

Grafton Co. Key Issue 2008

Instructions: Each county, program area and specialists as a whole are to identify key issues that their programming activities currently address, or should address. For each issue, craft a 2-3 sentence issue statement that outlines, in brief, what the issue at hand is and why it is important or relevant. The issue statements should be crafted based on objective data, as well as input from Specialists, County Educators, Advisory Councils, and input from other key stakeholders.

1. In a few words, please come up with a title that succinctly defines the issue:

Economic Status of Families in Grafton County/New Hampshire/New England

2. Please describe the issue in 2-3 sentences (i.e. craft an issue statement that describes what the issue at hand is and why it is a significant issue):

In our observations, families depend on seasonal systems in Grafton County for economic viability: the hospitality industry, natural resources industry and the service industry.

Families are facing decreasing opportunities to earn a living wage. Research has indicated that when financial resources for families are scarce the rates of child and domestic abuse rise.

With diminishing income, families are making hard choices about the necessities for basic survival, i.e. food, clothing, shelter, energy (fuel and gasoline) and transportation.

3. In 2-3 sentences, please describe what the public value for Extension to address this issue is/would be. (The term public value refers to not only the value of our outreach activities to community *participants*, but, more importantly, the value of these activities to those who do not *directly* benefit from these activities. The purpose of the Public Value approach is to secure support for activities with strong public value and identify those activities that do not have strong public value. The following is an example of a public value statement that addresses the issue of loss of rural landscape to development and other growth-related pressures.

“ Extension needs to promote education on basic living skills throughout the life cycle: food management, money management, promotion of positive family and child development, energy conservation/alternative energy sources and self reliant skills to preserve natural resources(i.e. gardening, forestry management practices, agricultural practices). In addition, Cooperative Extension needs to remain in the forefront of promoting community development initiatives to strengthen the infrastructure of the community to support families and business.

- 4. Identify and summarize key data that help make the case that this is a key issue** (key data might include demographic trend data, University priorities, issues identified in plans/policies of other agencies and organizations, stakeholder input, etc.).
- **Census 2000: income level and employment fields**
 - **State Unemployment rate by counties (Sept 2008- 4.1-7.1 %, non-farm)**
 - **Increased requests from social service agencies serving the affected population for family and consumer resources and Nutrition Connections educational programs**
 - **Local flooding and severe weather phenomenon (Winter 2008- record snowfall)**
- 5. How does/would addressing this issue tie into UNH Cooperative Extension's Mission?**

It allows the University research to be brought to the citizens of Grafton County.

- 6. What Extension programs/activities, if any, currently address this issue? For each, please succinctly describe how the program/activity addresses the issue.**

Nutrition Connections teaches food budgeting and preparation, nutrition education, food management decision making to food stamp recipients and other low income clientele.

Family and Consumer Resources teaches money management programs, food safety and family systems strengthening programs.

4-H Youth Development facilities teaching self reliant skills through project work.

Forestry and Wildlife Resources teaches planning for the future with management of forest and land resources, for privately owned lands, as well as working with those who make a living off the forests.

Ag Resources continues to bring UNH research to the field in applied sciences of agriculture to farms as well as supporting sustainability and value added products.

- 7. What other organizations/agencies are currently addressing this issue?**

AHEAD- money management in relation to home owning

Woodlot owner associations- woodlot management

Food and Nutrition- No one is addressing the issue in an educational way as Extension does evaluating long term results.

Agricultural practices- for profit companies; NH Farm Bureau; FFA (student organization)

- 8. If Extension does not currently address this issue, how might we address this issue in the future?** (consider staff capacity, financial resources, volunteer capacity, and what other agencies/organizations might address this issue, etc.).

We currently have at least two generations of families who have not learned basic cooking skills and have their ability to stretch their food dollar compromised.

We are billed as the fourth best county in the USA to live. Development and unplanned uses of natural resources abound in our towns and communities and will threaten just what makes us an area that brings in hundreds of thousands of tourists that support the local hospitality industry that provides jobs and second jobs to many Grafton County citizens.