



## A Logical Approach to Writing Objectives and Impact Statements (and County Highlights)

**Extension program professionals are skilled program planners. Because it becomes second nature, sometimes it may seem like a waste of precious time to pause and write down the details. But, writing down what we intend to teach and what the people who attend will learn can be very helpful.**

**It is helpful when –**

**It is time to evaluate the success or effectiveness of the program. It will be even more helpful when it is time to write an impact statement.**

**It is helpful when –**

**Your programs don't meet your expectations; you try to think back through your planning process to determine what you failed to compensate for or consider.**

**In this day of accountability, there is no substitute for documented evidence. Use evaluation data to help organize information and put it in writing.**

### **Who uses your reports and impact statements?**

**The Key Theme Reports and the Impact Statements you write are read and used by different people in different ways.**

- **Your program leader uses your report to help them evaluate your performance.**
- **They are used to support Extension's continued funding at the county, state, and federal levels.**
- **Your impact statements are used to create the reports for New Hampshire's state and federal legislators.**
- **Your county could use your impact statements when communicating local program successes to commissioners and other local supporters.**

**State specialists and other contacts use your impact statements when they prepare federal reports that they submit to Washington.**

## What is an effective impact statement?

An effective impact statement is a declaration about program outcomes, written in a specific or formal way that makes a striking impression. It has the power to reinforce and/or produce a change in attitude, a change in feelings about something, or to bring about a desired result.

With a little practice and a little planning, writing impact statements can be quick and easy.

### Defining an Effective Impact Statement

**Effective:** Something that makes a striking impression; it has the power to produce a desired result.

**Impact:** The power of an idea or statement to produce change – for example, a change in attitude, a change in feelings about something.

**Statement:** Declaration set forth in a specific, definite or formal way.

1. **Before you begin writing an impact statement about one of your programs, ask yourself the following questions:**
  - A. **What do the decision makers need to know about this program to understand how it has made a difference in the lives of the people involved?**
  - B. **How much do I need to share to have them understand the worth of this program well enough to continue supporting UNH Cooperative Extension?**
2. **Use the Impact Statement checklist to evaluate your efforts.**
3. **Ask an uninvolved person to review what you write. Find someone on your office team who will suggest ways to improve what you have written. The best writers rely on editors. The attached sheet provides some examples of well-written impact statements.**

## Prepare for next year

- **As you plan the programs that will become your 2003 Plan of Work, think about:**
- **How you want each audience to be changed or affected (What are the expected outcomes?)**
- **What kind of information you will need to gather as evidence (What are the outcome indicators?)**
- **What you will need to include in your impact statements**
- **What you will use as comparison baseline information to show your audience was changed or affected (Situation Statement)**

**Write the outcomes and/or impacts after each major program, or once a month, so you will not be caught in a time crunch in November.**

## **Stages of Change Model (SCM)**

**The Stages of Change Model is usually associated with changing or adopting a new behavior that is positive and leads to improvement. Anything a person does to modify behavior, emotions, thoughts, or relationships in an effort to change an identified action or practice are considered examples of the processes of change occurring.**

### **Pre-contemplation (Awareness)**

- **Does not think seriously about changing/adopting a new behavior**
- **Tends to defend the existing behavior and be defensive if others try to help change the behavior**
- **May not see the need for change at this point**

### **Contemplation**

- **Is aware of the consequences of a behavior**
- **Thinks about changing/adopting a behavior but is not ready to start**
- **Gathers information**
- **Thinks about the positive aspects of changing and the negative aspects of not changing**
- **Begins to weigh and balances**

### **Determination/Preparation**

- **The positive aspects of change begin to outweigh the reasons for not changing**
- **Gets ready to change/adopt the behavior**
- **Sets goals for themselves**
- **Determines skills they need to master**

### **Action**

- **Actively takes steps to change an existing behavior, adopt a new behavior to replace an old one or fill a void**
- **Tends to openly receive help and support from others**
- **Reviews their commitment to themselves to change**
- **Develops plans to deal with lapses**
- **Uses short term rewards to sustain motivation**
- **Analyzes their effort to change in a way that enhances their self-confidence**

### **Maintenance**

- **Continues to practice the changed/new behavior**
- **Can anticipate situations during which a relapse could occur and develop contingency plans**
- **Recovers from a lapse and sees it as a strength and a show of self-control**
- **Reminds self of what a difference it makes**

### **Relapse**

- **Temporarily discontinues the action, before resuming the desired behavior**
- **Recognizes that lapses are a normal part of change**

## Examples of Effective Impact Statements

- 1. Parents and their children are listening more carefully to each other. Communication skills were taught to 50 parents. Eighty percent of participants increased their communication skills with their children through the "Learning by Listening" program. Parents were observed and videotaped role-playing and practicing "I" statements instead of "you" statements. They concentrated on active listening, which was measured by observed ratios of time talking to time listening.**
- 2. A 26-head dairy herd on DHI increased production per cow by 550 pounds. Thirteen herds with 1,560 cows took advantage of the "Least Cost Ration" computer program. This resulted in \$60 increased income per cow or a total of \$93,600. The herds consumed less feed which resulted in a savings of an additional \$24,000 that year.**
- 3. In X County, 75 pesticide applicators out of 82 trained indicated they have adopted the practice of using protective clothing when applying pesticides. This was determined through a follow-up evaluation six months after completion of the original training program. The seven applicators who do not use protective clothing have had one pesticide related insurance claim per month, compared to the 75 applicators who use protective clothing who have had none.**
- 4. Fifteen public officials in X County participated in Extension leadership development programs. In an end of program questionnaire, ninety-five percent reported that they gained knowledge and increased leadership skills as a result of participation. They feel they are doing a better job for their residents after the program as compared with prior to being involved. Several have encouraged other officials to enroll in the I**
- 5. One hundred thirty seven public officials participated in a series of six Leadership Development programs focused on conducting efficient and effective meetings. Eighty-five percent of those trained demonstrated increased skills in conducting successful meetings during a simulation exercise held during the last meeting. These skills were measured through the use of a checklist by trained observers and by program participants.**

Source: Jackie LaMuth, Ohio State University Extension, Columbus, OH

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