

## Strategic Planning and Ongoing Needs Assessment and Priority-Setting

Strategic planning is Cooperative Extension's primary planning initiative over the next two years. Its focus is at the macro-organizational level. It answers the question:

*How can we position our organization to effectively carry out its mission in an ever-changing environment?*

Through strategic planning, Cooperative Extension can:

- Examine the environment in which it exists and operates.
- Explore factors and trends that affect the way we do business and carry out its mission.
- Frame the strategic issues we must address.
- Find ways to address these issues by re-examining and re-working organizational mandates and missions, costs and financing, management, and organizational structures.

Go to <http://www.uwex.edu/ces/strategicplanning/> for more information on our strategic planning initiative.

Strategic planning does not preclude, nor is it a substitute for, ongoing needs assessments used by individuals, counties, and teams to set direction for educational programs. Such educational planning answers the question:

*What will be our educational programming priorities?*

Many of you have been asking, in light of the direction of our strategic planning initiative, about ongoing educational assessment and priority setting processes. Educational planning will not be a component of the strategic planning process, however we can offer the following guide for educational planning.

- Program development is a continuous process that Extension professionals follow as they assess local needs, plan, implement and evaluate their educational programs.
- Our process is not confined to a four-year planning cycle.
- All colleagues throughout the state are responsible for ongoing needs assessment and priority setting. This is accomplished:
  - Individually – designing your own guide
  - As Office teams – addressing the local needs of the county served, including county government priorities,
  - As Program Teams – exploring your current needs and assets
- You can design and implement a planning process that best suits your needs. You will find resources at:

<https://www.uwex.edu/ces/apps/programplanning/>

This website will be updated by the middle of May, 2007.

- Your local plans will inform the strategic planning process. We ask that you advise your District Director, and in the case of state program teams, your Program Leaders, by June 1, 2007 of your office and/or team priority setting process over the coming year.
- Participating counties should submit their issue statements by December 31, 2007. <https://www.uwex.edu/ces/apps/programplanning/issuestatements/index.cfm>

If you have questions, contact your district director or program area leadership.