Development of UNH Cooperative Extension Programs

Cooperative Extension’s broad scope of activities are identified through on-going statewide and local needs assessment and reflected through our many partnerships with other organizations, agencies and academic departments. Our programs aim to foster development of competent individuals and strong families, strengthen New Hampshire communities, conserve and improve natural resources, and strengthen the economic viability of New Hampshire, in particular agricultural, forest and marine industries.

Stakeholders are encouraged to provide input to UNH Cooperative Extension in a variety of ways across the state. One hundred-forty (140) citizen volunteers participate in county and state-wide Advisory Councils. These councils not only advise local Extension staff on the priorities of people living in the county, but also participate in hiring of new staff and performance reviews of existing staff. In addition, Extension administration meets with each of these groups regularly (face-to-face and via video conferencing) to insure stakeholder input is considered when making broad organizational issues. Further, specific groups (after school providers, small-scale livestock producers, users of soil testing services, etc.) are often consulted on program quality and direction.

UNHCE educational programs are built around a well-researched and popular model for educational program development called the logic model. Logic models have been used by many organizations as a framework for planning, implementing, evaluating, and communicating results of educational programs. UNHCE staff have been trained to develop educational programs designed to articulate long- (condition change), medium- (action) and short-term (learning) outcomes and planned activities that lead to these outcomes. In order to provide clear target performance measures for each outcome, impact indicators for most action and learning outcomes have been articulated and evaluation plans have been developed. Impact indicators are written similar to SMAART objectives (specific, measurable, audience-directed/ambitious, realistic, and time-bound) and provide a clear measure of associated outcomes.

A schematic representation of the University of New Hampshire Cooperative Extension’s program teams can be found on the following page.
Food and Agriculture — UNHCE provides support to fruit, vegetable, dairy, livestock and ornamental horticulture industries, food safety for schools, restaurants and food producers, and practical advice to home gardeners. Safe and local food production and small-scale agriculture are high priorities for UNHCE.

Natural Resources — Working closely with our many state and federal partners, UNHCE provides forest stewardship and wildlife support to landowners and municipalities; land use and water quality education; assistance to commercial fishermen; and support for trained volunteers working in their communities to protect natural resources.

Community and Economic Development

This program compliments traditional Extension programs and draws upon existing strengths to promote civic leadership, foster participation in community decision-making, strengthen entrepreneurs’ skills in value-added farming, fishing, and forestry, and enhance communities’ capacity to grow the local and regional economy.

Youth and Families - Staff provide leadership for the 4-H youth development program in all 10 counties and training for teachers, volunteers and after school providers on positive youth development, healthy living and science literacy for non-formal teaching. UNHCE also provides educational programming to vulnerable audiences on financial management, nutrition and parenting.