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College of ACES
Cooperative Extension Service

Self-Study Guide for the New Extension Agent

Revised 10/2018

ECONOMIC AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT



College of Agricultural, Consumer and Environmental Sciences

Self-Study Guide for the New Extension Agent

Welcome to the Extension family. You have joined a group of dedicated professionals who enjoy helping people through educational programs in the areas of agriculture, community development, 4-H youth development, Natural Resources and Family & Consumer Sciences. This self-study guide is designed to help the county Extension agent as a newly employed member of the New Mexico State University Cooperative Extension Service. It is an organized plan of observation and participation under the guidance of experienced Extension personnel, usually a County Director and/or District Extension Department Head (District Director).

You will be expected to complete this assignment within **six** months of the time you are employed. Time and effort will be required on your part to complete this guide. As you complete an activity, fill in the guide. It is not necessary for you to follow the guide according to page order.

Furthermore, some areas may not apply directly to you (for example, if you are a new FCS agent, you do not need to know everything about agriculture, although having some understanding of key contacts may be helpful).

Experience has proven the value of this training activity. Your County Director will work with you concerning reference material as well as other assistance you may need as you complete this assignment. When you have completed this self-study guide, please submit it to your District Extension Department Head for review and evaluation. Best wishes to you as you complete this self-study guide and begin your career as a County Extension Agent.

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Name:

Title:

County:

Address:

Date Received:

Date Completed:

UNDERSTANDING YOUR NEW ROLE

You've applied, interviewed, and been selected to fill the role of Extension agent which means you probably have some understanding of your new position; but be prepared! Extension work extends far beyond sharing research based information within your community. As an Extension agent you are a: *teacher, public speaker, "expert", negotiator, problem solver, relationship builder, curriculum developer, community leader, event planner, publicity person, team player, researcher, collaborator, and representative of New Mexico State University*. Above all, an Extension agent is a **public servant** who strives to improve the lives and well-being of all people they are to serve.

For more information about agent responsibilities visit <https://aces.nmsu.edu/employee/> and click on 'Agent Position Expectations'.

NM EDGE PROGRAM FOR NEW AGENTS

To assist you in gaining further understanding of your new role and the history of the Cooperative Extension Service, new Extension agents are required to receive certification as an Extension professional. This certification is offered through NM EDGE, a program designed to provide a comprehensive course of study to administrators, managers, elected officials, and staff in local, state, tribal, and national government, through which participants acquire and apply the best practices and theory to their management behaviors and strategies using the highest professional standards.

NM EDGE classes for Extension professionals are typically offered during CES in-service (usually held in January, every other year). Additional classes are provided throughout the year in various locations. Your County Director or District Director will provide more information about your participation in NM EDGE classes.

For general information about the NM EDGE program visit <http://edge.nmsu.edu/> or call (575)646-0315 (Albuquerque) or (575)646-4304 (Las Cruces)

For an updated NM EDGE class schedule visit <http://nmedge.nmsu.edu/upcoming-classes.html>

To review required classes for new Extension agents visit <http://nmedge.nmsu.edu/documents/nm-certified-extension-professional-checklist-jan-1-2015.pdf>



COUNTY BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Having knowledge of the population, geography, and economic situation for the county in which you will be serving is very important. This information is commonly referred to as background information and provides an overview of current situation in your county. Along with background information, it is important to understand the communication media in your county. Establishing relationships with local media is crucial for promoting upcoming programs and spreading the word on Extension activities. Let's begin with some suggested references for completing this section.

SUGGESTED REFERENCES

- Current U.S. agricultural and population reports.
www.census.gov
fedstats.sites.usa.gov/
www.usda.gov/
- Office file on background information (if available)
- College of Agriculture, Consumer, and Environmental Sciences Strategic Plan.
<http://aces.nmsu.edu/strategicplan/welcome.html>
- County major program plans.
<http://aces.nmsu.edu/employee/>
- New Mexico agricultural statistics.
<http://www.nmda.nmsu.edu/>
<http://www.nass.usda.gov/nm/>

PEOPLE WHO CAN HELP YOU

- Other Extension personnel <http://aces.nmsu.edu/county/>
- Your District Department Head
- County school superintendents/principals/teachers
- Director, president or members of community organizations, such as: the local Chamber of Commerce, Rotary, Kiwanis, Women in Business, Civitans, etc.
- Officers and members of your County Extension Advisory Committee(s) on file in each county office.
- Farm Service Agency office manager <http://www.fsa.usda.gov>
- Key community/organization leaders

Using the resources provided above, complete this section for your county.

A. GENERAL INFORMATION

- Number of households _____
- Trend (increase or decrease) _____
- Person per household _____
- Trend (increase or decrease) _____
- Educational level (median school years completed) _____
- Number of single parent households _____
- Infant mortality rate _____
- Number of families with children under 6 yrs. of age _____
- Number of families with children under 18 yrs. of age _____
- School dropout rate _____
- Unemployment rate _____
- Number of people who own their home _____
- Number of people living below the poverty level _____
- Literacy rate _____
- Percent of people with diabetes _____
- Leading causes of health related death _____

B. POPULATION INFORMATION

- Total county population _____
- Number of towns/villages _____
- Percent of population over 65 years _____
- Percent of population under 18 years _____
- Number of children ages 9-19 _____
- Number of children ages 8 and under _____

C. ECONOMIC INFORMATION

Annual total gross income from all sources \$ _____

Amount and percent of county annual income from:

	Amount	Percent
Oil and gas	\$ _____	_____ %
Business	_____	_____
Industry	_____	_____
Recreation/tourism	_____	_____
Government (except military)	_____	_____
Military	_____	_____
Other Revenue _____	_____	_____

Major employers in the county:

D. EXTENSION REACH WITHIN COUNTY

Number of 4-H clubs within county _____

Total number of 4-H members _____

Total number of 4-H adult leaders _____

Number of Extension Association (EANM) clubs in county _____

Number of EANM members _____

Number of Master Gardeners _____

Number of Master Food Preservationists _____

E. MEDIA OUTLETS

Number/names of local newspapers (if applicable)

Number/names of local radio stations (if applicable)

Does your county generate a newsletter? _____ If so, how often is it published? _____
Is it emailed or printed? _____ Where can you find the most current newsletter?

Does your county have social media accounts? If so, how many and where can you access them? _____
What is your county's website address? _____

F. WRITE A PARAGRAPH ABOUT THE HISTORY AND DEVELOPMENT OF THE COUNTY

G. WHAT'S YOUR COUNTY'S STORY? WHAT IS IT KNOWN FOR? WHAT MAKES IT UNIQUE?

H. AGRICULTURAL INFORMATION (Ag Agent only needs to complete)

Number of farms and ranches	_____
Number of farm or ranch owners	_____
Number of farm or ranch tenants	_____
Number of farmers with majority of income from off farm jobs	_____
Average size of farm or ranch	_____
Percentage of family owned farms or ranches	_____
Rural non-farm population	_____
Land area of county (square miles)	_____
Acres in:	
Forests	_____
Pasture or improved range, native grassland	_____
Cultivation	_____
Topography	_____
Types of soil	_____
Elevation	_____
Average annual rainfall	_____
Last frost date (spring)	_____

First frost date (fall) _____

Length of growing season _____

Major Crops:

Agriculture (list major agricultural producers/farms/ranches in the county)

Name of enterprise	Amount	Percent
_____	\$ _____	_____ %
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____

Total agricultural enterprises in county\$ _____

ORGANIZATION AND PERSONNEL

An Extension agent needs to understand how the New Mexico Extension Service is organized at the state and county levels and the responsibilities of his or her particular job. It is also important to be acquainted with organizations in the county that assist with carrying out the county program.

SUGGESTED REFERENCES

- CES website <http://extension.nmsu.edu/index.html>
- Extension County Map <http://aces.nmsu.edu/county/docs/ces%20map.pdf>
- Organizational chart <https://aces.nmsu.edu/employee/> (found under directories)
- Extension agents by county <http://aces.nmsu.edu/county/>
- ACES personal directory <http://aces.nmsu.edu/directory>
- Agent and Specialist Position Expectations <https://aces.nmsu.edu/employee/>

A. GENERAL INFORMATION ABOUT NMSU CES

Name the individuals who hold the following NM Extension Administrative positions:

Extension Directory Link: <http://aces.nmsu.edu/county/>

Position	Name
Associate Dean & Director	
Associate Director	
Ag. Economics Department Head	
Plant & Environmental Sciences Department Head	
Animal Science & Natural Resources Dept. Head	
Family & Consumer Sciences Dept. Head	
4-H and Youth Department Head	
Business and Resource Planning, Director	
Computer Operations, Manager	
Media Productions, Department Head	

Complete the following:

CES homepage: <http://extension.nmsu.edu/>

- a. The state headquarters for NM Extension is located in_____.
- b. For organizational management purposes, New Mexico is divided into _____Extension Districts.
- c. The headquarters for your district is located in_____.
- d. The name of your district Extension Department Head is_____.

Names and titles of **Extension Specialists** for you programming area(s) include:

Name	Title
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

B. GENERAL INFORMATION ABOUT YOUR JOB

Become acquainted with the following:

1. History, development, objectives and characteristics of the Cooperative Extension Service

References: Taking the University to the People, Wayne D. Rasmussen, Chapters (Check with you District Director)

Land-Grant universities and Extension into the 21st Century, George R. McDowell (Check with your District Director)

<http://aces.nmsu.edu/historyportal/>

Questions/Remarks: _____

2. Job description: Study your job description to learn your responsibilities.

References: *County Extension Agents Current Job Description & Position Description*

<http://aces.nmsu.edu/employee/>

Questions/Remarks: _____

3. Performance appraisal: Study the performance appraisal system for county

Extension agents. _____

Extension reporting utilizes Digital Measures

<http://digitalmeasures.nmsu.edu/how-do-i/performance-evaluation/>

Questions/Remarks: _____

4. Promotion & Tenure (P&T): Study P&T guidelines for county extension agents

Reference: <http://aces.nmsu.edu/employee/>

Questions/Remarks: _____

5. Professional development

- a. Become familiar with various professional associations relevant to your work
Reference the following:
- National Association of Extension 4-H Agents (NAE4-HA)
<https://nae4ha.com/>
 - Extension Association of New Mexico (EANM)
<https://aces.nmsu.edu/ces/eanm/index.html>
 - New Mexico Association of County Agricultural Agents (NMACAA)
<https://aces.nmsu.edu/nmacaa/index.html>
 - New Mexico Extension Association of Family and Consumer Science (NMEAFCS)
<https://aces.nmsu.edu/nmeafcs/index.html>
 - The National Extension Association of Family and Consumer Sciences (NEAFCS)
<https://www.neafcs.org/>
- b. Become familiar with NMSU CES publications which can assist you in your work
<http://aces.nmsu.edu/pubs/howto/howto.html>
- c. Read and become familiar with the following material:
NMSU Resources for Faculty & Staff: System Access, Campus Services, Employee Resources and Faculty Resources (Search option is a useful tool)
<http://facultystaff.nmsu.edu/>

Questions/Remarks: _____

6. Civil Rights: Gain knowledge of civil rights (equal employment opportunity/affirmative action) policies and regulations.

<http://aces.nmsu.edu/ces/civilrights/>

<https://eeo.nmsu.edu/affirmative/>

Where are the civil rights files kept in your county office?

Questions/Remarks: _____

C. INFORMATION ON COUNTY ORGANIZATIONS AND KEY LEARDERS

Use the following outline to obtain information about organizations and individuals in the county. Write, "does not apply" in blanks where condition does not exit.

1. Extension Agents

Name	Title	Major job responsibility

2. Extension Administrative Assistants

Name	Major job responsibility

3. County Extension Advisory Committee

Names of members (make a copy and attach it to this guidebook)

4. County Commissioners/ County Manager

Name	Address
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

5. State legislators

<https://www.nmlegis.gov/>

Name	Title	Address
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____

6. U.S. Congressional Representatives and Senators

<http://www.newmexico.gov/government/Representatives.aspx>

Name	Title	Address
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____

7. County 4-H Council

	Name	Address
Chair	_____	_____
Vice-chair	_____	_____
Secretary	_____	_____
Treasurer	_____	_____

8. FCE and /or Extension Association of NM (EANM) Council

<http://www.aces.nmsu.edu/ccs/eann/>

	Name	Address
Chair	_____	_____
Vice-chair	_____	_____
Secretary	_____	_____
Treasurer	_____	_____

9. FSA (Farm Service Agency) office manager

Name

Location of office

10. FSA (Farm Service Agency) county committee (chairman)

Name

Address

11. NRCS (National Resource Conservation Service) Personnel

Name

Title

Location of office

Name	Title	Location of office

12. NRCS (National Resource Conservation Service) Board of Supervisors

Name

Title

Area Represented

Name	Title	Area Represented

13. Public/Private schools

School

Superintendent

Principal

School	Superintendent	Principal

14. Vocational agriculture/FFA departments/programs

Location

Teacher

Location	Teacher

15. FCS/Child Development/Young parenting, etc. debarments/programs

Location	Teachers

16. Local growers'/Farmer markets

Name	Market Manager	Location held

17. Major farmer cooperatives in the county

Name of cooperative	Manager

18. Key leaders of organized livestock or crop associations in the county

Organization	Name	Address

19. Key leaders of major farm organizations in the county

Organization	Name	Address

20. Executives or key leaders of major organizations and agencies in the county working with families

Organization	Name	Address

21. Executives or major organizations in the county working with youth

Organization	Name	Address

22. Executives of Chambers of Commerce in the county

Organization	Name	Address

23. Mayors, city managers and members of city council

Name	Title	City

24. Officers or other key leaders in major civic organizations in the county

Organization	Name	Address

25. Officers or key leaders in other professional organizations or special interest groups in the county

Organization	Name	Address

26. Names of foundations that reside in the county (source of program funds)

Foundation	Name	Address

REPORTS AND RECORDS

Schedule time to examine the reports and records for which Extension agents are responsible. You will participate in making reports and keeping records.

A. Reports	Date Completed	Questions/Remarks
Plans of Work https://digitalmeasures.nmsu.edu/	_____	_____
Impact Reports (insert w/ plans of work) https://digitalmeasures.nmsu.edu/	_____	_____
Annual Performance Evaluation http://aces.nmsu.edu/employee/	_____	_____
Allocation of Effort http://aces.nmsu.edu/employee/pt/documents/allocation-of-effort.pdf	_____	_____
Conflict of Interest https://hr.nmsu.edu/coi/	_____	_____

Annual Reporting information can be found at <https://aces.nmsu.edu/employee/>

B. Forms to be reviewed with your County Director or District Department Head

Leave Request	_____	_____
Agent out of County	_____	_____

Additional HR forms can be found at: <https://www.nmsu.edu/inside/>

FORMS or REORTS specific to your county office or district:

GETTING THE JOB DONE

This section covers things an employee must know and understand to accomplish the day-to-day job of being a county Extension agent. Observe & record date when completed and indicate questions/remarks, if any.

A. OFFICE MANAGEMENT	Date Completed
1. Observe office equipment and arrangement.	_____
2. Study organization of files and uniform filing guide.	_____
3. Observe techniques used in answering and relaying telephone calls.	_____
4. Observe county director's/co-workers techniques in talking to an office visitor. Participate in office visits.	_____
5. Observe county director's /co-workers techniques for responding to email from clientele	_____
6. Develop a personal calendar for a year in advance	_____
7. Learn system for reserving rooms in your building, using state vehicles, management of credit card receipts, requesting time off, calling in sick, covering office, communicating with co-workers about daily work tasks and programs (if applicable)	_____
B. STAFF CONFERENCE/MEETING	Date Completed
1. Participate in regular staff meetings with county personnel.	_____
2. Observe the use of a county calendar in an office conference	_____
C. FARM AND HOME VISITS OR OTHER PERSONAL CONTACTS	
1. Make several farm and home visits or other personal contacts with the county director/co-worker and observe procedures and techniques	_____
2. Make some visits or contacts alone	_____
3. Write a paragraph or outline the procedures for making effective farm and home visit or other personal contacts	_____

D. LETTERS AND MAILING POLICIES**Date Completed**

1. Individual
 - a. Observe agent's incoming mail for one day, assist agent in answering mail _____
 - b. Study correct business letter form _____

2. Circular letter
 - a. Read and analyze some recent circular letters written by agents in your county _____
 - b. Write a circular letter for the county director's/ _____
 - c. co/worker's to critique _____

3. Attach one copy of circular letter written by an individual and one copy written by you.

E. PUBLICATIONS AND VISUAL AID**Date Completed**

1. Find out how state, USDA and commercial publications are obtained. _____

2. Determine how publications are distributed in the county _____

3. Observe how current publications are displayed or kept current and how supply is maintained _____

4. Learn how movies, charts, books, pictures, or other educational materials are obtained. _____

5. Learn how your county office uses social media, who updates websites, and the procedure for requesting changes or additions to social media _____

6. Familiarize yourself with your county website. View other county websites throughout the state to view programming efforts and to acquaint yourself with your Extension colleagues _____

F. DEVELOPING PROMOTIONAL MATERIALS**Date Completed**

1. Read the ACES Guidelines and FAQs
<http://aces.nmsu.edu/branding/guidelines.html> _____

2. Familiarize yourself with ACES Template
<http://aces.nmsu.edu/branding/templates.html> _____

3. Visit the ACES Branding Home page
<http://aces.nmsu.edu/branding/guidelines.html> _____

G. NEWSPAPER ARTICLES**Date Completed**

1. Get acquainted with newspaper editor. Fine out what makes a good news article _____
2. Read agricultural or family and consumer sciences articles from your county and surrounding counties _____
3. List aids available from Media Productions on news writing and visual aids.
<http://mediaproductions.nmsu.edu/presentations.html>

H. RADIO AND TELEVISION**Date Completed**

1. Observe on or more radio and television programs presented by agents (if applicable) _____
2. Participate in a radio or television broadcast if possible _____

I. MEETINGS**Date Completed**

1. Observe the different kinds of meetings the agents in the county took part in during your training period. Participate, if possible. _____
2. Observe parliamentary procedure used in conducting meetings. _____
3. Write a brief statement setting forth the factors which made one of the meetings you attended successful or unsuccessful. _____

J. EDUCATIONAL PRESENTATIONS**Date Completed**

1. Observe educational demonstrations. Include 4-H family and consumer sciences, and agriculture _____
2. Prepare and present a method of demonstrations before a group _____

K. RESULT DEMONSTRATIONS**Date Completed**

1. Learn a definition for result demonstration _____
2. Visit results demonstrations. Include 4-H, FCS, and agriculture _____

- 3. Prepare a proposal to develop and conduct a result demonstration group _____

L. OTHER TEACHING METHODS

Date Completed

- 1. Discuss other teaching methods _____

WRITE A PARAGRAPH OR AN OUTLINE GIVING AN ACCOUNT OF METHOD DEMONSTRATION IN WHICH YOU PARTICIPATED OR OBSERVED

M. WRITE A PARAGRAPH OR AN OUTLINE GIVING AN ACCOUNT OF A RESULTS DEMONSTRATION IN WHICH YOU PARTICIPATED OR THAT ANOTHER AGENT IS CONDUCTING

N. 4-H ORGANIZATION

Date Completed

- 1. Become familiar with the NMSU 4-H website, <http://aces.nmsu.edu/4h/> _____
- 2. Study and observe how to conduct 4-H meetings _____
- 3. Meet with 4-H club leaders _____
- 4. Participate in a 4-H Council meeting _____

**O. VOLUNTEER 4-H LEADER RECRUITMENT/
TRAINING****Date Completed**

1. Learn the responsibilities of agents in volunteer 4-H leader recruitment and training _____
2. Assist in a club leader leadership training meeting conducted by an agent _____
3. Assist in a project leader's training meeting _____
4. Observe material another agent presents and his or her methods of presentation _____
5. Learn the responsibilities of volunteer leaders in carrying out a specific program, such as agriculture or FCS _____
6. Observe how adult, junior and teen leaders work with 4-H members _____
7. Study 4-H volunteer leader teaching guides _____
8. Learn how recognition should be given to volunteer leaders _____
9. Study and observe the Leader's 4-H Association _____
10. State in your own words why you think it is important for Extension agents to recruit and train volunteer 4-H leaders _____

P. 4-H PROJECTS

1. Learn the kinds of projects available for 4-H members. <http://aces.nmsu.edu/4h/projects/index.html> _____
2. Learn how to deliver programs to short-term groups through school enrichment and special interest projects _____

Q. 4-H AWARD PROGRAMS

1. Become acquainted with the available 4-H award programs and their requirements _____
2. Assist with county and district 4-H award programs _____

Write or attach any other information you think would reflect the extent of training received. Please include what further training you feel you need.

Congratulations!!!

Welcome to NMSU Cooperative Extension Service

