



## 2008 Key Issue Identification Form

**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:**

The Impact of Economic Decline on Financial and Emotional Well-being

**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):**

The current economic downturn caused by the global banking crisis and stock market fluctuations is likely causing increased emotional and financial stress to individuals, families, and businesses in Rockingham County. Families and individuals are cutting back on spending; they are looking for alternatives or going without. This impacts businesses in the county, especially as the holidays approach. In addition, many households and businesses are still experiencing financial impacts due to the tornado that streaked through northern Rockingham County this summer. The current national and global crisis may be compounding the stress that these individuals and businesses are experiencing.

**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.)

- Individuals, families and youth who are coping well with the financial crisis will have a greater positive impact on the many facets of their community.
- Businesses that are able to sustain themselves through the financial crisis will be able to maintain employees and services and thus have a positive impact on their community.
- Limited-resource individuals who are better able to manage food resources to provide nutritionally adequate food for themselves and their families will help community-based food security initiatives meet their objectives.

- 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.).
- Nearly 1 in 10 people in New Hampshire live in poverty which puts them at risk for hunger and poor nutrition.
  - According to the Kids Count New Hampshire Data Book 2008, there are three towns in Rockingham County who have a low score in the Child Well-being Index, which is a summary index standardizing seven common indicators of child opportunity. There are six communities that have a middle score, and due to the economic downturn, could possibly have a lower Child Well-being Index in the near future.
  - According to the State of NH Emergency Operations Center in a news release on July 29, 2008, 150 structures were damaged along a 54-mile path of a tornado that touched down during that time. In addition, there was extensive forested land destruction to numerous towns in Merrimack, Rockingham, Strafford, Belknap, and Carroll Counties.
- 5. How does/would addressing this issue tie into UNH Cooperative Extension's Mission?**
- Providing resources and information to individuals, families, youth and businesses to help them cope with the financial crisis will enhance their abilities to make informed decisions, sustain natural resources, and improve the economy.
- 6. What Extension programs/activities, if any, currently address this issue? For each, please succinctly describe how the program/activity addresses the issue.**
- Financial management programs for individuals, families and youth.
  - Programs that focus on savings and stretching dollars.
  - Programs related to Affluenza or over consumption.
  - Parenting programs on kids and commercialism.
  - Programs on sustainability; how spending choices relate to impact on natural resources.
  - Food safety programs assure that food service establishments are serving a safe product, thus helping maintain their economic viability.
  - Stress management programs for individuals and families teach coping skills under difficult circumstances.
  - Food resource management programs for limited-resource audiences help individuals, families, and youth meet nutrition needs.
  - Workshops and individual consultations were provided to businesses and individuals in Rockingham County impacted by the tornado.
- 7. What other organizations/agencies are currently addressing this issue?**
- A bank in the area is providing financial management programs.
  - The Emergency Food Providers network is looking into this issue.
  - Adult education in various communities.
  - Some human services organizations.

**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 potential partnerships with other agencies/organizations, etc.).

- We are currently addressing the issue in the programs listed above.
- Additional staffing and financial resources could enable us to provide even more programs than we currently have the capacity to do.

**Please Complete and Email to Lisa Townson by October 23, 2008**

**Form Submitted by:** Claudia Boozer-Blasco

**Date:** October 23, 2008

**Representing:** Rockingham County