



EXTENSION

2017-2018 Needs Assessment Local Government Officials Statewide Summary

Introduction

NC State Extension’s 2017-2018 needs assessment process incorporates a multi-method approach to collecting county trend data and stakeholder input related to educational and service needs in agriculture, nutrition and health, youth development, and community and rural development. The stakeholder group of interest in the local government officials phase of data collection is County Managers and County Commissioners. Input from County Managers was collected in a twofold manner; District Extension Directors conducted face-to-face interviews with County Managers using a semi-structured interview, and County Managers completed an electronic survey. Input from County Commissioners was collected through an electronic survey. Commissioner and Manager surveys were received from 191 county leaders representing 63 of North Carolina’s 100 counties and 79 County Managers were interviewed. Information from local government officials is provided to state Extension leadership in aggregate form to guide statewide program planning efforts and provided in disaggregated form to County Extension Directors to guide county level planning.

Overall Satisfaction with Extension Services

County leaders were asked to identify their level of satisfaction with programs and services provided by Extension. Over half of Managers and Commissioners are extremely satisfied and cumulatively over 90% are either moderately or extremely satisfied.

Satisfaction with the programs and services provided by Extension (n=153)

Extremely satisfied	66.0%
Moderately satisfied	27.5%
Slightly satisfied	1.3%
Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	3.9%
Moderately dissatisfied	1.3%

County Managers disclosed a number of things Extension does well such as “serving the boots on the ground agriculture business community and keeping them viable.” In addition, County Managers find that “the staff are recognized as experts in their field” and conduct activities that “are very well planned and received well by the community.” County Extension offices are said to be “very adaptable and flexible to the local needs which sometime change quickly,” and that “Extension has made certain that programming stays relevant in the ever-changing world/county. You stay true to serving the community in which you exist.”

During interviews with County Managers some issues surfaced which provide opportunities for improvement in Extension services. One area that was noted by multiple Managers centered around the budget for Extension and the county share for Extension operations. “Extension statewide needs to consider continuing to look at the model they have created to determine if it is effective.” Especially in small rural counties, the county share of the Extension budget strains county expenditures. As one Manager stated, the “state needs to stop dumping on counties by decreasing state funding and expecting counties

to pay the cost of state regulated programs. The programs offered should be funded by the state.” County Managers also expressed concern about Extension staffing. It was noted that there are not enough county based positions, positions are not filled in a timely manner and are not always filled by quality candidates. A Manager felt that “not enough programs are offered because of lack of capacity due to limited staff in the county.” In response to this issue, some managers expressed the need to increase staff levels as well as raise the salaries of county Extension staff. It was asserted that counties are “losing good staff because of salary.” It is necessary to “bring salaries up to market to keep good staff.”

A second area of concern surrounds the need to better market Extension programs. It was noted that many county residents are not aware of Extension programs or think Extension and 4-H only offer agricultural programs. “Extension needs to ensure that the community at large who doesn’t regularly interact with them understands the resources and services that are offered.” Extension staff need to deliberately work to reach a wider, more diverse audience. Agents and county staff “need to be aware of changing demographics.” This includes improving outreach to Latino populations. A concern was raised that “Extension is missing the segment of the population that do not actively seek out their programs and services.” One of the ways Extension can improve outreach efforts is to “just increase and improve on communication, visibility and telling our story.”

A concern was raised that “currently, the service demands and curriculum is larger than the local staff available to provide. The Extension/County relationship is ultimately about service delivery on the ground - how and who does it is not the issue.” It is essential for Extension to increase the number of partnerships as well as foster existing partnerships with other county and community agencies. One Manager identified that “Cooperative Extension has to step up and be a partner in the community and in the county.” This includes “coordinating activities and communications with other county agencies to reach a wider audience and coordinate offerings.” It is important that Extension is aware of other programs available in the community and not to duplicate existing services. Finally, in several instances Managers noted the need to “improve the relationship between Extension and county government - strengthening our internal bond.” In some counties, it was observed that Extension “removes itself from most county functions.” By strengthening relationships and partnerships, Extension can have a greater impact on the community.

Extension/County Alignment

Surveys of county leadership examined Extension’s alignment with county goals and the impact and effectiveness of Extension. County leaders view Extension as being in alignment with county goals, making positive impacts, being effective and efficient and adding value to the community. The areas where Extension has the most room for growth include reaching the right audience and sharing important research based information with people who might not access it otherwise.

Agreement with statements about Extension (n=148)

	Yes	Somewhat	No
Aligns with our goals/vision	82.4%	16.9%	0.7%
Reaches the right audience	68.9%	29.1%	2.0%
Makes positive impacts	89.9%	8.8%	1.4%
Is an effective organization	81.4%	11.6%	3.4%
Is an efficient organization	83.6%	14.4%	2.1%
Is cost effective	82.2%	15.8%	2.1%
Adds value to our community	91.9%	7.4%	0.7%
Shares important research based information with people who might not access it otherwise	79.1%	18.9%	2.0%

Communication

County leaders identified their preferred methods of receiving information from Extension. The table below shows that the top three methods are the annual presentation, electronic newsletters, and personal contact.

*Preferred method of contact (n=151)**

Annual Presentation/Report to the People	57.6%
Electronic Newsletters or Reports	55.0%
Personal Contact from Extension Staff	51.7%
Printed Newsletters or Reports	33.1%
Input from Citizens	20.5%
Extension Website	18.5%
News Reports about Extension Efforts	16.6%
Social Media Posts from Extension	11.9%

Most Important Extension Program/Service

In an effort to gauge what is perceived to be the most valued work performed by Extension, County Manager interviews began with the question; *What would you identify as the one Extension program or service that you believe is the most important in your county and why is this such an important program or service?*[†]

Agriculture and 4-H/Youth Development were broadly identified as the two most important Extension programs or services offered. It was noted that these are the programs that “Extension is known for and people depend on.”

Out of the 79 County Managers interviewed, 51 identified agriculture as most important. Within Agriculture, educational programs for producers were identified as important programs offered by Extension. It was noted that educational programs need to incorporate information on research-based practices and agrotechnology. During the interviews, multiple County Managers discussed the importance and economic impact of agriculture in their county. As such, many comments focused on Extension programs and services for helping farmers improve their profitability, production practices, diversification of production, and increasing agribusiness and agritourism opportunities.

4-H and youth development programs were identified by 41 of the 79 County Managers interviewed as important Extension programs. Programs to encourage youth interest in agriculture and to promote the next generation of farmers were identified as important since youth “need to see that there is a future here in the county for them.” A number of County Managers stated that 4-H is one of the few youth development programs in their county and stressed the importance of 4-H afterschool programs and summer camps especially for limited resource families. Other County Managers stated that 4-H is important in their county because there is a lack of programs to teach leadership and civic engagement. It was noted that youth have too much free time and it is important to have productive activities to participate in.

Nutrition, including health and wellness and obesity prevention was identified by 7 of the 79 Managers as important programs offered by Extension. County Managers consider obesity and related diseases as problems resulting from a “lack of access to healthy choices due to poverty and transportation.”

* Multiple methods could be selected

† Note: Some County Managers indicated more than one “most important” program

Agriculture and Food

A core program area for NC State Extension is agriculture and food production. Information to guide future programming in this program area was gathered from County Managers and Commissioners through interviews and surveys. County Manager interviews sought to identify the most important agricultural and food production challenges facing the counties as well as what future priorities Extension should focus on. The most frequently cited agricultural or food production challenge, as seen in the word cloud below, centers around farmland which includes the loss of farmland, farmland preservation, and the cost of farmland. Farmland challenges were mentioned by 27 of the Managers during the interviews. It was noted that “land prices are going to become too high to be able to farm on.” Furthermore, “there is always tension between keeping things as is and development. Investing and planning for the future is difficult but essential.” It is important to be “mindful of the tension between population growth and maintaining agriculture land.”

The second most identified challenges are in the areas of farm profitability (mentioned in 11 interviews) and the need for farms to diversify production (mentioned in 15 interviews) as well as for farm operators to increase farm business skills (mentioned in 8 interviews). Farms must explore value-added opportunities such as new products, agritourism, and new markets to maintain profitability. Extension needs to be “providing entrepreneurial business and growers with the expertise to be successful.”

Another set of challenges centers around the aging farmer population, the need to expand the number of next generation farmers, and provide support to beginning farmers and small farms (mentioned in 23 interviews). “Many farmers in the county are older and younger people either do not have interest in farming or cannot afford the upfront cost to begin farming.” It is also a concern that “farming is not a family business as in the past.”



Along with challenges, County Managers identified future priorities in agriculture and food production. Supply chain related issues were identified as critical future priorities for Extension. Included in this domain, Extension should prioritize providing farms and related businesses with assistance related to marketing, distribution and sales of agricultural and value-added products. This includes connecting the grower to market and consumer, identifying and cultivating new markets, identifying modes of transportation of products to market, enhancing support to niche and small to medium size growers, and improving the local food supply chain. Future priorities for Extension should also include assisting farms and agribusinesses with increasing profitability by educating farmers with business management skills. Extension should

prioritize the need to assist farms with diversification of production and the transition to specialty crops and niche products. Extension programs should provide research-based data, best practices, technology, and production practices for clientele. Horticulture will continue to be important and programs to assist both commercial horticulture as well as the backyard gardener should be a priority.

Future Priorities in Agriculture and Food Production



Surveys of county leaders (County Managers and Commissioners) included questions asking about the need for various agriculture and food production programs and services as well as whether Extension should be the organization providing the program or service. Leadership responses and the identification of programs that are highly needed are provide in the two tables that follow.

Several programs/services were identified by over 75 percent of county leaders as being highly needed. These programs/services include: supporting profitable production of row crops, small grains, livestock, poultry, and commercial fruit, vegetable, greenhouse and nursery crops; addressing the economics of agricultural production, marketing, processing, and sale; growing and improving the local food systems from local production to local marketing and consumption; promoting effective pest management, including pest, disease, and weed identification, treatment, and pesticide safety education programs; and promoting safe production and processing of food to prevent food contamination and food borne illness.

Extension was also identified as the organization that should be the provider of several programs/services by over 75 percent of county leaders. These programs/services include: supporting profitable production of row crops, small grains, livestock, poultry, and commercial fruit, vegetable, greenhouse and nursery crops; addressing the economics of agricultural production, marketing, processing, and sale; growing and improving the local food systems from local production to local marketing and consumption; promoting effective pest management, including pest, disease, and weed identification, treatment, and pesticide safety education programs; and promoting safe production and processing of food to prevent food contamination and food borne illness.

There is a high degree of overlap in the programs identified as highly needed and those that extension should provide. This indicates that county leaders believe supporting profitable production of row crops, small grains, livestock, poultry, and commercial fruit, vegetable, greenhouse and nursery crops; addressing

the economics of agricultural production, marketing, processing, and sale; growing and improving the local food systems from local production to local marketing and consumption; promoting effective pest management, including pest, disease, and weed identification, treatment, and pesticide safety education programs; and promoting safe production and processing of food to prevent food contamination and food borne illness are highly needed programs/services and Extension is the organization that should be providing the program/service.

Agriculture & Food	Program/Service Needed in County			Program/Service Should be Provided by Extension		
	Percent/Count	Highly Needed	Somewhat Needed	Little or No Need	Definitely Should	Somewhat Should
Programs/services that support profitable production of row crops, small grains, livestock, poultry, and commercial fruit, vegetable, greenhouse and nursery crops.	90.4% 169	8.6% 16	1.1% 2	91.7% 155	8.3% 14	0.0% 0
Programs/services that address the economics of agricultural production, marketing, processing, and sale.	86.1% 161	11.8% 22	2.1% 4	84.6% 143	14.8% 25	0.6% 1
Programs/services that grow and improve the local food systems from local production to local marketing and consumption.	82.4% 154	15.5% 29	2.1% 4	81.5% 137	18.5% 31	0.0% 0
Programs/services that support opportunities for organic producers.	47.3% 87	45.1% 83	7.6% 14	58.4% 97	38.6% 64	3.0% 5
Programs/services for commercial management of landscapes, lawns, parks, trees, and sports turf.	36.2% 64	49.2% 87	14.7% 26	45.9% 73	44.0% 70	10.1% 16
Programs/services for consumers on gardening, landscape maintenance, and food production.	57.0% 102	37.4% 67	5.6% 10	64.6% 106	32.3% 53	3.0% 5
Programs/services providing aquaculture growers the information they need to continue growth of this industry.	50.9% 85	27.5% 46	21.6% 36	58.4% 87	34.2% 51	7.4% 11
Programs/services that promote effective pest management, including pest, disease, and weed identification, treatment, and pesticide safety education programs.	77.2% 142	22.3% 41	0.5% 1	84.2% 139	15.8% 26	0.0% 0
Programs/services focused on nutrient management, air and water quality, soil erosion, biofuels, stormwater, and animal waste management.	71.0% 130	25.7% 47	3.3% 6	66.7% 110	29.1% 48	4.2% 7
Programs/services to promote safe production and processing of food to prevent food contamination and food borne illness.	75.5% 139	19.6% 36	4.9% 9	75.8% 125	20.0% 33	4.2% 7
Programs/services that assist farmers and agricultural industry be prepared for emergency/disaster situations and to plan for such events.	70.4% 131	25.3% 47	4.3% 8	70.9% 117	25.5% 42	3.6% 6

	Low	Need for Program or Service	High
High	Extension Should Provide Service		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Support profitable production of row crops, small grains, livestock, poultry, and commercial fruit, vegetable, greenhouse and nursery crops - Address the economics of agricultural production, marketing, processing, and sale - Grow and improve the local food systems from local production to local marketing and consumption - Promote effective pest management, including pest, disease, and weed identification, treatment, and pesticide safety education programs - Promote safe production and processing of food to prevent food contamination and food borne illness
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Support opportunities for organic producers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - For consumers on gardening, landscape maintenance, and food production - Providing aquaculture growers the information they need to continue growth of this industry - Focused on nutrient management, air and water quality, soil erosion, biofuels, stormwater, and animal waste management
Low		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - For commercial management of landscapes, lawns, parks, trees, and sports turf 	

Note: *Need* is measured by the percent responding that the program or service is highly needed. *Extension Should Provide Service* is measured by the percent responding that Extension definitely should be the organization providing the program or service. *High* is defined as 75% or more respondents, *Moderate* is defined as 50%-74% of respondents, and *Low* is defined as less than 50% of respondents.

Health & Nutrition

The second core program area for NC State Extension is health and nutrition. County Manager interviews revealed the long-term health challenges of poor diets and inactivity, specifically obesity, diabetes, heart disease and ultimately high health care costs. It was suggested that “many people do not even know they are eating unhealthy. So, they do not attend programs.” It is difficult “getting people to change bad habits.”

A challenge in the area of health and nutrition that needs to be overcome is healthy eating (mentioned 25 times). Processed food is quicker, cheaper, and easier (mentioned 7 times). In addition, more meals are eaten away from home (mentioned 13 times), meaning people are consuming more processed foods and less healthy, nutritious foods. People are increasingly busy and don't take the time to cook healthy meals (mentioned 10 times). As stated by one Manager “people need to understand the importance of family meal time (whatever the family dynamic may be), and preparing/eating meals at home. I believe the combination of how we as a society work more hours, and the fast past environment have created this idea that food is a second thought. People don't put as much emphasis on planning and cooking their own meals because it takes too much time.”

The cost and accessibility of healthy food options is also a challenge (mentioned 25 and 23 times respectively). A number of County Managers commented on the fact that the cheapest foods are not always the healthiest foods. Even when people have the knowledge to make good food choices “having affordable fruits and vegetables available to our residents” is an ongoing challenge when “we do not have the source of good, healthy food to select from.” Accessing healthy food is also a challenge for this population who often get their food from small, higher priced convenient stores that offer less variety of healthy food choices. Residents in rural counties were noted to have food deserts, high rates of poverty and the lack of access to fresh foods.

Most Important Health and Nutrition Challenge



According to County Managers, the future priorities for Extension in regard to health and nutrition include educating people on nutrition (24 mentions) including the benefits of healthy eating (19 mentions), how to select, prepare, and preserve foods safely (38 mentions). In addition, it is important to work with schools and youth to help establish healthy eating habits at a young age (mentioned 11 times). It was identified as important for extension to help people with being “preventative versus fixing their health later.” A number of managers commented on the need for teaching families how to make quick and easy meals, “they are

not going to spend time cooking so how do they eat fast and healthy.” In the future Extension will need to “continue to encourage people to take advantage of programs in this area and use all forms of reaching them including workshops, social media and on-line courses.”

Extension’s future priorities should include building “partnerships with others to make sure we are most efficient in meeting the needs of the community.” It is essential that Extension recognizes “what is out there, don’t replicate but enhance, and add depth.” A number of managers discussed having programs for county employees including Lunch and Learn options. It was also noted that programs need to be taken “into the community of the audience to be served. Consider community centers to hold meetings.”

Future Priorities in Health and Nutrition



When examining the surveys of county leaders and the need for a health and nutrition programs and services as well as if Extension should be the organization providing the program or service, several programs/services were identified by over 75 percent of county leaders as being highly needed. This includes programs that decrease the risk for chronic diseases such as diabetes and heart disease and reduce health care costs associated with chronic diseases; that reduce obesity in adults and youth through the promotion of healthy food choices, healthy food preparation, and physical activity; that offer nutrition education to limited resource families and children; and that improve the health and financial well-being of older adults. However, none of the programs were identified by over 75 percent of respondents as ones that Extension should be the organization providing the service. This can be seen in the following tables.

Health & Nutrition	Program/Service Needed in County			Program/Service Should be Provided by Extension		
	Percent/Count	Highly Needed	Somewhat Needed	Little or No Need	Definitely Should	Somewhat Should
Programs that decrease the risk for chronic diseases such as diabetes and heart disease and reduce health care costs associated with chronic diseases.	81.1% 129	17.0% 27	1.9% 3	53.7% 79	36.1% 53	10.2% 15
Programs to reduce obesity in adults and youth through the promotion of healthy food choices, healthy food preparation, and physical activity.	85.8% 139	12.3% 20	1.9% 3	59.9% 88	31.3% 46	8.8% 13
Programs to educate adults and youth on food safety and home food preservation.	70.8% 114	28.0% 45	1.2% 2	66.0% 97	32.0% 47	2.0% 3
Programs that offer nutrition education to limited resource families and children.	77.6% 125	21.1% 34	1.2% 2	60.7% 88	31.7% 46	7.6% 11
Programs that improve the health and financial well-being of older adults.	75.6% 121	21.3% 34	3.1% 5	55.5% 81	31.5% 46	13.0% 19

		Need for Program or Service		
		Low		High
Extension Should Provide Service	High			
		-	- That educate adults and youth on food safety and home food preservation	- That decrease the risk for chronic diseases such as diabetes and heart disease and reduce health care costs associated with chronic diseases - That reduce obesity in adults and youth through the promotion of healthy food choices, healthy food preparation, and physical activity - That offer nutrition education to limited resource families and children - That improve the health and financial well-being of older adults
	Low			

Note: *Need* is measured by the percent responding that the program or service is highly needed. *Extension Should Provide Service* is measured by the percent responding that Extension definitely should be the organization providing the program or service. *High* is defined as 75% or more respondents, *Moderate* is defined as 50%-74% of respondents, and *Low* is defined as less than 50% of respondents.

4-H Youth Development

The third core program area for NC State Extension is 4-H Youth Development. In regard to challenges facing this population, a highly cited challenge was opioids and drugs in general (mentioned 26 times). In addition to this, a challenge facing many communities is the lack of youth programs which provide exposure to new experiences and help them “develop soft skills, personal skills and workforce development. This is where Extension and 4-H should concentrate their efforts” (mentioned 55 times). Concern was raised that youth are not prepared to enter the work force.” In many cases they are not provided opportunities to explore what careers are available. In addition to the lack of job readiness, “there are no jobs here so we cannot keep our youth here.”

County Managers also see youth facing challenges in the areas of citizenship and community engagement (mentioned by 8 managers). It was noted that youth need to practice and learn the importance and giving back to their communities. As one manager commented, “if these youth do not become functioning citizens then they wind up in the prison system or welfare system and cannot contribute to our society and economy.” A related concern is that “our youth do not have enough positive role models to give them hope or dreams to rise above their current situation.”

Most Important Youth Development Challenge



Extension should prioritize “making sure that schools and parents know the benefits that youth can gain by participating in 4-H.” It was identified that Extension needs to reach out to populations not being reached and have more diverse program offerings (mentioned 28 times) which will “keep it interesting to more diverse numbers of kids.” Program expansion efforts should work to “change the perception that 4-H is only for youth interested in agriculture.” Developing collaborations and partnerships with other service providers is also important (mentioned 8 times).

Extension should concentrate future priorities on new experiences that build on citizenship (mentioned 11 times), soft skills (mentioned 13 times) and leadership development (mentioned 11 times) in order to “develop young people to be leaders in the future.” Extension should help our youth prepare for college or a technical school which includes a focus on STEM fields. It is important for 4-H programming efforts recognize that “not everyone is going to go to college” and youth will benefit from “workshops that offer job training or introductions to different types of careers in this area.”

Future Priorities in Youth Development



The surveys of county leaders included questions asking about the need for a variety of 4-H youth development programs and services as well as if Extension should be the organization providing the program or service. Detailed tables are included below.

Several programs/services were identified by over 75 percent of county leaders as being highly needed. These programs/services include: plant & animal science; citizenship and leadership; service; youth competitive events; camps and conferences; after-school and in-school programs; 4-H clubs; engineering & technology; health, nutrition, and fitness; healthy living; and positive youth development.

Extension was also identified as the organization that should be the provider of several programs/services by over 75 percent of county leaders. These programs/services include: plant & animal science; citizenship and leadership; service; youth competitive events; camps and conferences; after-school and in-school programs; and 4-H clubs.

There is a high degree of overlap in the programs identified as highly needed and those that extension should provide. This indicates that county leaders believe plant & animal science; citizenship and leadership; service; youth competitive events; camps and conferences; after-school and in-school programs; and 4-H clubs are both highly needed programs/services and Extension should be providing the program/service.

4-H Youth Development Percent/Count	Program/Service Needed in County			Program/Service Should be Provided by Extension		
	Highly Needed	Somewhat Needed	Little or No Need	Definitely Should	Somewhat Should	Should Not
Environmental science & alternative energy programs that provide young people experience utilizing alternative energy, conserving energy, and learning how to limit humanity's impact on the environment.	65.8% 102	29.7% 46	4.5% 7	58.7% 84	36.4% 52	4.9% 7
Engineering & technology programs in robotics, rocketry, computer science, and electrical engineering to teach problem solving, creative and critical thinking, and build interest in engineering and technology.	77.6% 118	20.4% 31	2.0% 3	58.9% 83	34.8% 49	6.4% 9
Plant & animal science programs that engage young people in agricultural science, topics such as veterinary science, biotechnology, raising and training animals, and forestry.	86.8% 132	13.2% 20	0.0% 0	89.6% 129	10.4% 15	0.0% 0
Health, nutrition, and fitness programs that help youth understand the importance of eating right, physical fitness, being active, and practicing good hygiene.	84.4% 130	14.3% 22	1.3% 2	68.8% 99	27.8% 40	3.5% 5
Healthy living programs that include alcohol, tobacco and drug use prevention, bullying prevention, and encourage good decision-making skills.	82.4% 126	16.3% 25	1.3% 2	63.9% 92	31.9% 46	4.2% 6
Citizenship and leadership programs that encourage civic engagement, involve youth in their communities, and prepare youth to be leaders.	88.9% 136	11.1% 17	0.0% 0	82.6% 119	15.3% 22	2.1% 3
Service programs that teach youth about the importance of giving back, improving their communities, and developing innovative solutions to solve problems.	83.0% 127	16.3% 25	0.7% 1	80.7% 117	17.2% 25	2.1% 3
Positive youth development programs targeting at risk behaviors and youth crime prevention.	79.7% 122	19.6% 30	0.7% 1	69.2% 99	25.2% 36	5.6% 8
Youth competitive events/programs including project achievement; judging programs in areas including essay, consumer, cotton, horse, dairy, poultry, livestock, forestry, wildlife, and land; quiz bowl, shooting safety; etc.	80.4% 123	19.0% 29	0.7% 1	79.9% 115	18.1% 26	2.1% 3
Camps and conferences that provide recreational and educational opportunities for youth, including day and overnight camps, youth summits, 4-H council, and leadership forums.	80.4% 123	19.0% 29	0.7% 1	78.5% 113	20.8% 30	0.7% 1
After-school and in-school programs that provide 4-H activities during and after school hours using hands-on activities and 4-H curriculum.	83.3% 125	16.7% 25	0.0% 0	79.2% 114	19.4% 28	1.4% 2
4-H clubs that follow a planned program and offer multiple learning opportunities for youth.	85.5% 130	14.5% 22	0.0% 0	85.3% 122	14.0% 20	0.7% 1

	Low	Need for Program or Service	High
High			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Plant & animal science - Citizenship and leadership - Service - Youth competitive events - Camps and conferences - After-school and in-school programs - 4-H clubs
Extension Should Provide Service		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Environmental science & alternative energy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Engineering & technology - Health, nutrition, and fitness - Healthy living - Positive youth development
Low			

Note: *Need* is measured by the percent responding that the program or service is highly needed. *Extension Should Provide Service* is measured by the percent responding that Extension definitely should be the organization providing the program or service. *High* is defined as 75% or more respondents, *Moderate* is defined as 50%-74% of respondents, and *Low* is defined as less than 50% of respondents.

Other Programs (Non-Core)

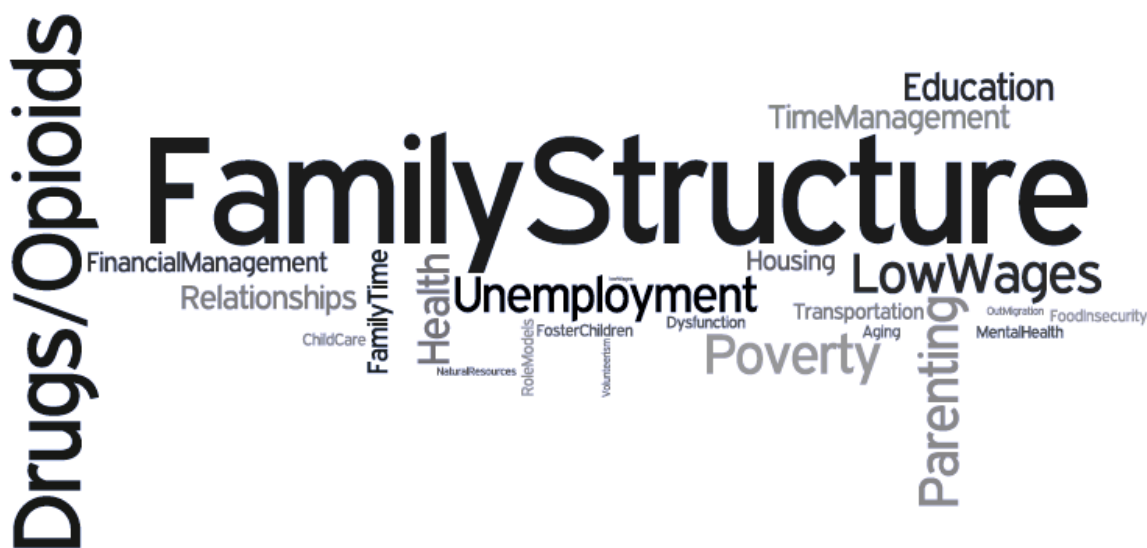
In addition to the three core Extension program areas, NC State Extension provides programs and services to improve the condition of individuals, families and communities.

During the County Manager interviews, family structure was identified as the greatest challenge facing families (identified in 27 interviews). There has been an increase in the number of single parent households and grandparents raising their grandchildren. This change in family structure is coupled with poor parenting skills and family dysfunction (mentioned 13 times). A Manager cited that “we have too many single parent families or cases where grandma is raising the grandkids because mom and dad are not around or too busy or will not take on the responsibility. There is no one there to role model adult behaviors i.e. as a good employee. The youth do not see a parent or both parents going to work, taking pride in getting compensated for a job well done. This generation needs someone to instill a can do, want to do work ethic.” County Managers also mentioned that there was a lack of quality family time (mentioned 5 times). It was noted that “quality family time has decreased as more parents are working longer hours and have more than one job.” Another Manager stated that “I believe the decline in civility of our society can be directly linked to the loss of family time and the degradation of the family unit. People can no longer have civil conversation. We have sacrificed a piece of the family unit that impacts these things -- families no longer have time for dinners together, where individuals learn how to have meaningful conversation and respectfully disagree and think.”

Challenges related to opioid and other drug abuse also impacts families (mentioned 17 times). “We have a drug problem that leads to lots of broken homes.” Counties are also “seeing more kids in foster care due to domestic violence and substance abuse.”

Family financial wellbeing was also identified as a challenge for many as many families are living in poverty (mentioned 10 times) due to the lack of jobs (mentioned 9 times) or the availability of only low paying jobs (mentioned 11 times). As one County Manager shared, “We want to see people succeed, but they cannot do that if they are hungry. The county will spend a lot of money caring for these people if they can't become self-reliant.” Poor economic conditions also impact future generations of workers, “we do not have the economy for our youth to come back to if they do go to college. Many stay and take low paying service jobs.”

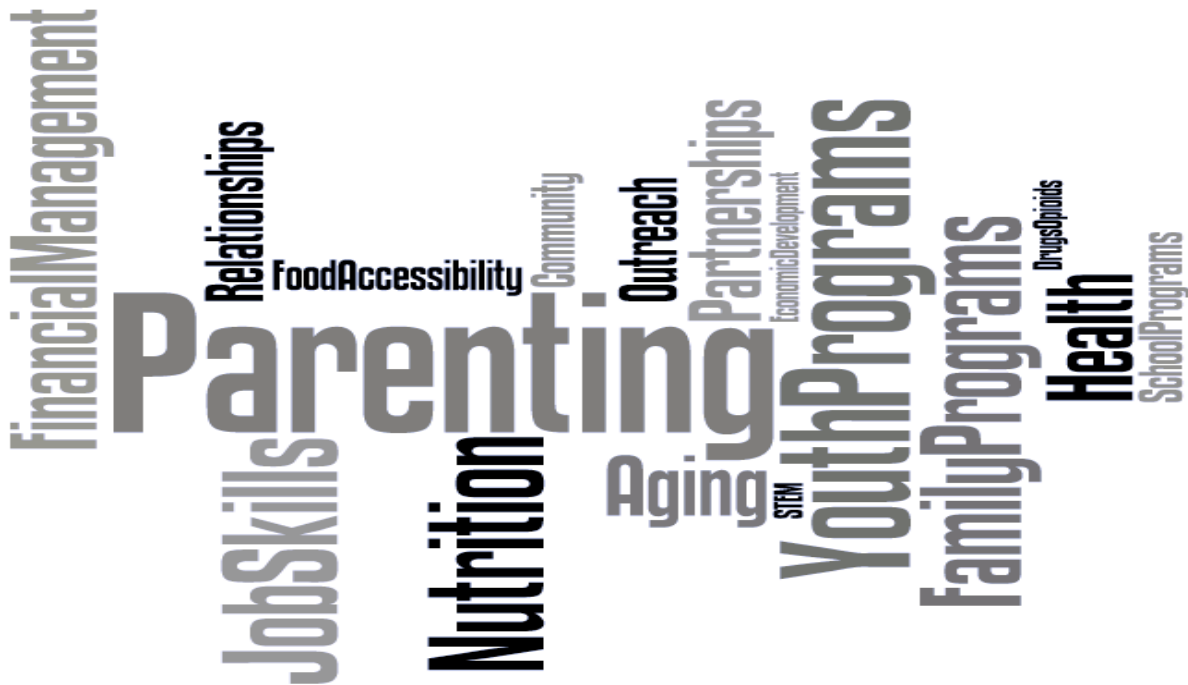
Most Important Family or Community Challenge



Future program priorities identified by County Managers include parenting programs (14 comments), job skills (8 comments), financial management programs (6 comments), youth, family, and older adult programs (22 comments) as well as nutrition and health programs (14 comments). One Manager stated that they “need a trained workforce to meet the employment demands of the county.” Several interviews centered around Extension programs with a focus on activities that encourage community and family. “Multi-

generational programs can be beneficial.” It was noted that Extension should “continue to work with community partners to deliver quality services to the most people and maximize childhood development and success.” The idea of partnerships was also echoed in the comment that Extension should “work with other organizations to coordinate efforts in supporting families, teach others how to manage and develop volunteers, and keep working on civic engagement with the youth.” Programs for older adults are also necessary, as a manager observed “folks are living longer we need more programs for them as they age and keep them in their homes.”

Future Priorities in Areas of Family or Community



Surveys of County Managers and Commissioners also inquired about Extension being the organization that should provide programs for individuals and families. Responses seen in the table below show a lack of consistency in opinions as to whether Extension should be providing family programs or not. The program areas with the highest level of agreement the Extension either definitely or somewhat should provide include helping households compost, reuse and recycle consumer goods; improving leadership, personal development, and citizenship skills in adults; promoting healthy homes (such as addressing carbon monoxide, mold, radon, air quality, home safety, etc.); and helping families improve home energy conservation.

Individual and Family Programs	Percent/Count	Definitely Should	Somewhat Should	Should Not
Programs that help individuals and families manage their financial accounts and financial identity.	42.3% 60	35.2% 50	22.5% 32	
Programs that help individuals and families protect their family assets.	40.4% 57	39.0% 55	20.6% 29	
Programs that help individuals and families gain knowledge and/or skills to increase economic security.	38.9% 56	34.7% 50	26.4% 38	
Programs that focus on improving human development, parenting, and caregiver skills.	41.8% 61	38.4% 56	19.9% 29	
Programs that improve leadership, personal development, and citizenship skills in adults.	55.1% 81	33.3% 49	11.6% 17	
Programs that help families improve home energy conservation.	49.0% 70	37.1% 53	14.0% 20	
Programs that promote healthy homes (such as addressing carbon monoxide, mold, radon, air quality, home safety, etc.).	45.6% 68	40.9% 61	13.4% 20	
Programs/services to help households compost, reuse and recycle consumer goods.	57.4% 85	35.8% 53	6.8% 10	

Surveys inquired about Extension being the organization that should provide programs for community development. Responses seen in the table below show over half of county leaders believe Extension definitely should provide programs and services that promote improved financial capabilities of NC residents, farms, businesses, and communities; programs/services that help communities create jobs, increase economic opportunity, and promote business development; programs/services that help community leaders use planning data to improve their local economy; programs/services that assist communities with Stormwater management (flooding, drainage, erosion); as well as programs and services that promote natural resource management to sustain our economy and quality of life.

Community Development Programs	Percent/Count	Definitely Should	Somewhat Should	Should Not
Programs/services that promote improved financial capabilities of NC residents, farms, businesses, and communities.	65.5% 97	30.4% 45	4.1% 6	
Programs/services that help communities create jobs, increase economic opportunity, and promote business development.	52.7% 79	36.7% 55	10.7% 16	
Programs/services that facilitate building resilient neighborhoods & communities, organizations, coalitions, and collaborative efforts that can address community issues.	46.3% 68	38.1% 56	15.6% 23	
Programs/services that promote tourism and recreation to in-state and out-of-state visitors.	42.8% 62	39.3% 57	17.9% 26	
Programs/services that help community leaders use planning data to improve their local economy.	54.4% 80	29.3% 43	16.3% 24	
Programs/services that help communities in disaster-preparedness planning, trainings, drills, and exercises.	42.8% 62	45.5% 66	11.7% 17	
Programs/services to assist local government and businesses with land use decisions.	48.6% 71	38.4% 56	13.0% 19	
Programs/services that promote natural resource management to sustain our economy and quality of life.	65.3% 94	31.9% 46	2.8% 4	
Programs/services that assist communities with Stormwater management (flooding, drainage, erosion).	50.0% 72	39.6% 57	10.4% 15	