

IOWA STATE UNIVERSITY

Extension and Outreach

WHITE PAPER

Structured for Success: A Review of ISU Extension and Outreach's Organizational Structure

Charge to the Committee

In September 2018, Vice President for Extension and Outreach John Lawrence established a committee to review how Iowa State University Extension and Outreach is organized in the counties and the county-to-campus connection. The committee was charged with studying what had been learned since the 2009 reorganization. The committee's task was to determine how ISU Extension and Outreach could effectively educate and serve Iowans and how the organization's structure would impact its ability to do so. In essence, the committee was to seek out structures for success.

Members

The following people served as the Structured for Success Committee. The committee met monthly by Zoom from late September 2018 through April 2019 and face-to-face in May and August 2019.

- Katharina Bain, director, Keokuk County
- Jamie David, Taylor County Extension Council
- Robert Dodds, assistant vice president, County Services
- Lori Donahoe, Johnson County Extension Council
- Paul Gieselman, Louisa County Extension Council
- Cheryl Heronemus, director, Region 1
- Molly Hewitt, director, Region 5 and former Woodbury County director
- John Lawrence, vice president, ISU Extension and Outreach
- Terry Maloy, executive director, Iowa County Extension Association
- Larry Tranel, dairy field specialist, Northeast Iowa

Following Robert Dodds' retirement in June 2019, Interim Assistant Vice President for County Services Andrea Nelson joined the committee.

Overview of the Process

When an organization spends time evaluating its structure, it is not uncommon for staff to experience some level of concern. Recognizing this possibility, the Structured for Success Committee operated with transparency and provided [frequent updates](#) throughout the past year.

The committee identified three steps for finding potential structures for success:

1. Identify important functions for extension to effectively educate and serve lowans.
2. Explore and learn from models of extension education and program delivery across Iowa and in other states.
3. Assess the strengths and weaknesses of alternative models regarding the ability to educate and serve lowans. Specifically, the committee would examine how any proposed structure would impact ISU Extension and Outreach's ability to adjust to emerging issues; recruit, retain, and grow employees; enhance the reputation, respect, and relationship with stakeholders; and sustain and rebound through uncertain budgets.

To address these steps, the committee reviewed the 2009 reorganization, as well as ISU Extension and Outreach's current structure. The committee also reviewed council and staff perspectives gained during the 2018 Listening Sessions and from the Internal Communications Task Force.

To gain additional information, the committee conducted a survey of 100 extension councils and staff and had discussions with the 11 extension directors and staff in the North Central Region. The findings include what the committee believes are important functions that should occur locally to effectively educate and serve lowans.

Background: 2009 Reorganization

The last major reorganization of ISU Extension and Outreach occurred in 2009. Its intent was to strategically restructure ISU Extension and Outreach to meet financial realities and create a flexible, dynamic organization. The [2009 plan](#) called for using available resources to address complex issues facing lowans. It would:

- engage research and staff across disciplines to address complex issues,
- increase local control of county property taxes allocated for ISU Extension and Outreach, and
- reduce administrative costs.

The most noticeable changes were that the reorganization eliminated the approximately 100 county extension education director positions and the five area director positions, and established 20 regional director positions. The regions were identified to represent a balance of population, available county tax funds, client driving distance, and job commuting patterns. [Regions](#) ranged in size from three to eight counties.

The original plan called for regional directors to be assigned to a multi-county extension region and 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. Their duties included:

- utilizing a proactive approach within the region to identify needs and cooperate with extension program specialists in determining the appropriate programmatic response;

- coordinating 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 administering the resources and overseeing completion of all system reports for the region;
- working closely with regional economic development agencies, chambers of commerce, professional associations, and others; and
- establishing, organizing, and facilitating extension networks and coalitions at the regional level to build community capacity.

A new Memorandum of Understanding was developed to define Iowa State University and county council investment in the partnership.

County extension councils switched from paying a partnership fee to paying a smaller, shared services fee. Counties could reinvest the former partnership fee funds in extension staffing and programming to meet local needs. Councils had the ability to directly apply county property tax dollars to local programming priorities. They could choose to hire staff on their own or pool their resources and collectively hire staff with another county.

As specified in the 2009 plan, options for investing county funds might include:

- County paid employees, such as office assistant, bookkeeper, or program coordinator for county youth, horticulture, families, etc.; or
- Iowa State University paid employees (county reimburses ISU) who would be program specialists and could be shared positions with ISU or multi-county positions.

Counties could request to have a county or multi-county specific program specialist; the specialist would be an ISU employee supervised by the appropriate program director. The county would reimburse ISU Extension and Outreach for the salary and benefits of the position based on the percentage of time allocated to the county.

Today's Reality: Current Organizational Structure

Today county extension councils do have control over more of the local tax funds and do hire their own staff. However, the reorganization did not play out as planned. Here are a few examples that show how today's reality differs from the 2009 plan.

- While ISU Extension and Outreach engages with more colleges and faculty than in the past, programming remains mostly organized around Agriculture and Natural Resources, Human Sciences, Community and Economic Development, and 4-H Youth Development program areas.
- While the reorganization eliminated county directors and created regional directors to reduce administration, in 2019 there are 49 counties that have established a "county director" position. The individuals in these positions may have different titles, from executive director to office manager, but this administrative position has returned in nearly half of the counties.
- Counties have not partnered with ISU to hire program specialists, and relatively few counties share county positions across county lines.

- The role regional directors have in program planning with program specialists varies across regions, as does the amount of regional coalition building.

Council and Staff Perspectives: 2018 Listening Sessions

During the summer and fall of 2018 Vice President Lawrence held [listening sessions](#) in all 20 regions, with stakeholders, staff, and council representatives. These discussions were rich and far reaching. However, common themes around organizational structure were gleaned from the discussions with staff and councils:

- There is a need for greater clarification of roles and responsibilities for county staff, councils, regional directors, and specialists. This includes, but is not limited to, who performs the following “director” functions:
 - engagement – being the local “face of extension” and community connection, needs assessment, and program selection;
 - on-site manager/supervisor;
 - program selection, coordination, and implementation;
 - liaison to the county council; and
 - sharing ideas, staff, and resources across county lines.
- Strategies are needed for recruiting, retaining, and paying (including health benefits) staff.
- Councils identified the need for expanding accessibility to programming, multiple delivery methods and formats, and more content personnel.
- Staff identified the need for:
 - better communication throughout the system and improved collaboration across counties and between campus and counties;
 - clarification and consistency of position descriptions and supervision;
 - increased programming capacity at the county and field staff level;
 - more professional development for staff and volunteers, offered online and across the state;
 - more agile program response that works across disciplines and boundaries;
 - competitive and equitable staff salaries and health benefits for county staff; and
 - career path options and tuition assistance to provide opportunities for professional growth and to retain great employees in the organization.

Council and Staff Perspectives: Internal Communications Task Force Report

The [Internal Communications Task Force](#) conducted focus groups, one-on-one interviews, and surveys of staff and councils about how people communicate within ISU Extension and Outreach. Their report, delivered to Vice President Lawrence in late February 2019, provides valuable insight about the organization and more than 20 recommendations, including the following recommendations related to organizational structure:

Define clear lines of accountability. Perhaps one of the most basic recommendations is related to clarifying lines of accountability for all staff. The Structured for Success process may provide a vehicle for beginning to address this issue within the system.

Create standardized templates for position descriptions. ISU Extension and Outreach is making progress in clarifying position titles within the system. To aid communication, ISU Extension and Outreach could create templates for position descriptions that could be shared and implemented across the system.

Ensure county staff have a seat on all planning committees. All ISU Extension and Outreach program units, and service units when appropriate, should include county staff when creating committees.

Develop consistent teams across units for implementation across the state. ISU Extension and Outreach program and service units currently operate with a variety of structures, which creates confusion and miscommunication across the state. The Structured for Success Committee should seriously consider this recommendation as they progress in their work and develop their models of implementation.

Structured for Success Committee Findings

Important Functions for Serving Iowans

The Structured for Success Committee discussed functions that are important for ISU Extension and Outreach to effectively educate and serve Iowans with research-based education and information at the local level. Table 1 includes both administrative and programmatic functions that the committee identified. This list is a good starting place for discussing who is responsible for each function. It also highlights the importance of good communication to ensure that people do not take the functions for granted and do not make assumptions about who has responsibility for each function.

Table 1: Local Programmatic and Administrative Functions Important to Effective Extension Delivery

Programmatic function	Administrative function
Needs assessment	Human resources
Program planning	Budget and finance
Building partnerships	Daily office function
Audience recruitment	Risk management
Bringing ISU resources	Civil rights

The Structured for Success Committee developed a questionnaire to gather input from Iowa counties regarding how they currently are organized. In March and April 2019, the regional directors administered the questionnaire. In most cases it was completed by county staff, and reviewed and potentially revised by extension councils. The questionnaire included about a dozen open-ended questions and another 20 Likert scale questions (on a scale of 0 to 3 or 1 to 5). It is difficult to summarize all questions across 100 responses, but here are some observations:

- 49 counties have a director and most, but not all, require a bachelor's degree for the position.
- 37 counties have an office assistant/manager/coordinator as the key person listed.

- 91 counties have a county youth coordinator; 33 require and 11 prefer that the CYC have a post high school degree.
- 22 counties reported sharing resources across county lines: 78 counties do not share.
- 135 full time equivalents (FTE) of county staff self-identified as having administrative responsibilities, not counting the 20 regional directors. These FTEs include director, coordinator, manager, and assistant titles and account for 36% of the county FTEs. The remaining 64% of county FTEs identified as having programming responsibilities.

One question sought to understand the depth of involvement of county staff in the four program areas. The questionnaire asked for involvement on a scale of 0 to 3, where 0 = not part of county staff role to 3 = significant involvement, on a series of program responsibilities: deliver content, client questions, coordinate programs with specialists, meeting logistics, marketing and promotion, evaluate and report, volunteer management, use social media, develop partnerships, local media, county fair, and grant writing/external funding.

Table 2 summarizes county staff involvement by averaging across the identified responsibilities by program area. County staff are most heavily involved in the delivery of the 4-H Youth Development programming, followed by Agriculture and Natural Resources, Human Sciences, and Community and Economic Development. On a scale of 0-3, only one county reported average involvement at less than 2 in 4-H delivery. Conversely, 50% of counties reported CED programming averaging less than 1.

**Table 2. Depth of Programming by County Staff and Program Area.
(0-3 scale, with 0 = not part of county staff role and 3 = significant involvement)**

	Average	0-1	1-2	2-3
4-H Youth Development	2.83	0%	1%	99%
Agriculture and Natural Resources	2.18	2%	36%	62%
Human Sciences	1.99	8%	43%	49%
Community and Economic Development	1.16	50%	34%	16%

Table 3 summarizes perspectives regarding the roles of county staff, extension councils, and regional directors in carrying out important extension functions in the county. In most counties the questionnaire was completed by county staff and reviewed by councils. The results indicate that county staff report having the greatest role in the listed functions relative to councils and regional directors. Across the functions, county staff view themselves as relatively more involved in program planning and daily office function and less involved in needs assessment and human resources. County staff view councils and regional directors as relatively more involved in budget and finance issues and less involved in daily office function.

Table 3. The Role in County Extension District Operations of County Staff, Extension Councils, and Regional Directors, State Averages. (1-5 scale, with 1 = very little and 5 = a great deal)

Function	County Staff	Extension Councils	Regional Directors
Program planning	4.9	2.6	2.3
Needs assessment	3.8	2.8	2.8
Human resources	3.6	3.7	3.1
Budget and finance	4.1	3.9	4.2
Daily office function	4.9	1.5	1.5
Risk management	4.8	2.0	2.8
Building partnerships	4.8	2.9	2.4
Audience recruitment	4.8	2.3	1.7
Civil rights	4.1	2.4	3.8
Bringing ISU resources	4.5	2.2	3.7

Comparisons with Other North Central States

The Structured for Success Committee also gathered input from extension services in neighboring states. Iowa is unique in the North Central region and perhaps nationally on a few points of comparison that are worth noting. In other ways Iowa is quite similar to the other states.

Local funding: Iowa extension districts have their own taxing authority and elected council members to oversee the funds. All other North Central states submit an annual budget request to the county commissioners (supervisors) for county funding. Kansas has both funding methods. Fifty-three Kansas counties voted to form into 18 Extension districts that are given taxing authority. The remaining 52 counties are independent from other counties and request funds from commissioners.

Organization: Most states have multi-county, regional, or statewide specialists, as well as a county presence similar to Iowa. The number of counties in a group and how they are administered differ across states.

- North Dakota, Indiana, and part of Kansas still have county/district based delivery.
- Nebraska, Ohio, Illinois, Wisconsin, and Missouri are organized in multi-county groups that share resources within the group and may share specialization across a broader region.
- Minnesota, Michigan, Iowa, and Missouri (Missouri has both groups and specialists) have specialists with defined regions or districts.
- South Dakota has specialists who are based at regional centers and have statewide responsibility and also has county 4-H staff.

Staffing: All states except Iowa have state employees in the county office. In some states all staff are state extension employees, and in other states there are both state and county employees. Other than Iowa, states require a master's degree for educator or director positions and a bachelor's degree for

coordinator positions including county youth coordinators. Most allow hiring an individual with a bachelor’s degree but require the person to obtain a master’s degree in three to five years.

Reporting: All states have regional or area directors who supervise state staff in counties. In some states the specialists are co-supervised by program leaders and area directors. County staff are typically supervised by state staff, either an area director or the director/educator in the county. In one state, the office assistant, as a county employee, is supervised by the county auditor.

Financial partnership: The partnership for funding extension staff in counties differs across the states in the north central region. States that have specialists and regional/district/area directors are funding those positions centrally.

- Some states require the county to fully fund county staff salary and benefits.
- Most states have a formula to determine how much the state will contribute toward the county for educator/director.
- In most states, counties provide facilities, operations, and support staff.

Iowa is the only north central state to have elected council members and taxing authority for all counties. Iowa also has the greatest degree of separation of funding between state/federal funding and county funding. In addition, Iowa is the only state with no state funding for any county staff and where county employees report to and are supervised by elected volunteers. Most other states offer benefits to county employees through the university and some states contribute to those costs.

In general Iowa has lower educational requirements for county directors and coordinators than other states. However, as Table 4 indicates, while not required to have a degree, most county employees have a bachelor’s or master’s degree.

Table 4. Iowa County Paid Extension Staff Educational Degree by Working Title, Spring 2019

Working Title	Number identified	High School	Associate Degree	BS/BA	MS/MA
County director	47	0	1	27	19
Office manager	33	9	15	9	0
Program coordinator, 4-H/Youth Development ¹	130	19	10	90	11
Program coordinator, ANR	27	3	2	15	7
Program coordinator, Human Sciences	53	4	5	39	5
Program coordinator, not specified	42	2	2	31	7 ²
Bookkeeper	65	0	26	35	4
Office assistant	87	32	20	32	3 ²
Total	484	69	81	278	56

Positions as filled Spring 2019.

¹Program coordinators include six program specialists in the data

²Includes one Ph.D.

For more detail about the individual states, see the North Central Extension State Organization Summary, available on the [Structured for Success website](#).

Putting the Pieces Together

The council and staff perspectives gained during the 2018 Listening Sessions and from the Internal Communications Task Force indicate that ISU Extension and Outreach's current structure, created by the 2009 reorganization, has gaps. The Structured for Success Committee gathered data from the county survey and discussions with other states, which point to these gaps as well. Based on the collected data, ISU Extension and Outreach's organizational structure could be improved in the following areas:

- clear and consistent communication and accountability;
- enhanced professional development, engagement, and programming capacity in the field;
- competitive salary, benefits, and career opportunities for staff;
- reduced administrative burden for councils regarding supervision and program selection; and
- encouragement for collaboration;
- a voice for counties on planning committees.

After reviewing and discussing the information that was gathered, the Structured for Success Committee identified **guiding principles** to effectively educate and serve Iowans.

ISU Extension and Outreach must:

- have dedicated professionals who are well prepared and equipped;
- focus on developing and delivering impactful programs;
- align the ISU mission and county priorities, and share the mission and purpose of ISU Extension and Outreach with Iowans;
- lead with councils on strategic planning to identify needs of the county relative to ISU's resources; and
- leverage cooperation and collaboration across the cooperative extension system.

ISU Extension and Outreach's organizational structure should:

- attract and retain talented and dedicated staff, and provide opportunities for professional growth;
- provide clear and consistent communication, responsibilities, and accountability throughout the system;
- reduce administrative burden on staff and councils, and reduce costs to the system; and
- better utilize university resources to support county operations, such as Human Resources, Equal Opportunity, legal, and finance.

The partnership between Iowa State University and counties should:

- be flexible, sustainable, resilient, and relevant;
- recognize that one size does not fit all, and that basic coverage is important; and
- leverage resources to achieve common goals and encourage collaboration.

Identifying Structures for Success

The Structured for Success Committee was asked to determine how ISU Extension and Outreach could effectively educate and serve Iowans and how the organization's structure would impact its ability to do so. The committee incorporated information learned during the 2018 Listening Sessions and from the Internal Communications Task Force Report and gathered information about how counties currently are operating in Iowa, as well as from other states in the north central region.

Goals

After completing this review, the committee set the following goals for identifying potential structures for success. To be successful, an organizational structure must enable ISU Extension and Outreach to:

- effectively educate and serve Iowans 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.

Strategies

The committee believes an organizational structure for success should be based on the following strategies:

- Emphasize ISU Extension and Outreach's mission in education and engagement, and position staff to be successful.
- Position councils to act more as boards of directors and less as managers. Councils should establish policy and procedure, and ISU and staff should be responsible for implementation.
- Clarify and simplify reporting lines, responsibilities, accountability, and communication.
- Develop and adopt more consistent position descriptions for ISU and county staff.
- Encourage councils to move toward competitive salary and benefits for staff to improve recruiting and retention.
- Improved retention will improve internal and external communication and relationships.
- Provide opportunities for professional growth of staff.

DRAFT PROPOSAL: A Renewed Partnership

To meet these goals and strategies, the Structured for Success Committee developed the following proposal with two models for a renewed partnership between Iowa State University and county extension councils. The committee is sharing this proposed plan to start a discussion. Your feedback is needed.

Modest Changes to Improve the Organization

This partnership proposal makes modest changes to the current system that will help ISU Extension and Outreach better serve and educate lowans.

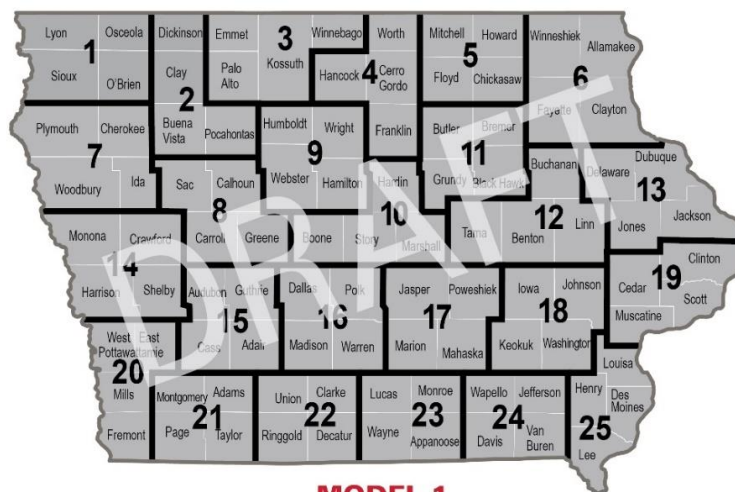
- First, it places more emphasis on local engagement and education, clarifies reporting lines throughout the system, and reduces administrative burden on county extension councils.
- Second, it provides access to the ISU health and dental insurance plan for county employees and provides a clearer career path.
- Finally, the plan asks county extension districts to pay an additional shared services fee to have ISU provide more service and assume more responsibilities and to provide access to insurance for staff.

Please Provide Feedback

The following overview of the two models provides details about the plan and how it will impact county extension councils and their staff, their budget, and their ability to serve and educate people in their county. Please read through the plan and talk with colleagues in your county and those in neighboring counties. Discuss it with councils, staff, and regional directors.

The Structured for Success Committee wants to answer questions you may have. (Answers to frequently asked questions will be available and updated as needed.) Please provide feedback on the proposal. There will be multiple ways to provide feedback, including virtual and in-person meetings, an online suggestion box, an online survey, and phone or email.

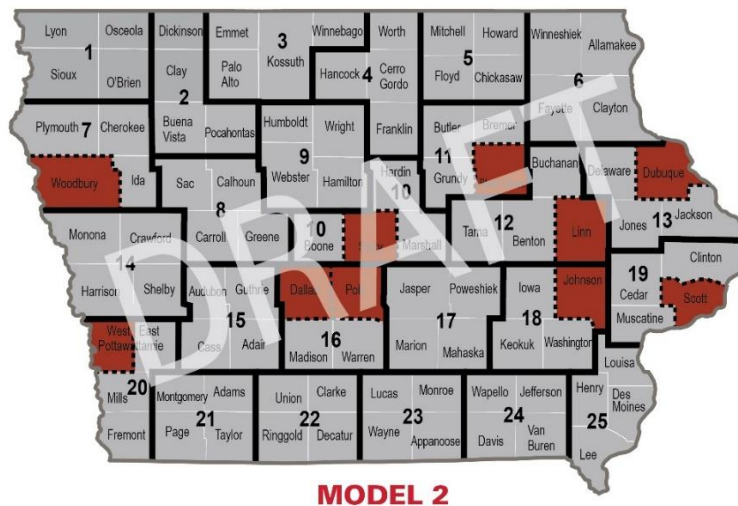
Model 1: Twenty-Five Regions and Each Regional Director Leads Four Counties



MODEL 1

This model calls for 25 four-county regions with 25 ISU regional directors funded centrally. Each regional director will lead four counties and have additional responsibilities and a clarified role. Regional directors, acting on behalf of the extension councils and within the ISU Extension and Outreach mission and Iowa Code, will be responsible for human resources, financial management, and program selection, and will help councils follow appropriate rules and regulations. County staff will work closely with the regional director to develop and implement the county plan of work. County staff also will spend more time serving lowans through education and engagement. They will work with program specialists to facilitate and, where appropriate, deliver programming. County staff will be expected to affiliate with and enhance their knowledge in a program area.

Model 2: One-County or Two-County Regional Director Option for Large Counties



This model provides an option for a small number of large counties to fund a one-county regional director or for two counties to fund and share a two-county regional director. These regional directors will be ISU employees with the same responsibilities as the four-county regional directors. Interested counties must have an operating budget over \$350,000 and 10 or more staff as a single county or as two counties combined. ISU will contribute 20% per county for salary, benefits, and travel. The counties involved fund the remainder. The goal is that the administrative duties and number of staff managed are similar to a regional director with four counties. The position description, title, and minimum requirements are the same for all regional directors, but the service area is different. The role of county staff would be similar to Model 1.

Models 1 and 2: Further Clarification

Using a school analogy, the council is the school board, the regional director is the superintendent, and staff are teachers.

Extension councils as defined in 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.

Regional directors help implement council's responsibilities:

- integrate council priorities with ISU mission and Iowa code via a plan of work;
- provide hiring, onboarding, mentoring, supervision, and performance review for county staff;
- coordinate and implement budget and financial management;
- assure accreditation, reporting, and risk management implementation;
- collaborate with councils, staff, and program specialists on program selection and delivery following the county plan of work; and
- explore collaboration across counties and partners.

County staff deliver on the county plan of work:

- focus on stakeholder education and engagement;
- align with a program area and grow as an extension educator;
- engage stakeholders, develop and maintain partnerships, and assess needs;
- recruit and develop volunteers, promote programs, and nurture relationships;
- facilitate and/or deliver educational programming in partnership with specialists; and
- evaluate and report outcomes and impacts to councils, stakeholders, and ISU Extension and Outreach.

In both Model 1 and Model 2, ISU assumes more responsibility for human resource management, provides staff training, and implements Equal Opportunity Employment practices and assumes additional staff misconduct risks. Councils have formal input on hiring and performance review of regional directors through representation on the interview committee and by providing input to the assistant vice president for county services. During the first year of transition, councils will be asked for quarterly feedback on the regional director's performance and changes implemented. Program specialists report to program directors, but regional directors will provide formal input on program specialist annual performance review.

The proposed plan modifies duties and realigns service areas. Regional directors will be assigned to the newly defined regions. ISU Extension and Outreach will make assignments and will take into account input from the regional directors and extension councils. New regional directors will be hired for the remaining regions, onboarded, and trained prior to the launch date.

Staff Recruitment and Retention

County councils are encouraged to adopt a recommended staffing model of educator, director, program coordinator (for example, CYC), and office assistant as resources allow. Current county directors are encouraged to shift their focus to education and engagement and align more closely with a program area for professional development. Program areas will develop curriculum and training appropriate for county educators, directors, and coordinators to deliver. Career path opportunities with additional experience and/or education are from director or coordinator to educator to specialist, or from director or coordinator to regional director. Educator, specialist, and regional director positions require a

master's degree and experience. The Tuition Assistance Program is available to help county staff obtain additional education.

By participating in this renewed partnership, counties may provide health and dental insurance for their employees through ISU's health and dental insurance plan. To be eligible, employees must be employed at least half time (20 hours a week or more) per ISU policy. The ISU plan is an excellent plan and is offered through Blue Cross and Blue Shield. It is a large pool of employees and the plan has competitive and stable premiums. The information on the ISU Benefits webpage reflects current plans, which will be updated with the next open enrollment period in November 2019 and take effect January 1, 2020. The Structured for Success Committee proposes that counties joining the partnership enroll beginning July 1, 2020, to give staff time to review the 2020 plan and councils time to budget for employer contributions. The full information about cost and coverage will be provided for councils and staff to make decisions.

Counties joining the ISU health and dental plan will be billed by ISU monthly for the total employer and employee contributions. Counties should follow their policy on the employer contribution of insurance premiums that they provide employees. ISU Extension and Outreach can share ISU's policy on employer contribution with interested councils.

The Structured for Success Committee believes that providing county employees quality health and dental insurance, offering the opportunity for career advancement and tuition assistance, and clarifying roles and responsibilities will enhance job satisfaction and allow ISU Extension and Outreach to recruit and retain great extension professionals.

Shared Services Fee

The proposed plan will place more emphasis on local education and engagement, reduce administrative burden on councils, clarify roles and responsibilities for staff, and provide access to competitively priced, quality health and dental insurance. In turn, ISU and counties will be better able to recruit and retain professionals who will strengthen relationships and build trust with internal and external partners.

However, the plan will require additional funding. ISU will allocate additional funding and counties are asked to provide additional funding to ISU Extension and Outreach to support the additional services provided.

The current Memorandum of Understanding between ISU Extension and Outreach and county extension councils charges each county a shared services fee of 2.7% of their tax revenue. In return, counties receive statewide financial accounting system licensing, training, and support; in-office network technology and hotline support; and branding support services. This partnership proposes to ask counties to pay an additional shared services fee of between 2.0 – 3.0% of their tax revenue for counties in four-county regions. Counties funding a one-county or two-county regional director will not pay the additional fee.

In return for the additional service fee, county councils will receive assistance in carrying out their responsibilities under Iowa Code. This includes assistance with human resource management, employment and civil rights compliance, financial management, and program selection and implementation. County staff can focus more attention on local relationships, marketing, and

programming, and access health and dental insurance. There are still details to be finalized and they will be developed as feedback is gathered. Details will be finalized before commitments are made.

Timeline

The Structured for Success Committee introduced the proposal August 20, 2019, via an Adobe Connect webinar. The presentation was archived for later viewing. ISU Extension and Outreach leadership will be seeking comment and feedback on the proposal until Friday, October 11. There will be multiple ways to provide feedback, including virtual and in-person meetings, an online suggestion box, an online survey, and phone or email.

This feedback will be reviewed, and revisions made, with the final version made available October 21, 2019. Extension councils will have until January 1, 2020, to indicate choice of Model 1 or 2. The change in regional boundaries, regional directors and roles and responsibilities, and access to ISU benefits will begin July 1, 2020. Half of the partnership assessment will be due November 1, 2020.

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Iowa State University Extension and Outreach does not discriminate on the basis of age, disability, ethnicity, gender identity, genetic information, marital status, national origin, pregnancy, race, color, religion, sex, sexual orientation, socioeconomic status, or status as a U.S. veteran, or other protected classes. (Not all prohibited bases apply to all programs.) Inquiries regarding non-discrimination policies may be directed to the Diversity Advisor, 2150 Beardshear Hall, 515 Morrill Road, Ames, Iowa 50011, 515-294-1482, extdiversity@iastate.edu. All other inquiries may be directed to 800-262-3804.