

2009 ISU Extension Restructuring Plan

Background and Context

Iowa is a land of constants within a world of change. Small communities, agriculture, small business, main streets and families—these begin to describe how Iowans understand themselves and what it means to be an Iowan. Within the historic scope of nearly every Iowan, Iowa State University Extension has been a constant as well.

Before there was an “official” Extension Service in Iowa there were visionaries who saw the need and invented methods. Perry Holden created the “corn train” to extend knowledge of seed corn selection to farmers. Jessie Field Shambaugh sought “to extend the benefits of the agricultural college to the young people of Iowa.” These visionaries locked onto the core need and hope of Iowans in those times: to better themselves and the future for their children. Such hopes remain constant.

The emphasis on practical research in agriculture spread to other parts of the institution when Dean Anston Marston established the Engineering Extension Service in 1913.

These and other activities were part of the genesis for the Smith-Lever Act, which created a national Extension Service. In 1906, the Iowa General Assembly approved the Iowa Agricultural Extension Act, now known as Chapter 176A, to become the first state to establish state Extension work that provided local assistance to rural areas. This Act provided funds for demonstration projects. Soon to follow was the Iowa Farm Aid Association Act in 1913, which permitted each county to appropriate funds for County Extension efforts. The Smith-Lever Act was approved in 1914, providing Federal funds dependent upon the state providing matching funds.

In Iowa, Extension agents were established in every county to help improve the quality of life for Iowans. They helped farmers increase yields, and showed consumers how to plant, harvest and store goods from their Victory Gardens. Extension agents were the technology transfer agents from the land grant university to the people. In 1955, the Iowa County Agricultural Extension Law created County Extension Councils as the local governing boards and established local taxes to support Extension programming and facilities. In 1990, uniform council membership and county at-large elections were initiated.

Youth, community, business and industry, and family programming expanded Extension’s benefits beyond agriculture to issues and needs which have substantively remained constant as well. The current mission of ISU Extension is to provide research-based, unbiased information and education to help people make better decisions.

Historically, structuring Extension geographically at a county level was a necessity. This approach served Iowans well. Then as the need for proximity diminished, the expectation for proximity replaced it.

The demand for our research, education and outreach is changing. Iowa’s demographics are changing. The state’s capacity to provide services has changed, yet the structure of Extension has remained the same. Distance and information exchange is no longer measured by travel on horseback as it was when counties were created. Therefore, we must envision a new structure that meets the financial realities we are facing, and creates a flexible, dynamic organization, positioned to maintain its leadership role as one of the best Extension systems in the nation.

While Extension must look back occasionally to understand our roots, the future must be our focus. All Extension practitioners must view themselves as leaders in their field, playing an extraordinary role within Iowa’s culture. Each of us should aspire to carry the legacy onward in the manner in which Holden, Shambaugh and Marston would take pride.

Rationale

Extension's tradition and legacy are defined by the needs of its clients. Potentially, Extension clients include everyone. This Extension Restructuring Plan is designed with that idea in mind. It emphasizes and prioritizes issues that most significantly impact lowans across a broad range of ages, careers and activities. In order to reach all lowans, Extension plans to shift from a geographically based structure to an issues-based model. To make that happen we are going to increase local control of county property tax funds allocated for Extension in each county, engage research and staff across disciplines to address complex issues, and reduce Extension administrative costs. The goal is to be the premier source and provider of practical, validated and affordable information for all lowans.

Current Staffing

ISU Extension currently employs 619.2 full time employees (FTEs), both on and off campus, and the County Districts employ 290.4 FTEs, for a total of 909.6 Extension staff that provide service and support to every Iowa county. ISU Extension provides local presence in all 100 County Extension Districts by partnering with the Districts. The County Extension Districts are individual legal entities that are funded by property tax dollars (\$3 to \$13 per capita). The current Partnership Agreement between Iowa State University and County Extension Districts includes a partnership fee that pays for access to ISU resources that include Area Extension Education Directors, County Extension Education Directors, Field Specialists, broadband, educational materials, etc. The total paid by County Extension Districts to Iowa State University was \$3.5 million in FY09.

Program areas available to every county include Communities & Economic Development (CED), Business & Industry (B & I), Families, 4-H & Youth Development, Agriculture & Natural Resources (ANR), and Continuing Education and Professional Development (CEPD). ISU Extension campus support to counties includes marketing/communications, information technology, distribution, conference services, human resources, finance and administration.

Current Funding and Budget Cuts Iowa State University Extension is funded by allocations from the federal and state government. Most federal appropriations require a one-to-one match of state funds. Approximately 50 percent of the current state appropriations are match dollars as required in relation to the federal dollars received.

County Extension is supported by property tax dollars that are appropriated to meet the Iowa Code requirements that County Extension Councils maintain an affiliation with Iowa State University to sustain Extension services in Iowa. In addition to public dollars, Extension generates revenues through grants, contracts, and user fees.

For the past 10 years, federal and state dollars have stayed fairly consistent. The steady increase in county property tax

dollars and the significant growth the past 5 years in revenue generation from grants, fees and contracts has allowed Extension to maintain the current Extension structure.

The FY10 reduction is related to the state appropriation (not federal appropriations, grants, fees or contracts). This cut will impact all other funding sources due to the interconnectedness of funding, and decreased flexibility in using these dollars to generate new revenue.

The ISU Extension FY09 state allocation was 10.7 percent of the university's total state appropriation. Therefore Extension's FY10 budget cut is 10.7 percent of the university's overall state budget cut, which includes the FY09 2.5 percent mid-year permanent reduction. The ISU Extension 10.7 percent reduction in FY10 State appropriation is \$4.15 million.

Examining the Extension Structure

The current economic situation forces Extension to change. In order to be responsive to lowans and their needs, we used input from citizens, staff and county council members to create the Extension Restructuring Plan.

Citizen Input—In 2003, ISU Extension carried out a Futuring Process to assess the environment Extension operates in and to develop a vision for change. Sessions were held across Iowa. The citizens involved expressed a resounding desire for programming to align with the needs of lowans and for the placement of offices consistent with budgets and service demands. A long-term goal was set in place at that time to implement a model or plan for regionalization of ISU Extension while still providing a county presence.

When Jack Payne began as Vice President of Extension and Outreach in 2006, he embarked on a Listening Tour across Iowa. He summarized the tour with several thoughts: At every stop and turn, we asked about Extension's relevance in today's world and we were told that we were certainly relevant, but needed to do more. The challenge will be to teach more people with Extension's services within budgets that are shrinking. That will mean looking at our delivery systems and finding new ways to communicate through technology.

The proposed restructuring plan addresses these critical issues.

Staff and County Extension Council Ideas—At the beginning of the process to develop a restructuring plan, all staff were asked to provide input on the best way to address these issues. A total of 335 staff attended listening sessions in 15 locations. Participants watched a short prerecorded statement from Jack Payne on the forecasted budget cuts before moving to small groups and brainstorming budget adjustment ideas for the three broad areas of: organization, operations, and support services. Each group submitted its top three ideas under each category, generating 518 cost saving suggestions. An online survey was made available to staff that were unable to attend listening sessions, staff who wanted to enter additional comments, and County Extension Council members.

A total of 112 individual staff and 76 council member surveys were completed, generating another 1016 cost saving suggestions.

Ideas from the listening groups and the online surveys were analyzed separately and sorted by like items. The top categories included improving operational efficiencies, restructuring area offices, restructuring county offices, increasing revenue generation, and merging/cutting Extension support units. Many County Extension Councils requested to retain a local Extension presence.

These ideas brought forth by citizens, staff and County Extension Council members were taken into consideration as the Extension Restructuring Plan was developed.

The ISU Extension Restructuring Plan

Extension will strategically restructure the organization to meet financial realities, and create a flexible, dynamic organization positioned to maintain its leadership role as one of the best Extension systems in the nation. The ISU Extension Restructuring Plan will use the available resources to address the complex issues that face Iowans. The plan will:

- Engage research and staff across disciplines to address complex issues
- Increase local control of county property taxes allocated for Extension
- Reduce Extension administrative costs

Campus Based Restructuring

Extension will aggressively expand and develop programming that supports the university's strategic initiatives focusing on a vision of 2050. This vision includes food security, sustainable energy sources, infrastructure, water quality and availability, and sustainability of our planet for future generations. ISU Extension program and support budgets will be reduced. The distribution of the FY10 budget cuts to program and central service units will be distributed based on a formula, which provides a credit for the programs/units that have successfully generated additional revenue. Each program/unit will absorb their allocated share of cuts through a combination of staff reduction, new program revenue generation, and implementation of efficiencies. A total of approximately 25 campus based FTEs will be eliminated.

A plan is being developed to merge the Families programs and 4-H & Youth development programs, and the Center for Industrial Research and Service (CIRAS) and Communities programs. The goal is to increase efficiencies and strengthen these programs.

County Based Restructuring

The restructure will include eliminating the County Extension Education Director positions (\$3.5 million savings to ISU Extension and \$3.5 million savings to County Extension Districts), the Area Director positions, and closing the five Area Offices (\$1.4 million savings to ISU Extension).

This plan will allow County Extension Councils to have increased

local control of county property tax funds to invest in program staff and county programs. The current Partnership Agreement between Iowa State University Extension and County Extension Councils will be dissolved and a new Memorandum of Understanding will be established.

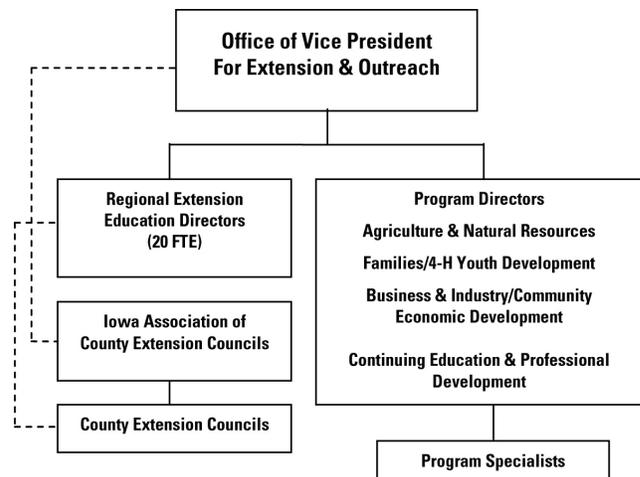
New Organizational Structure

ISU Extension will create 20 Extension Regions, through a reallocation of a portion of state funds, which currently pay for area office costs and ISU Extension's share of County Extension Education Directors salaries/benefits to hire 20 Regional Extension Education Directors—a \$2.7 million cost for staff and operations to ISU Extension.

Merging program areas are reflected in the number of Program Director positions—from the past six positions to four in the restructured organization.

In the new structure, Program Specialists include Extension faculty, state and field specialists, and county funded program specialists.

Iowa State University Extension New Organizational Structure



Position Descriptions

Regional Extension Education Director—Regional Extension Education Director (REED) is an ISU Extension employee, funded by ISU Extension. The REED will be assigned to a multi-county Extension region and will provide leadership to each county Extension council within the region to meet their legal obligations as an elected body, and to carry out the roles and responsibilities of an Extension District.

The Regional Extension Education Director will:

- Utilize a proactive approach within the region to identify needs and cooperate with Extension Program Specialists in determining the appropriate programmatic response
- Coordinate with Program Specialists and County Extension Councils for the future program direction, secure resources to support identified needs, and assist in reporting program outcomes

- Appropriately administer the resources and over—see completion of all system reports for the region
- Work closely with regional economic development agencies, chambers of commerce, professional associations, and others
- Establish, organize, and facilitate Extension networks and coalitions at the regional level to build community capacity

Program Specialist—Program Specialists may be faculty positions or professional and scientific positions located on or off campus. Program Specialists report to and have responsibilities defined by their respective Program Directors. Program Specialists are members of a program development and plan of work delivery team. They provide leadership for program delivery related to their subject matter emphasis within the region or topic assigned. Off campus Program Specialists will have virtual offices, which may be their place of residence or other local facility. Each Program Director administers and manages the resources for these Program Specialists.

A Program Specialist position funded by a county or a multi-county arrangement will be managed by a Memorandum of Understanding that will include fiscal and operational considerations of all parties.

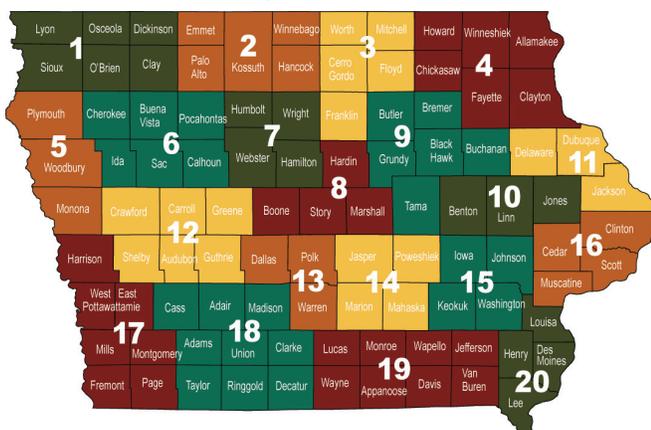
Extension Regions

The 20 Iowa Extension Regions were identified to represent a balance of population and available county tax funds in each region. There has been an effort to honor current coalitions and linkages among counties. The office for the Regional Extension Education Director will be located within a County Extension Office. County Extension Councils will have an option to complete a Request for Proposal to be the site.

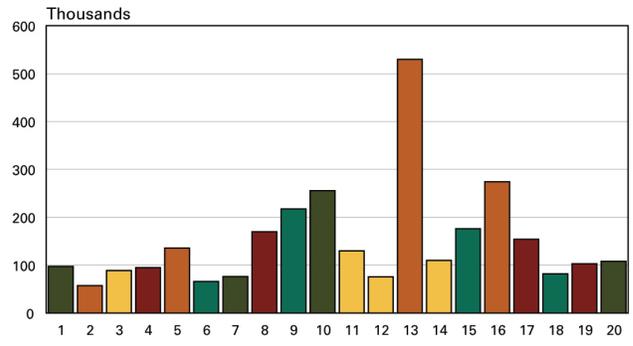
Extension Regions were designed with the assistance of university economists and sociologists. They took into consideration:

- Client driving, physical distance
- Balance population
- Equalization of available tax funds
- Current coalitions, linkages, sharing
- Job commuting patterns

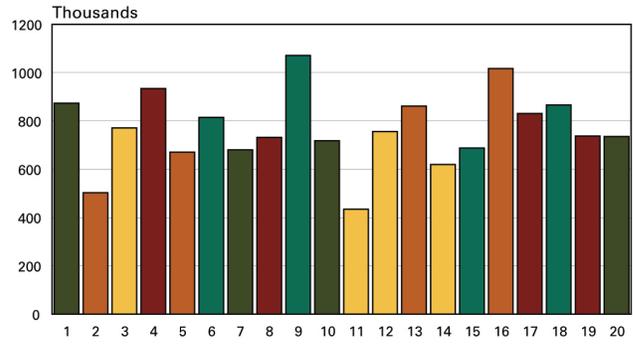
ISU Extension – 20 Regions



2008 Estimated Population by Region



2008 County Tax Funds by Region



Local Presence

County Extension Councils represent the local needs to ISU Extension, as well as represent ISU Extension within their district. Extension’s plan for restructuring relies on these elected officials to continue providing citizens with access to ISU resources—research, professional staff, educational programs and curricula—through the most modern delivery methods available.

The Iowa Code (Chapter 176A) defines the role of the Extension Council is to “disseminating among the people of Iowa useful and practical information on subjects relating to agriculture, home economics, and community and economic development, and to encourage the application of the information in the counties of the state through extension work to be carried on in cooperation with Iowa State University.” The Iowa Code also outlines that Extension Councils must “enter into a Memorandum of Understanding with the extension service setting forth the cooperative relationship between the extension service and the extension district.”

Iowa State University/Extension Council Cooperative Relationship

Collaboration between Iowa State University and the elected County Extension Councils is essential to the future of ISU Extension. The current Partnership Agreement between Iowa State University and County Extension Councils will be dissolved and a partnership fee no longer paid to Iowa State University. A new Memorandum of Understanding will be developed to define Iowa State University’s and County Council’s investment in the partnership.

Under a new Memorandum of Understanding the County Extension Councils will agree to:

- Provide ISU faculty/staff and clients access to local resources
- Accept responsibility for the preparation, adoption, delivery and periodic review of the Extension District's program
- Maintain accurate and complete financial records consistent with the Code of Iowa
- Carry out such other duties and responsibilities as are outlined in Chapter 176A and other appropriate sections of the Code of Iowa
- Pay ISU Extension an access fee for system-wide services

Iowa State University will provide:

- Development of research-based curriculum by faculty and staff
- Access to Program Specialists to deliver local, client-driven programs
- In-service training and educational opportunities to improve the professional competence of ISU Extension staff
- Assistance with needs assessment for the Extension Districts
- Assistance with the development of the Extension District educational program plans
- The following support services covered by the access fee:
 - Professional development for county paid staff
 - Financial management resources
 - Extension District Council training
 - Support for grants and contracts through Iowa State University
 - Postage meters and postage credit
 - Print-on-demand credit and 4-H publications credit

The access fee charged to the counties is based on the cost of the support services provided to all counties and has been set at 2 percent of the maximum property tax levy for all Iowa Extension Districts. This access fee is within the range of a franchise fee that a business might pay.

Partnership Agreement Ending Date

The dissolution of the Partnership Agreement and start of a new Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) will be determined by the date the CEED position is ended.

The partnership will end and the MOU begin on the date as determined by the following:

- Counties with current open CEED positions—July 1, 2009
- CEED positions open from retirement—Day after retirement date
- Shared CEED & Other CEEDs—When CEED position ends

Use of County Funds

The new Memorandum of Understanding will allow counties to reinvest the former partnership fee funds in Extension

staffing and programming that meets local needs. County Extension Councils will have the ability to directly apply county property tax dollars to local programming priorities. Counties may choose to hire staff on their own, or pool their resources and collectively hire staff with another county. Options for investing county funds might include:

• County paid employees

Office Assistant, Bookkeeper, Program Coordinator—County Youth, Horticulture, Families, etc.

• Iowa State University paid employees

(County reimburses ISU) Program Specialist—may be a shared position with ISU or multi-county position

Counties may request to have a county or multi-county specific Program Specialist; the Specialist is an ISU employee supervised by the appropriate Program Director. The county will reimburse ISU Extension for the salary and benefits of this position based on the percentage of time allocated to the county.

Plan for Transition

Iowa State University Extension will work with County Extension Council members and other community partners across the state to define local Extension presence and discuss options which would allow Extension to provide high quality education and programs.

An assessment will take place in every Iowa county to determine local programming needs. Current programming will also be examined to determine alignment with strategic initiatives designated by ISU and Extension's focus on healthy people, healthy economies and healthy environments. Programs that are not aligned with these initiatives will be discontinued or scaled-back. Each county will develop a plan to match their resources with the citizens' most critical needs.

ISU Extension program and support units will make adjustments to absorb their allocated share of cuts through staff reduction, new program revenue generation, and implementation of efficiencies.

ISU Extension has long benefited from partnerships with other organizations, agencies and departments. Partnerships are increasingly important across all service providers in Iowa as budgets tighten and needs increase. Projects and programs and their corresponding partnerships that are in line with the strategic goals of the organization and the critical needs of Iowans, will continue. Extension will partner with other state agencies and other universities to leverage dollars.

Ongoing Dynamics

The ISU Extension Restructuring plan will allow Iowa State University and Extension Councils to work together to change our methods, but not our mission. This new structure meets the financial realities we are facing, and creates a bold, innovative organization that is positioned to maintain its leadership role as one of the best Extension systems in the nation.

OUR MISSION

ISU Extension builds partnerships and provides research-based learning opportunities to improve quality of life in Iowa.

We believe in...

Quality • Access • Diversity • Accountability

We are dedicated to...

Engagement • Entrepreneurship • Local Presence

IOWA STATE UNIVERSITY

University Extension

. . . and justice for all

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