strengthen Advisory groups. • Serve as a liaison body between County Advisory Councils, State Extension Administration and Foundation Regional Directors.
- Build relationships with federal, state, and local government and community leaders to effectively advocate for NC State Extension.
- Work with NC State Extension program leaders and university departments to ensure that programs are relevant and that resources are available at the county level for delivery of quality programs.
- Market NC State Extension as a leader in addressing the changing needs of rural and urban North Carolina communities.

Extension educational programs are primarily planned and delivered at the county level where local advisory councils and committees identify needs and develop educational programs. The State Extension program must reflect these needs plus the demands of regional and national levels.

## **The Land Grant Connection and Philosophy:**

The land-grant universities of America have three functions – teaching, research, and extension. While research and extension make this special university model unique, it is extension that has the potential for widest effect, especially Cooperative Extension. In North Carolina, the Cooperative Extension system is the collaboration that links two great land-grant universities: NC State University and NC Agricultural and Technical State University.

The legislative acts that created the educational partnerships of the land-grant system evolved as follows:

- The land-grant system was enacted in 1862 with the first Morrill Act, which provided grants in the form of federal lands to each state to establish a public institution to provide higher education to the working class.
- A second Morrill Act of 1890 created the same system for black citizens in the southern states.
- The Hatch Act of 1887 founded the agricultural research stations to do applied research and established funds to support that research.
- The Smith-Lever Act of 1914 created the Cooperative Extension Service to extend research knowledge to all citizens and communities.
- In 1994, the Morrill Act was extended to create Native American land-grant colleges and universities, primarily in the western and southwestern states.

The philosophy of openness, accessibility and service to people undergirds the founding legislation of land-grant universities and their extension efforts. The same philosophy remains embedded in operations today. One mechanism that helps to ensure Cooperative Extension remains a relevant and responsive component of the land-grant system is the Advisory Leadership System which gives voices to the publics served by the extension outreach programs.

## **Understanding Cooperative Extension**

The land-grant founding legislation specifies audiences, general subject areas, and educational approaches for this unique public partnership. The act states: *“To aid in diffusing among the people of the United States useful and practical information on subjects relating to agriculture,*

*... home economics, and rural energy and to encourage the application of the same,*

*...extension work shall consist of the development of practical applications of research knowledge and giving instruction and practical demonstrations of improved practices on technologies, in agriculture,*

*... home economics, and rural energy and subjects relating thereto to persons not attending or resident in said colleges in the several communities, and imparting information on said subjects through demonstrations, publications, and otherwise for the necessary printing and distribution of information. ...”*

In North Carolina and around the country, Cooperative Extension is operating in a totally different environment than when it was established. The founding legislation was written when society was agrarian and communities were predominantly rural. Today, the masses of population reside in urban and suburban areas and hardly know that food comes from the land. Small communities are leaving behind their rural, farm heritage to become bedroom communities for urban areas. The same social and demographic changes are reflected in the profiles of county, state, and federal elected officials. In addition to their diverse backgrounds, they typically have not had any experience with Cooperative Extension. The consequences of this scenario are that decision makers in elected positions are less grounded through experiences in either the philosophical tenets or the values that have made land-grant institutions and Cooperative Extension strong.

Both NC State University (1862 Morrill Act) and NC A&T State University (1890 Morrill Act) deal in the same changing political, economic, and social environment. Both universities work collaboratively to provide seamless educational programs for citizens of every county. Campus and county faculty for NCA&TSU target development and delivery of programs for limited- resource audiences, urban populations, and small farmers. The program administrator works in concert with the director of NC State Extension to provide leadership for NC Cooperative Extension.

### **Uniqueness**

Extension is commonly described as being very complex. This is because there are three levels of governmental partners (federal, state, and county), and all are interrelated. The system:

- Is educational in program content and methodology, not regulatory or financial. Cooperative Extension is administratively attached directly to the 1862 and 1890 land- grant university systems and is a major part of them, rather than being attached directly to state government.
- Involves funding and administrative relationships that permit educational programs directed at broad national purposes, yet at the same time serve specific needs and priorities determined locally.
- Provides services to all people without discrimination.
- Provides nonformal, non-credit education conducted primarily beyond the formal classroom.
- Makes clientele participation voluntary,
- Depends on volunteers to help plan, implement, and evaluate educational programs.
- Recognizes that the people with whom it works are of supreme importance, • Provides research-based information.
- Offers programs that are flexible and valuable in emergencies



## **Funding**

The educational partners in Cooperative Extension are interdependent, yet each has considerable autonomy in funding, staffing, and programming. Each partner performs distinctive functions essential to operation of the total system. The system is characterized by two-way communication between those who work for extension and those who utilize extension's efforts. Communication is accomplished through the Advisory Leadership System, which functions in every county and district as well as on the state level. After helping define and develop the needed programs, advisory leaders help to report successes and impacts of the programs to the funding sources.

The federal partner, the US Department of Agriculture, administers land-grant funds and coordinates federal land-grant activities through the National Institute for Food and Agriculture (NIFA). Federal funds come to states through the Farm Bill and are mostly based on a formula calculation. Each year, State Advisory Council members visit elected officials in Washington DC to urge their support of Cooperative Extension through the Farm Bill.

Smith-Lever (Cooperative Extension) funds come from the federal level to the state level with a mandate of a state match. State funds are used primarily for personnel, with a small portion supporting operations. With demographics of the General Assembly changing so drastically during the last few elections, county advisory council members and state advisory council members are encouraged to develop and nurture working relationships with their state legislators.

The third partner is county government, whose funding portion has steadily increased in recent years. County government contributions support salaries, utilities, supplies, equipment and travel. Each of North Carolina's counties has a Memorandum of Understanding with NC Cooperative Extension that specifies the cooperative relationship with state and administration of funds. County advisory councils typically help plan and conduct a Report to the People or Report to the Commissioners to help keep local elected officials informed.

A growing portion of the Cooperative Extension total budget at all levels is contracts and grants. These competitive funds are sought by extension faculty to launch new programs or enhance ongoing programs. These private partnerships are interdependent yet they have considerable autonomy as well.



## Section 5 Organization Charts



## Section 6 Miscellaneous Resources

### Common Cooperative Extension Acronyms

AEE	Agricultural and Extension Education
AHS	Agricultural and Human Sciences
ALN	Accelerated Learning Network
ALS	Advisory Leadership System
ANR	Agriculture and Natural Resources (program area)
APLU	Association of Public and Land Grant Universities
CALS	College of Agriculture and Life Sciences
CECP	Cooperative Extension Curriculum Project
CED	County Extension Director
CEFS	Center for Environmental Farming Systems
CES	Cooperative Extension Service
CMAST	Center for Marine Sciences and Technology
CORE	Committee on Racial Equity in the Food System
COT	County Operations Team
CRD	Community and Rural Development
DED	District Extension Director
DEL	Department Extension Leader
ECA	Extension and Community Association
ECOP	Extension Committee on Organization and Policy
EDEN	Extension Disaster Education Network
EFNEP	Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program
EIT	Extension Information Technology
EOD	Extension Organizational Development
ERS	Extension Reporting System (internal reporting system)
ES-237	Federal Extension report for 4-H and youth programming

ESP	Epsilon Sigma Phi
FCS	Family and Consumer Sciences
IPM	Integrated Pest Management
IPOA	Individual Plan of Action
IT	Information Technology
LMS	Extension's Learning Management System
JCEP	Joint Council of Extension Professionals
JET	Joint Extension Team
JOE	Journal of Extension
LDP	Learning Development Plan
MOA	Memorandum of Agreement
MOU	Memorandum of Understanding
RCCI	Rural Community College Initiative
REINS	Regional Equine Information Network System
SAC	State Advisory Council (NC State Extension)
SARE	Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education
SEAL	Strengthening Extension Advisory Leaders
SNAP-ED	Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program Education
SPC	Strategic Planning Council (NC A&T Extension Program)
UNC-GA	University of North Carolina General Administration
USDA	United States Department of Agriculture

## Important Websites and Resources

<a href="http://www.ces.ncsu.edu/">http://www.ces.ncsu.edu/</a>	NC State Extension
<a href="https://als.ces.ncsu.edu">https://als.ces.ncsu.edu</a>	NC State Extension Advisory Leadership System
<a href="http://www.cals.ncsu.edu/">http://www.cals.ncsu.edu/</a>	NCSU College of Agriculture and Life Sciences
<a href="http://www.ncsu.edu/extension">http://www.ncsu.edu/extension</a>	NC State Outreach and Engagement
<a href="http://www.ncsu.edu/">http://www.ncsu.edu/</a>	North Carolina State University
<a href="https://www.ncat.edu/caes/cooperative-extension/">https://www.ncat.edu/caes/cooperative-extension/</a>	North Carolina Agricultural & Technical State University Cooperative Extension Program
<a href="https://campus.extension.org/course/view.php?id=595">https://campus.extension.org/course/view.php?id=595</a>	SEAL (Strengthening Extension Advisory Leadership)
<a href="https://www.ncat.edu/caes/cooperative-extension/">https://www.ncat.edu/caes/cooperative-extension/</a>	NC A&T State University Extension
<a href="https://www.ncat.edu/index.php">https://www.ncat.edu/index.php</a>	NC A&T State University