



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:

Building Civic Communities

Could develop into: Civic Smarts Institute (CSI)

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):

Following nearly 20 years of civic & community profiles the dominant issue has consistently been the lack of *informed civic participation and community leadership*. Citizens have been dissatisfied with the ability of elected officials to lead. Additionally, the lack of civil decorum and demonizing those with opposing opinion abound in public meetings and sporting events.

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 has begun to address this issue through an Outreach Scholarship Grant for the NH Citizen Planner Training Collaborative. The first two of 4 modules, each earning one credit, will be offered @ UNHM in the Spring 2009 semester. They are titled *Effective Meeting Management* and *Public Participation & Involvement Strategies*. Clearly, the community benefits through healthy stakeholder participation, and consensus building which leads to more effective/efficient government. Funds from the grant will be used for scholarships and compensation for a team of elected and appointed municipal land use officials who agree to evaluate the spring 09 modules content and formats. It is unclear how we will proceed in funding the fall 09 modules entitled *Conflict Management in Meetings & Forums* and *Advanced Facilitation Techniques*.

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.).

An Analysis of Themes and Actions Identified...Community Profiles (1996-2004) reported the dominant theme of informed participation and community leadership; additionally the recently released Ten Years of Community Profiles in NH reported civic participation & community leadership as being the most common theme being expressed, more than twice as frequently as the next theme of housing, growth & development.

5. How does/would addressing this issue tie into UNH Cooperative Extension's Mission?

Extension's FY 07 to FY 11 Plan of Work Goals report the following goals within Civic Capacity and Leadership:

Goal: A diverse range of community members – from both communities of place and communities of interest – become more effectively engaged in community planning, decision-making and community action.

Goal: Residents of NH communities build strong connections with neighbors and other community members.

Goal: Individuals and groups from communities gain new leadership skills that empower others to engage in community activities/projects.

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

Community Profiles, Recreation Profiles and similar facilitated programs serve to heighten and prioritize community issues and provide beginner skills in facilitation for a community based team of small-group facilitators & recorders. This is just a beginning to building *sustainable* communities. Ideally, in this writers opinion, building a team of volunteers (supporting regions of the state) in a model similar to Tree Stewards and Master Gardeners, able to be called upon to facilitate public forums would be an asset to communities interest and place (and a credit to Extension). Graduates would receive their CSI designation.

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

Many agencies and organizations, nearly all being part of the Citizen Planner Collaborative, address components of this/these issues independently. Primarily they serve elected and appointed officials or municipal employees. There is also a Selectpersons Institute @ Antioch NE.

I don't believe any of these efforts are also designed to serve the broader community as the Training Collaborative is in its collaboration with the CoLead associate degree program @ UNHM and reaching the broader community seeking skills in community leadership and meeting management.

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.).

While strong partnerships exist in the collaborative, all these partners are being stretched to provide staffing. While Extension is also feeling the same pressures, it seems we have greater capacity to be the “glue” and resource for staffing and technology.

- A) Additional funding for the 3rd and 4th modules.**
B) Funding further research into partnerships with UNH and UNHM including the Masters of Public Administration @UNH M.

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

Form Submitted by: (Name) **Dan Reidy**

Date: (Date) **Oct. 23, 2008**

Representing: (Name of County, Program Area, UNHCE Team/Committee/Group, etc.) **Sea Grant, Water Resources (and community development)**