

## General Committee Guidelines for Extension Councils

Extension councils benefit from the work of various committees of the council. Committees are made up of council members who research and prepare background information in order to present recommendations to the entire council. Committees provide recommendations to the council and cannot authorize decisions without full council approval.

Extension councils as a whole determine which committees best meet their needs. Committee membership is best determined by the individual skills each member possesses and the scope of the work to accomplish. At all times Committees will communicate and cooperate with Regional/County Director about their work.

Committees follow Robert's Rules of Order and the same rules of procedure as the council. Agendas should be posted as part of the council report and minutes taken (see committee action report form at the end of this document). Committees follow the Iowa Code Chapter 21 [Open Meeting](#) and Chapter 22 [Open Records](#) laws. [Simplified Parliamentary Procedure](#) can be purchased at the [Extension Store, http://store.extension.iastate.edu](#). This publication explains a set of well-proven parliamentary procedures and rules designed to move business along in a meeting while maintaining order and controlling the communication process.

## Types of Extension Council Committees

An initial consideration is whether to appoint a standing or ad-hoc committee. The recommendation is no more than four members on a committee.

**Standing committees** handle a specific part of the regular, ongoing work of the organization.

The terms might be staggered to ensure continuity. Only a few standing committees should be needed. At the organizational meeting these committees are typically appointed: fiscal/legal, program, and personnel committees. In addition, the Executive Committee consists of the council chair, vice chair, secretary, and treasurer of the council. These roles are defined through an election of officers yearly at the January organizational council meetings.

Standing committees are designated for a certain time period. For ISU Extension and Outreach, that is usually one year. A standing committee usually has a chair.

**Ad hoc committees**, such as task forces or action groups, are selected to do a particular job. With these committees, when the job is finished, the committee is discharged. Some ad hoc committees will complete their task in a short, specified period of time, while others may take years, but there is still an end.

A second consideration is the goal being addressed. Is it a program goal or an organizational or maintenance goal?

**Organizational/maintenance committees** are usually standing committees that provide advice and assist the local staff in carrying out specific functions. Examples include finance or budget, nominating or membership, expansion and review, marketing and public relations, and the executive committee.

**Program committees may be standing or ad-hoc.** They may be based on local initiatives or centered on a specific core program area. A program committee can exist for each component of extension. These committees identify and prioritize needs, problems, or opportunities and help develop plans for addressing priority needs. They will usually become involved in helping plan and conduct some phase of the extension program under their purview. They may also use their time and

expertise gathering and reporting data about customers. Members of program committees should be knowledgeable about the subject matter and resources for addressing needs in the program area. They should also represent customers who would benefit directly from programs initiated. Special types of program committees include issue committees, which focus program development efforts on a targeted issue; task forces, which are short-term groups assigned to facilitate action on a particular issue or part of an issue; and study groups, which may be appointed to analyze and interpret information related to a particular issue or long-term program plan.

## **Duties of Committee Members and Chairpersons**

Committees are comprised of extension council members with the committee chair appointed by the council chair. The first person named on a committee should act as chair unless the committee, by a majority of its members, elects a chairperson.

All committee agendas are posted and become part of the council report. Minutes are kept and filed.

### **Committee members**

- Attend the meetings of the committee.
- Inform themselves on the issue at hand as much as they are able in advance of the meeting.
- Keep the discussion centered on the matter at hand.
- Keep the discussion moving toward the objective.
- Express own point of view clearly and concisely.
- Accept responsibilities promptly and cheerfully.
- Encourage shy members to express themselves.
- Be willing to accept the decisions of the majority.
- Help to avoid obstacles and conflicts within the group.
- Keep issues on an impersonal basis.
- Fulfill the committee assignments quickly and report back promptly.
- Often select their own chairperson and recorder.
- Seek to understand the committee assignment and work to complete it.
- Try to understand and use the ideas of all members.
- Help to reach committee decisions and follow through in the final disposition of the work.
- Evaluate their own contributions to the committee and share the responsibility for evaluating the work of the committee as a whole.

### **Committee Chairpersons**

- Call meetings and arrange for the notification of members.
- Make plans for meetings of the committee.
- Contribute to the appointment process.
- Serve as a resource to the designated committee.
- With the help of the committee, define needs, problems, and methods of delivery and evaluation.
- Report recommendations of the committee to the council.
- Delegate responsibilities to committee members.
- Keep a file of subject matter resources.
- Act as leader when initiatory action is called for.
- At the beginning of a meeting, state the purpose of the meeting and lay out the task of the present meeting and propose some logical method for proceeding (or delegate this task).
- Act as a spokesperson to report progress to the council (or delegate this task).

## **Extension Council Standing Committees**

### **Executive Committee**

The Executive Committee shall be responsible for issues outside the scope of other committees. It shall have the power to ask for a special meeting of the Council, when, in the judgment of the Committee, necessity requires action.

### **Personnel Committee**

- Develops a working relationship with staff.
- Reviews personnel policy and makes recommendations to council.
- Develops plans and budget for staffing.
- Reviews employee pay rates and benefits and makes recommendations to council.
- Develops and reviews job descriptions.
- In cooperation with the Regional/County Director conducts formal reviews with staff at least annually.
- Considers staffing changes and needs.
- Conducts staff searches as needed to fill positions.
- Plans council and employee functions.
- Acts to lead staff as a team.
- Provides oversight, with the Regional/County Director to solve personnel issues.

### **Program Committee**

- Reviews county program plan of work and makes recommendations to council and staff.
- Works with staff and recommends innovative programming ideas.
- Provides leadership to conduct local needs assessment.
- Determines county programming needs.
- Explores opportunities for multi-county programming.
- Nurtures opportunities for new partnerships.
- Develops programming budget.
- Develop and carry out marketing plans with extension staff.
- Make recommendations for working with under-served audiences in communities through Civil Rights Audits.

### **Fiscal/Legal Committee**

- Refer to the fiscal policy for guidance on property or equipment bids.
- Gathers recommended budget adjustments from staff and other committees.
- Prepares whole budget proposal and presents to council for consideration.
- Reviews fiscal policy and makes recommendations to council.
- Reviews risk management and makes recommendations to council for coverage and levels.
- Develops and monitors budget for risk management and related fiscal items.
- Monitors entire budget throughout the year.

## **Other Possible Committees**

### **Building and Grounds Committee**

- Refer to the fiscal policy for guidance on property or equipment bids and secure the bids for council action.
- Monitors facility upkeep and condition; oversees building construction or improvements.

### **Equipment Committee**

- Investigates and recommends equipment needs.
- Explores lease/purchase options.
- Develops and oversees replacement schedule.

### **Public Relations and Marketing Committee**

- Provides leadership for development of marketing plans and budget.
- Provides suggestions to improve ISU Extension and Outreach's image.

### **Audit and Fiscal Policy Committee**

- Ensures audit is completed and fiscal policy is in compliance.
- Recommends action on audit outcomes.

### **Technology Committee**

- Advises and determines needs for technology, software, and equipment.
- Arranges training opportunities.

### **Special Task Force**

Shorter-term assignments, usually for a single, well-defined topic.

### **Other Committees Councils May Oversee:**

- 4-H Foundations/Endowment
- Master Gardeners
- 4-H Youth Committee
- 4-H and Fair Board Committee

# Committee Action Report Form

TITLE of paper:

Prepared by:

Date Prepared for:

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**NOTE:** *Please keep to one page. If additional information is available, note in proposal.*

**SUBJECT:** Main subject of the paper should be addressed here.

**PURPOSE:** Present any pertinent history or context important to the decision or action at hand.

**BACKGROUND:** Present any pertinent history or context important to the decision or action at hand.

- Use bullets when writing each point.
- Provide dates and actions or key decision points.
- Provide source for additional information, if needed.

**DISCUSSION:** Following points pertain to information paper format.

- Use bullets when writing each point.
- Present facts.
- Address issues and concerns.
- Specify objectives.
- Commonly used acronyms and abbreviations are acceptable, but spell them out the first time used.

**RECOMMENDATION:** Specify options and which action is recommended. One to two bullet points in support of the recommendation is helpful.

**Council Decision:**