

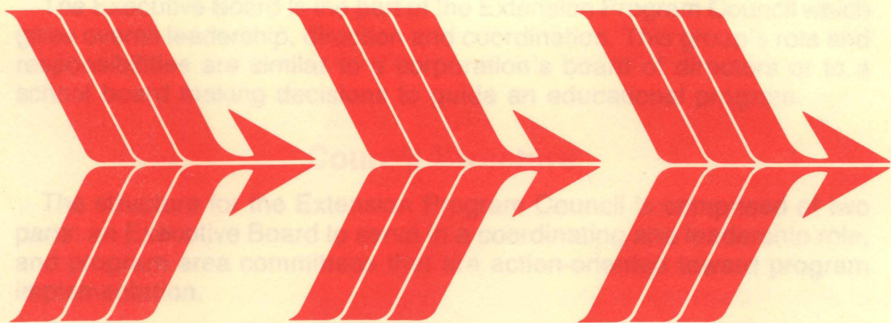
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Texas Agricultural Extension Service



Extension Program Council's Executive Board



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This leaflet describes the role of the Executive Board in the program development process for county Extension programs. The Executive Board is the highest leadership level in the Extension Program Council. The board's actions determine the organization's success from year to year.

The organizational structure for the county's Extension Program Council and responsibilities of the Executive Board as its leadership body are explained.

Extension Program Council's Executive Board



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Extension Program Council's Executive Board

Mary G. Marshall and Burl B. Richardson
Extension Program Development Specialists

The Extension Program Council works with Extension agents to plan, implement, evaluate and interpret the local educational program. Effectiveness of a county's Extension program depends on involvement of local citizens in program development.

The basic units of the Extension Program Council (page 4) are:

- Executive Board
- Program Area Committees*

The Executive Board is the part of the Extension Program Council which gives overall leadership, direction and coordination. This group's role and responsibilities are similar to a corporation's board of directors or to a school board making decisions to guide an educational program.

Council Structure

The structure for the Extension Program Council is comprised of two parts: an Executive Board to serve in a coordinating and leadership role, and program area committees that are action-oriented toward program implementation.

Extension Program Council membership entails representation of various economic, geographic and social interests as well as relevant county organizations. Within this structure are officers, other key leaders, chairpersons and members of all program area committees.

The size of the Extension Program Council is flexible, depending on the population and complexity of county concerns. Greater diversity will all for more representation of the various county/community interests.

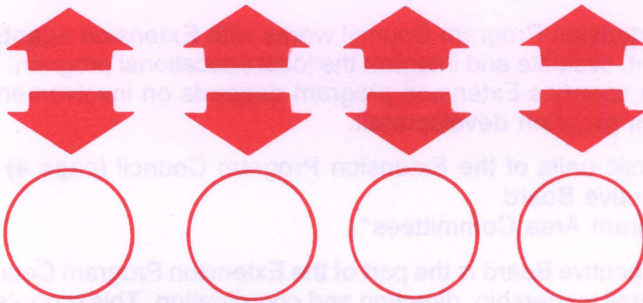
The Extension Program Council includes the Executive Board and all members of program area committees.

*The role of program area committees is explained in detail in Extension publication B-1364 *Program Area Committees*.

Extension Program Council

(12-20 people)

- officers
- program area chairpersons
- other key leaders



Program area committees as needed

The Executive Board's membership ranges from 12 to 20 people but may be larger in counties needing more representation. It has Council leadership and coordination responsibilities, while program area committees implement specific educational activities on agricultural, home economics, 4-H youth and community development issues. Program area committees also may be subdivided into short-term task forces whose primary focus may be one issue to be addressed by an intensive Extension educational program for a limited period of time. A task force is a temporary group that works under one leader for the purpose of accomplishing a specific objective; it may be dissolved after completing its assignment.

The membership of the Executive Board consists of:

- Officers (Extension Program Council chairperson, vice-chairperson and secretary, and treasurer or reporter, as needed)
- Program area committee chairpersons
- Other key leaders

Program area committee and task force members do not serve on the Executive Board but are members of the overall Extension Program Council.

The **chairperson** is responsible for the organization's operations. As organizational leader, this person presides at Council and Executive Board

meetings. The chairperson works with Extension agents to set schedules for regular and special sessions, prepare meeting agendas and encourage member participation. The chairperson assures use of standing rules and appoints members to special and program area committees. The chairperson stays informed on activities of all parts of the Council.

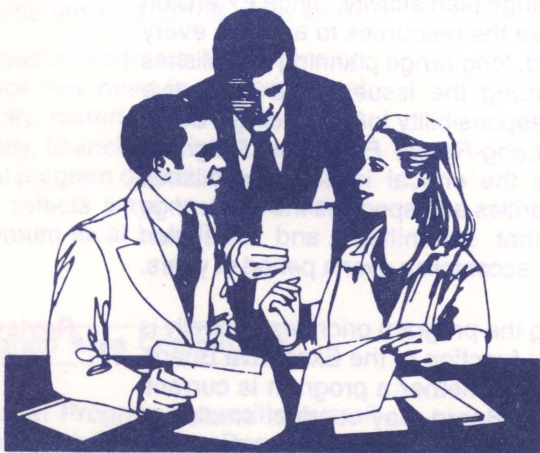
The **vice-chairperson** is principal aide to the chairperson. This individual must be familiar with duties of that office to act in the chair's absence. The vice-chairperson may also carry out special assignments as requested by the chairperson.

The **Secretary** is recording officer and maintains the group's papers. Duties include handling correspondence, keeping minutes, maintaining membership records and others as assigned.

Each **program area committee chairperson*** represents one area of interest—a specific agricultural, home economics, community development or 4-H youth committee within the Extension Program Council structure. These people provide an important link between program area committees and their issue-based task forces and the Executive Board.

Other **key leaders** represent the county's major economic, geographic, social and organizational composition. They inform the Board of programming needs and critical issues while conveying the purpose and activities of the Extension Program Council to people in their communities.

Proper representation and regular rotation on committees and in offices strengthens Extension's educational program and broadens it to meet public interest.



* See Extension publication B-1533 *Program Area Committee Chairperson* for explanation of the role and functions of this position.



Role of the Executive Board—Five Primary Functions

Keep Educational Program Current

The overall Extension educational program must be kept in tune with current interests and needs of local people. Rapid change in communities and the state requires review of present programs and anticipation of new programming possibilities.

The Executive Board needs to stay aware of activities in all parts of the Extension Program Council. It tries to be aware of community changes, critical issues, problems and trends which can affect the Extension program. Program area committee chairpersons regularly report efforts, plans and accomplishments at Executive Board meetings. Another way to stay informed is to invite local resource people to give short talks at Board meetings. Local resource people may include county and city officials, doctors, bankers, education personnel, state legislators, agency and association representatives.

Stay informed

Long-range program development guides the general direction and scope of all educational long-range plan activity. Since Extension does not have the resources to address every issue or need, long-range planning establishes priorities among the issues. The Executive Board has responsibility for producing a document, *The Long-Range Extension Program*, that defines the critical issues, establishes program priorities and specifies the long-range objectives that committees and Extension agents try to accomplish over a period of years.

Develop a long-range plan

Reviewing the program priorities annually is an important function of the Executive Board. In determining whether a program is current, the Executive Board may conduct studies or surveys to pinpoint problems and opportunities. It judges the educational programs being offered according to their success in furnishing alternatives and solutions. If needs are not being met, additions or changes are made.

Review priorities



When need for a new program area is established, the next step is to assign a standing committee or task force to plan an action program. The Executive Board, assisted by Extension agents and resource people, decides whether this need can be directed to an existing program area committee, a new program area committee, or to a special task force. It also decides how much priority the new program area has in relation to established programs.

Delegate responsibility

Occasionally, program opportunities of a special nature become available either from outside sources or because of unexpected emergency needs. Because the Extension Service is a public agency financed by federal, state and county funds, it is responsible for certain assigned educational programs initiated by legislative or executive action.

Utilize special programs

Examples of programs initiated at the national level are those designed to improve conditions of low-income people. Through congressional legislation, Extension at state and county levels develops appropriate educational programs to assist low-income families and individuals. Programs for older adults and minorities may be initiated at the state level.

With these special programs, the Extension Program Council may need to use additional program publicity, materials, resource people and, occasionally, financial assistance. In considering special program opportunities, the Executive Board selects ways to use or adapt these for maximum local benefit.

Support Program Area Committees

As the Extension Program Council's overall leadership body, the Executive Board is in a position to assist program area committees (sometimes called sub-committees). The Board can see opportunities to coordinate efforts, as well as lend additional support.

Coordinate committees

Two or more groups working together can accomplish more than the same groups working separately on related ideas, each unaware of the other's activity. Because program area committee chairpersons serve on the Executive Board, they are in a position to coordinate committee work and better utilize resource people, develop major or in-depth programs and achieve more results.

An example of this coordination involves an agribusiness committee and a beef cattle committee jointly conducting a series of educational programs on livestock marketing options. Another example is the 4-H and home economics committees jointly sponsoring an intensive effort on improving physical fitness and health of adolescents.

Provide resources

The Executive Board assists committees that need help by obtaining financial assistance, suggesting program ideas and securing appropriate resource people to help in many ways. Members of the Board can promote events by encouraging individuals and groups to take part in activities that would benefit them.

Interpret Extension Programming

Interpreting the program and organization includes two parts: informing the public and keeping members within the Extension Program Council aware of all program activity. An organization must not assume that the public or its own members fully understand its objectives and activities.

Get public support

A important interpretation task is informing key groups, individuals and the public of activities. The Executive Board is responsible for gaining public support to maintain contact with other community groups and to make the educational program more effective and well known.

Distribution and explanation of the *Long-Range Extension Program* promote

understanding of the Extension Program Council and its functions. The Executive Board decides which groups should hear about the Council's priorities and planned programming efforts and divides the task of information presentation among Executive Board members. An open house, Extension Information Day and short programs given by members to community organizations will help gain support among groups with similar objectives. This requires careful planning by the Board and Extension agents.

Another key interpretation task relates to the Extension Program Council itself. Each part of the Extension Program Council must understand and appreciate what other segments do. Activities of a specific area committee will be more successful if other program area committees support, help publicize and actively participate in them.

Effective exchange of ideas and communication are achieved within the organization at the Extension Program Council's annual meeting, which the Executive Board plans. Each program area committee is provided an opportunity to tell the Council what it has done and what is planned. Posters, slide presentations, written and verbal reports by the chairpersons are effective reporting methods.

Evaluate Progress

The Executive Board evaluates program accomplishments and the Council's structure and membership. The annual meeting is an excellent time for this.

At the annual meeting, when program area committees report on their achievements, the Executive Board is able to determine if combined results are reaching established program goals and the people for whom the programs are intended.

Communicate within

Check program results



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The Council also evaluates itself. The various components of the Extension Program Council should be staffed with active local leaders. Effective program area committees and short-term task forces should be maintained to address current issues and other needs.

Evaluate council effectiveness

Maintain a Strong Organization

The Extension Program Council delivers the county's Extension educational program to the people. The purpose is not to maintain an organization just to have one, but to ensure that the structure and membership are adequate to plan, carry out and evaluate the educational program for the people it is designed to help.

Organizational maintenance includes determining the number and types of program area committees needed. Committees divide or redefine their scope as situations change. When a need no longer exists, the Executive Board decides whether to dissolve the group or merge it with another.

Review structure

A well-run organization applies standing rules to its internal operations. In consultation with Extension agents, the Executive Board develops standing rules, updates them and diligently uses them in decision making.

Use standing rules

Organizational maintenance requires a schedule. With an organizational calendar, the Executive Board can anticipate regular meeting dates, major activities and annual meetings. Program area committees and agents can plan educational events and advance promotion of them. The schedule will prevent time conflicts and inadvertent concentration of events.

Develop a calendar

Program area committees and the Executive Board need active and interested members and chairpersons. New members vitalize and strengthen the organization while veteran members offer continuity and experience. Selection methods vary among counties.

Rotate leaders

The Council also selects the Extension Program Council, which is composed of representatives from the Extension Program Council and Extension Agents. The Council is responsible for member and officer elections and is consistent with the Council's standing.

Challenge

The Extension Program Council, together with Extension Agents and other resource people, develops programs to improve the quality of life for people in the county. The Executive Board has an important leadership role as it coordinates the various functions outlined here. An effective Extension Program Council, guided by a strong and active Executive Board, provides educational programs which are designed to give people the skills they need to survive.

Extension Agents are assigned to specific areas and are responsible for providing educational programs to the people in those areas. The Extension Program Council and Executive Board are responsible for providing the support and resources needed for the Extension Agents to do their jobs. The Extension Program Council and Executive Board are also responsible for providing the support and resources needed for the Extension Agents to do their jobs.

A well-run organization applies the principles of management to its operations. In consultation with Extension Agents, the Executive Board should develop a plan that will guide the organization's operations. The plan should include a statement of the organization's purpose, a list of the organization's goals, and a description of the organization's structure.

Organizational maintenance requires a schedule. With an organizational calendar, the Executive Board can anticipate and plan for the organization's needs. The calendar should include the dates of the organization's meetings, the dates of the organization's elections, and the dates of the organization's annual meetings. The calendar should also include the dates of the organization's major activities and the dates of the organization's major events. The calendar will help the organization to avoid conflicts and to ensure that all activities are completed on time.

Educational programs conducted by the Texas Agricultural Extension Service serve people of all ages regardless of socioeconomic level, race, color, sex, religion, handicap or national origin.

Issued in furtherance of Cooperative Extension Work in Agriculture and Home Economics. Acts of Congress of May 8, 1914, as amended, and June 30, 1914, in cooperation with the United States Department of Agriculture. Zerle L. Carpenter, Director, Texas Agricultural Extension Service, The Texas A&M University System.