

## County Department Head Role

The community-building work of Cooperative Extension, including the practical educational programs that respond to local needs ensures access to the research and resources of the University of Wisconsin System. We are successful in our mission, in part, because Cooperative Extension offices are located where people live and work in each of Wisconsin's 72 counties. The overall responsibility for leadership and management of each of these offices is assumed by a county department head, a county department head team or in our most urban counties, a county director.

Each county department head's role is unique. Because counties differ in size, complexity and type of administrative structure, the specific time demands and complexity of the department head's role varies. Serving as both a leader and as a manager, the county department head, appointed in joint agreement by Cooperative Extension and county government, carries out the following functions to strengthen the organizational effectiveness of Cooperative Extension:

- Create work environments marked by high levels of trust, which in turn, foster creativity, innovation, excellence, team work, shared leadership, collegiality, personal responsibility for outcomes and a sense of enthusiasm for achieving Cooperative Extension's mission.
- Model Cooperative Extension's core values and take steps to ensure alignment between these values and the ways in which the work of Cooperative Extension is carried out at the local level and through the County Cooperative Extension office.
- Work collaboratively to support all office colleagues with the physical, fiscal and human resources necessary to be successful in their positions.
- Work to encourage opportunities for all office colleagues to achieve personal effectiveness and professional growth.
- Work to create and sustain an inclusive, respectful and cohesive professional office climate where office colleagues are encouraged to share their best efforts.

## **Expectations and Desired Outcomes of the Department Head Role**

Working collaboratively with all office colleagues, department heads are self-directed individuals responsible for sharing the leadership of the County Cooperative Extension program, internal relations, resource management and external relations:

**Program Expectations – *Comprehensive educational programs that respond to county needs are provided throughout the county.***

### **Desired Outcomes:**

- A comprehensive Cooperative Extension program based on local concerns and local educational needs is provided, based on constituent-based planning.
- All colleagues feel supported in their programming efforts through the collaborative efforts of the department head and program area staff.
- Cooperative Extension colleagues seek out and secure resources to expand and support innovative programming.
- Support the civil rights review process and provide leadership for follow-up.

**Internal Relations Expectations – *The County Extension Office/Team experiences high productivity and high morale.***

### **Desired Outcomes:**

- A positive, creative work environment in which colleagues seek excellence is promoted through positive role modeling, recognition, encouragement, support and coaching.
- A sense of team work and shared leadership.
- Accurate organizational information is disseminated to office colleagues in a straightforward, clear and timely manner through regularly scheduled office meetings and other appropriate means.
- Office colleagues participate in county, district and statewide meetings and teleconferences.
- The district director is well-informed regarding the operations of the county office.
- Office colleagues are aware of what Cooperative Extension expects of them and when their actions do not match these expectations.
- Office colleagues demonstrate personal responsibility and a sense of pride for accomplishing program outcomes and sustaining an effective office environment.

- Office colleagues demonstrate acceptance, and respect for differences and inclusiveness are evident.
- Office colleagues demonstrate honesty and behavior that builds trust, and behavior is in alignment with organizational values.
- Office colleagues demonstrate openness and are encouraged to speak up when standards and expectations are not being met; ask questions or ask for assistance to ensure commitments will be met; and share information, opinions and emotions without fear.
- Office colleagues strive to resolve disagreements in a spirit of mutual support and accountability.
- Office colleagues demonstrate a willingness to listen and are receptive to feedback.

**Resource Management Expectations – *Human, fiscal and physical resources are efficiently and effectively managed; university and county policies and procedures are effectively implemented.***

**Desired Outcomes:**

- Office operations are managed efficiently and effectively by office colleagues.
- The county budget is created through an inclusive process and is advocated by the department head.
- In cooperation with the district director and program areas, local coordination is provided for recruitment, hiring and orientation of new colleagues in accordance with county and university procedures.
- Colleagues are aware of the work performed by other office colleagues. Feedback is given by all in an effective and appropriate way to support and coach each person in a supportive way.
- Requests for additional resources are made with the district director and appropriate program director when performance improvement is observed. Support is provided to carry out subsequent performance improvement plans.
- A process for annual performance reviews is in place and performance conferences are held with all office colleagues in accordance with Cooperative Extension's performance review process.
- Resources are allocated for the professional development of all office colleagues.
- Equal Employment Opportunity and Affirmative Action policies are understood by all and implemented.
- All county and university human resources policies and procedures are followed, including those delineated in the county's collective bargaining agreement.
- Fiscal policies and procedures are understood and followed appropriately.

- Appropriate county and university records (e.g., personnel, fiscal, meeting minutes, etc.) are maintained by office colleagues in accordance with public records policies.

**External Relations Expectations – *Positive, productive relations and a professional image are maintained with county partners and other external stakeholders and clients as the primary administrative contact for county government.***

**Desired Outcomes:**

- Fiscal, physical and human resources needed to carry out departmental work are secured from county administrators and/or county board members.
- A comprehensive marketing plan is in place, which details how office colleagues are expected to be involved in promoting a positive image of the local office and communicating the value of Cooperative Extension.
- Positive working interpersonal relationships and open communication exist with county departments, elected officials, county administrative staff and other critical stakeholders.
- All program areas are supported and represented to external stakeholders.
- Program impacts and Cooperative Extension's value are reported to county, state and federal stakeholders in accordance with Cooperative Extension's planning and reporting system.
- Other county departments and agencies are aware of how Cooperative Extension can add value to the services they provide.

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