

STRUCTURED FOR SUCCESS

THE PLAN FOR OUR FUTURE

In September 2018 it was time to examine what we had learned since the last reorganization of Iowa State University Extension and Outreach. Was our structure helping us in our efforts to educate and serve lowans, or was it getting in our way? What was working for us and what was working against us? What could we do better? Our system needed answers to these questions. **That is why ISU Extension and Outreach began the Structured for Success process.**

Throughout the following months, the Structured for Success Committee studied our organization. The committee members examined what we learned from the 2018 listening sessions and from the Internal Communications Task Force. They also gathered information about how counties currently are operating in Iowa, as well as from other state extension services in the north central region.

As the committee developed models for consideration, they determined that for ISU Extension and Outreach to be successful, our organizational structure must enable us to:

- effectively educate and serve lowans with resources from Iowa State University;
- increase focus on engagement, programming, and partnership development;
- recruit and retain talented, professional, and passionate staff;
- reduce the burden on councils related to human resources, finance, and program selection; and
- improve communication and accountability within the ISU Extension and Outreach system.

On August 20, 2019, Vice President John Lawrence shared the Structured for Success Committee's initial proposal to start the discussion. Over the next two and a half months, extension staff and county extension councils engaged in thoughtful discussion about the two proposed models for a renewed partnership between Iowa State University and county councils. As discussions progressed, a group of county directors proposed a third model. Vice President Lawrence discussed their draft model with the Structured for Success committee, Iowa State Human Resources, and University Counsel. After the initial human resources and legal review was completed, the third model was shared for discussion.

Throughout this process, staff and councils provided feedback – during the first webinar, the area-wide meetings, other face-to-face sessions, and the virtual listening sessions; and via the virtual suggestion box and the online survey. All the questions and comments were read and considered.

Structured for Success was never intended to be a “one size fits all” approach. **The thoughtful discussion from throughout our system made it clear that all three models are necessary for ISU Extension and Outreach to move forward.** The plan was finalized on Nov. 22, 2019.

This document briefly reviews the three models and provides more specific information about the role of the regional director, expectations for county staff, and the value proposition for counties. The role of the ISU regional director will be similar under models 1 and 2, but it will differ for model 3. We will establish new regions that will have four or perhaps five counties per region with a regional director.

We are asking each extension council to decide which of the three models is the best fit for their county. **It's time to commit to Structured for Success. It is the plan for our future.**

Three Models for a Renewed Partnership

The roles and responsibilities of the ISU regional director and county staff leader differ depending on the model selected. However, the extension council has similar responsibility under all three models. Extension councils as defined in Iowa Code Chapter 176A:

- enter into a Memorandum of Understanding with ISU Extension and Outreach for cooperation,
- employ extension professional personnel with assistance from ISU Extension and Outreach,
- establish compensation for county paid staff with input from ISU Extension and Outreach,
- prepare the annual budget and certify to the board of supervisors with assistance from ISU Extension and Outreach, and
- are responsible for extension education programming in cooperation with ISU Extension and Outreach.

MODEL 1: The regional director leads county staff	MODEL 2: One-county or two-county regional director option for large counties	MODEL 3: County director with both an administrative and a programming role supported by the regional director
Model 1 is available to all counties. Current county directors are encouraged to shift their focus to education and engagement and align more closely with a program area for professional development.	Model 2 is available only to counties that have an operating budget over \$350,000 and 10 or more staff as a single county or as two counties combined.	Model 3 is available to counties that currently have a county director, or an office manager or office coordinator performing a similar administrative role as a county director and having similar qualifications.

Model 1

- The ISU regional director works with councils to provide staff supervision and development, budget and finance implementation, and program planning. The regional director also will lead county staff development and annual reviews.
- In counties that currently have a county director, or an office manager or office coordinator performing a similar role and having similar qualifications, the model 1 county director (CD1) will focus more on local education, engagement, and programming. Individuals in this position also will affiliate more closely with and enhance their knowledge in a program area.
- Day-to-day operations in the county will be similar to current operations and may vary by office, and the regional director will have oversight.

Model 2

- The regional director is an ISU employee and serves one large county or two moderate-sized counties.
- ISU Extension and Outreach will pay 20% per county of salary, benefits, and travel for the regional director. The county or counties pay the remaining 80%.

Model 3

- The model 3 county director (CD3) implements a county plan of work that focuses on stakeholder education and engagement and is responsible for day-to-day office operations and county staff supervision.
- The ISU regional director will supervise the county director in conjunction with the extension council. The regional director also will serve as a resource to the county and a connection to Iowa State, ensuring that processes align with ISU mission and Iowa code.

Roles and Responsibilities for Regional Director in Model 1 and Model 2

In models 1 and 2 the regional director is an ISU employee and represents the vice president for extension and outreach at the local level. The regional director has hands-on responsibility for assisting the extension council with its duties under Iowa Code 176A and for helping county staff to succeed and grow as professionals. Regional directors will spend time with staff to learn about them, their responsibilities, and their goals so that they can effectively mentor, coach, and supervise staff for future growth. Regional directors will coordinate and regularly

attend council and committee meetings and help councils manage their staff, budget, programming, and facilities. More specifically, in models 1 and 2, regional directors will lead the following areas of responsibility.

MODELS 1 AND 2

Staff development and supervision in conjunction with the council

Budget implementation and monitoring in conjunction with the council

Program planning and implementation in conjunction with the council and staff

Council support

Compliance with required practices

Office and facility oversight

Staff development and supervision in conjunction with the council

The regional director will:

- manage the hiring process, conduct onboarding, and coach county employees.
- plan and monitor staff development and conduct annual performance reviews.
- recommend appropriate professional development opportunities.
- lead staff meetings and oversee office operations.
- organize and lead regional staff meetings and regional council meetings.
- communicate new state initiatives to staff.
- coordinate participation in regional, area, and statewide events.
- be in the county four days or more per month.
- coordinate with county staff on visits to counties by extension and university leadership, USDA personnel, and other dignitaries.
- follow human resources best practices, compliance, and employment rules.
- implement county human resources policy.
- approve time sheet, leave, FMLA, and travel reimbursement.

Budget implementation and monitoring in conjunction with the council

The regional director will:

- ensure deadlines and rules are followed.
- lead annual budget planning to achieve council goals.
- proactively monitor monthly reports, actual to budgeted spending, and deviations.
- interpret and provide training on standard financial reports for staff and councils.
- monitor voucher preparation, petty cash, receipts, and receivables.
- pursue and oversee grants and contracts.
- create relationships with external funding partners and leverage those relationships.

Program planning and implementation in conjunction with the council and staff

The regional director will:

- lead needs assessment and share results with councils and program specialists and leaders.
- lead program plan of work development annually and longer term.

- encourage and assist staff with making partner connections and engagement.
- encourage and assist staff in identifying programming opportunities.
- serve as a connection between county needs and program priorities and resources.
- coordinate programming between specialists and counties.
- assist in partnership agreements, including with the county fair board.

Council support

The regional director will:

- attend 80% or more of council meetings and most committee meetings.
- onboard and train new council members.
- create council agendas and board packets.
- serve as a connection between councils and staff, and between councils and ISU.
- develop the strategic planning process in alignment with ISU Extension and Outreach.
- explore regional collaboration opportunities.

Compliance with required practices

The regional director will:

- lead civil rights training, planning, reporting, and audits, and investigate complaints.
- support and oversee nominating committee and election procedures.
- ensure compliance with open meeting law and processes.
- ensure compliance with human resources practices and employment law.
- facilitate accommodation requests and processes.
- ensure compliance with volunteer screening, reviewing files and processes.
- coordinate fiscal and personnel policy development and adherence.

Office and facility oversight

The regional director will:

- lead the safety audit, staff training, and risk management assessment.
- lead the bid process on leases, repairs, services, and insurance coverage.
- coordinate office closure/weather decisions with council and communicate decisions with staff.

Roles and Responsibilities for Regional Director in Model 3

In model 3 the regional director is an ISU employee and represents the vice president for extension and outreach at the local level. The regional director is responsible for helping the county director to be successful and grow professionally, and for advising the extension council related to federal, state, and ISU rules and regulations. In conjunction with the extension council, the regional director will supervise and oversee professional development for the county director. The regional director will also assist, coach, and serve as a resource for the county director. More specifically, in model 3 the regional director will provide oversight to the following areas of responsibility.

MODEL 3

County director development and supervision in conjunction with the council

Budget monitoring in conjunction with the county director and council

Program planning and implementation with the county director and council

Council support

Compliance with required practices

County director development and supervision in conjunction with the council

The regional director will:

- manage the hiring process, conduct onboarding, and act as coach for the county director.
- plan and monitor county director development and participate in the county director's annual performance review.
- attend staff meetings.
- advise the council and county director on human resources best practices, compliance, and employment rules.
- monitor county human resources policy.
- support the county director with human resource issues.
- be in the county four days or more per month.
- coordinate with county staff on visits to counties by extension and university leadership, USDA personnel, and other dignitaries.
- help communicate new state initiatives to staff.
- help coordinate participation in regional, area, and statewide events.

Budget monitoring in conjunction with the county director and council

The regional director will:

- ensure deadlines and rules are followed.
- participate in annual budget planning to achieve council goals.
- monitor monthly reports, actual to budgeted spending, and deviations.
- train and support the county director on financial reports for staff and councils.

Program planning and implementation with the county director and council

The regional director will:

- participate in program plan of work development annually and longer term.
- lead needs assessment and share results with council and staff and with program leaders.
- assist the county director with connecting county needs and program priorities and resources.
- assist the county director with making partner connections and engagement.
- assist in partnership agreements, including with the county fair board.
- assist county director and staff with engagement and programs.

Council support

The regional director will:

- attend 60% or more of council meetings and committee meetings.
- onboard and train new council members.
- assist with the strategic planning process in alignment with ISU Extension and Outreach.
- explore regional collaboration opportunities.

Compliance with required practices

The regional director will:

- lead civil rights training, planning, reporting, audits, and complaint investigation.
- assist with nominating committee and election procedures.
- ensure compliance with open meeting law and processes.
- advise the county director and council on compliance with human resources practices and employment law.
- assist the county director with facilitating accommodation requests and processes.
- advise on county fiscal and personnel policy development and adherence.

Role of County Director in Model 1

In counties that currently have a county director, or an office manager or office coordinator performing a similar role and having similar qualifications, the model 1 county director (CD1) will focus more on local education, engagement, and programming and will affiliate more closely with and enhance knowledge in a program area. Not all counties choosing model 1 will have someone taking on this role.

Duties and responsibilities

- Develops local programming based on county needs with direction from the regional director and council
- Builds community collaborations and serves as the face of ISU Extension and Outreach locally
- Plans, coordinates, and implements educational programming in a specific program area in collaboration with program specialists
- Manages local data collection in line with program area requirements
- Manages project budgets within the program area
- Secures outside funding sources
- Provides direct instruction if possesses high level of education and experience

Recommended qualifications

- Bachelor's degree
- Content knowledge in the field related to program area: agriculture and natural resources, human sciences, youth development, community and economic development, marketing
- Strong written and oral communication skills
- Computer, organizational, and problem-solving skills
- Team player and people oriented
- Ability to work evenings and weekends
- Teaching or facilitation experience in field related to program area if direct instruction is a required job responsibility

County Paid Staffing Structure (June 2018) is the main source of these duties and responsibilities and recommended qualifications.

Role of County Director in Model 3

In counties that currently have a county director, or an office manager or office coordinator performing a similar role and having similar qualifications, the model 3 county director (CD3) implements a county plan of work that focuses on stakeholder education and engagement.

Duties and responsibilities

- Provides leadership for county strategic planning and program planning based on local needs
- Builds community collaborations and serves as the face of ISU Extension and Outreach locally
- Provides programming management and oversight in collaboration with program specialists and faculty
- Supervises county paid staff
- Serves as county staff representative for the extension council and creates council agendas and board packets
- Manages the county budget
- Secures and manages outside funding including grants and private sources
- Oversees day-to-day office operations
- Evaluates and reports outcomes and impacts to councils, stakeholders, and ISU Extension and Outreach
- May also fulfill the role of a program area coordinator in addition to county director duties

Recommended qualifications

- Bachelor's degree and minimum three years management or leadership experience
- Supervisory experience
- Content knowledge in at least one field: agriculture and natural resources, human sciences, youth development, community and economic development
- Strong written and oral communication skills
- Networking, team building and organizational skills
- Ability to work without direct supervision
- Ability to work evenings and weekends

County Paid Staffing Structure (June 2018) is the main source of these duties and responsibilities and recommended qualifications.

Value Proposition for a County Extension District in Partnership with ISU Extension and Outreach

The existing partnership between county extension districts and ISU Extension and Outreach provides considerable value to counties. This value will continue under the new Memorandum of Understanding.

Continuing value

- Partnership with a well-respected institution and brand
 - » Access to research-based education, information, and resources from Iowa State University
 - » Connection to the Federal Cooperative Extension System
- Branding, templates, and promotion support
- Accounting software and technical support
- IT support including software, encryption, email, servers, and help desk
- Webpage hosting, support, and templates
- Secure registration services and the ability to accept credit cards online
- Group liability insurance that provides more coverage for the same or lower cost

- Advice that reduces the council’s risk of violating Iowa code or becoming involved in lawsuits
- Additional ISU Extension and Outreach resources in the county to assist staff with partnership development and programming
- University Human Resources guidance on labor relations issue

Additional value provided in new partnership

MODELS 1 AND 2:	MODEL 3:
Access to ISU health and dental insurance for county employees	
More formal connection to ISU including ISU legal counsel; employment and equal opportunity decisions and actions carried out by ISU employees have the support of University Counsel and the State of Iowa	
Access to advisory support and training for county staff from University Human Resources	
Additional support for equal opportunity training, consultation and compliance	
ISU regional director provides additional support to councils for <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supervision and staff development for county staff • Budget development, implementation, and monitoring • Programming from needs assessment through planning, scheduling, delivery, and evaluation 	Professional development for county director on staff development, financial management, and program planning and implementation
Increased emphasis and support for county staff on local programming and engagement	Direct communication from ISU Extension and Outreach leadership to the county director
Regional director spends more time in county working with staff	Regional director has additional time in the county to partner with and support the county director

Questions to Consider

We are asking each extension council to decide which of the three models is the best fit for the county. As they make their decision, councils are encouraged to consider the following questions.

- As you compare models 1 and 3, and as you review the county director position descriptions, which model is the best fit for your staff?
- If you are considering model 3, does your director meet the recommended qualifications?
- How many staff does your county have? Does the ratio of employees to supervisor make sense and is the investment in professional development for administration warranted?
- Are you considering the needs of all staff members?
- Which model meets your county’s long-term needs?

Services Fee

Structured for Success is requesting a separate fee of 1% of county maximum tax ask¹ for counties selecting model 1 or model 3. However:

- The 1% fee will be waived for FY21.
- Counties selecting model 1 or model 3 will pay the 1% fee in FY22 and FY23 with half due in November and half due in May.

¹The original Structured for Success proposal had estimated the services fee would be between 2–3% of the county maximum tax ask.

Counties funding a one-county or two-county regional director in model 2 will not pay the 1% fee. ISU will contribute 20% per county for the regional director’s salary, benefits, and travel. The counties involved fund the remainder. This agreement will begin in FY21 with half due in November and half due in May.

Memorandum of Understanding

A committee has begun developing a new Memorandum of Understanding between Extension Districts and Iowa State that incorporates the Structured for Success plan for our future.

- The MOU will be ready for councils to review in early spring 2020.
- Councils may begin signing the MOU in the spring. It must be signed by June 1, 2020.
- The MOU will cover three years, July 1, 2020, through June 30, 2023.
- It is expected that there will be one overarching MOU and three separate operating agreements depending on the model selected.

Can a County Change Models?

The MOU will include a one-time option to move from one model to another during the three years of the MOU. A council could exercise this option in the case of a change in county staffing or an extraordinary financial hardship or opportunity. Counties should notify the Vice President for Extension and Outreach for approval if they plan to change models.

ISU Insurance Plans for County Paid Staff

County employees will have access to the [medical and dental plans that ISU offers its employees²](#); ISU Extension and Outreach is not designing its own plan.

ISU has two insurance risk pools for its current employees that have different premium costs from the provider, Blue Cross and Blue Shield. Iowa State has determined that county employees will be offered coverage at the Merit employee pool rate.

The table below lists the total cost of the ISU Plan per Merit employee. This is the monthly charge, depending on coverage selected, for a county employee. County councils have compensation policies that describe what portion of insurance premium, if any, they provide employees. Employees are responsible for the remainder of the monthly cost after the employer contribution is applied. The 2020 premiums will be the same as the 2019 premiums. ISU Extension and Outreach is not adding a fee to the county employee premium rate.

Table 2. ISU Insurance Plans for County Paid Staff

ISU PLAN - MERIT				
2020 Active Health and Dental Insurance Monthly Premiums				
	Health Insurance		Dental Insurance	
	PPO Plan	HMO Plan	Basic Plan	Comprehensive Plan
Total Premium				
Yourself only	691.00	669.00	26.00	42.00
Yourself + spouse/partner	1,580.00	1,537.00	56.00	103.00
Yourself + children	1,234.00	1,202.00	63.00	108.00
Yourself + family	2,026.00	1,955.00	71.00	122.00

²The premiums posted on the [ISU Insurance Plan](#) site are the cost to ISU employees after the employer contribution from ISU is applied.

The ISU Plan is an option that county employees and councils now may include in compensation policy conversations. It should be considered alongside other viable options. County employees may choose health insurance or dental insurance or both. Counties that have staff enrolled in the ISU Plan will send payment to ISU monthly for their county staff premiums.

Two-way Scorecard

In December we will name a committee to develop a formal “two-way scorecard” based on the MOU, which will be implemented across all counties. The committee will include representation from councils, county staff, and Iowa State. This scorecard will provide a formal way to provide feedback to partners. Counties will be able to provide formal feedback on regional directors, program specialists, and campus administration on defined responsibilities. Similarly, counties will receive feedback on defined expectations. The goal is to improve communication and continue to improve and grow as a system. The two-way scorecard will be available July 1, 2020.

Timeline

- **November 22, 2019:** The final plan with cost estimates for each model will be shared.
- **December 2019:** A committee will be named to begin developing the two-way scorecard.
- **January 1, 2020:**
 - » Councils choosing model 2 will provide a firm decision by returning a confirmation form signed by the council chair.
 - » A map showing likely regional boundaries will be released shortly after model 2 counties declare.
- **February 1, 2020:** Councils choosing model 1 or model 3 will provide a firm decision by returning a confirmation form signed by the council chair.
- **Spring 2020:**
 - » The new MOU that incorporates the final Structured for Success details will be ready for councils to review.
 - » Councils begin signing the MOU.
 - » Current regional directors will be assigned to the new regions and additional regional directors hired for model 2 counties and the remaining regions.
 - » The sign-up period for ISU health and dental insurance will be open.
 - » We will provide training for current and newly hired regional directors so that all are ready for launching Structured for Success.
- **June 1, 2020:** Each county must sign the MOU by or before June 1, 2020.
- **July 1, 2020:**
 - » The Structured for Success models will launch.
 - » The two-way scorecard will be available.
 - » ISU health and dental insurance coverage will begin.
 - » Professional development for model 3 county directors (CD3) will begin.

Additional Resources

The following resources are available from the [Structured for Success Feedback](#) webpage, as well as from [MyExtension](#):

- Structured for Success - Executive Summary: A Proposal, August 2019
- Structured for Success - White Paper: A Review of ISU Extension and Outreach’s Organizational Structure, August 2019
- Archive of the Aug. 20 webinar
- Structured for Success- White Paper: A Proposal for Model 3, October 2019

- Frequently Asked Questions and Common Themes
- County Paid Staffing Structure
- County MOU Shared Services Support - FY2013-2019 annual reports of expenses for centralized services