

Communication Strategies in WNEP
Prepared by Members of the WNEP Internal Communications Team
October 26, 2007

The purpose of this document is to overview many of the ways in which WNEP colleagues communicate with each other and within UW-Extension. It also overviews some suggestions and good practices related to communication strategies for WNEP staff. The adoption of good communication practices and habits by all colleagues will contribute to better communication and job satisfaction for everyone. The WNEP Internal Communications Team recognizes that we all have important roles in communication.

All WNEP staff should be able to send and receive email messages and have access to both the UW-Extension and WNEP websites. It is the coordinator's responsibility to orient local staff to the communication strategies discussed in this document and to determine the best way to provide computer access; being sure all staff receive email messages and other WNEP communication in a timely manner. It is expected that all WNEP staff will check their email at least once each week. In some counties, email is used as a daily communication tool and should be read more often. County coordinators should make their expectations clear to all WNEP colleagues in the office.

Before communication is initiated consider the best method to reach the intended recipient of the item to be communicated. All contact information for UW-Extension and Cooperative Extension Staff can be accessed at <http://www.uwex.edu/ces/dir/>. The county coordinator should review this information for accuracy as staffing or office address changes occur. Use the link at the bottom of the directory home page to request changes to the directory or the following URL <http://www.uwex.edu/ces/dir/feedback.cfm>.

Electronic Communications:

Procedure for Obtaining a NetID –

All WNEP colleagues should have a NetID Password. This NetID enables colleagues to access many password-protected resources (including the Family Living Resource Center, WNEP Database, and some Human Resources documents). Request a Net ID from the county office department head and/or the district office. Campus-based staff should request a NetID from the Family Living Program area office or from the Technology Services Help Desk. For further information or if you forgot your NetID Password see the following website link to the Technology Services Help Desk: <http://www.uwex.edu/ces/techservices/helpdesk/netid.cfm> For trouble-shooting or other questions, contact the Help Desk by phone at: 608-265-3895, or 800-760-7610.

Email Tips -

- Subject line message should be clear and to the point – abbreviations used in the subject line can confuse your message with spam.
- Keep messages in a business tone. Using upper case can be interpreted as shouting. Email is not private. Avoid sending any message that you wouldn't want posted on a bulletin board.
- Proofread your email before sending to ensure that the message is something you want to send and that the intended recipient is listed correctly. Choose "Reply all" to respond to all members on the list, or choose "Reply" to respond to just the sender.

- Consider the computer capability to receive the documents you are sending. If a modem type receiver is used, it may not be able to open large attachments.
- When you forward messages, remove unnecessary email addresses.
- Include name, contact information and ADA (Americans with Disability Act) informational statements at the bottom of your email.
- Consider using the Out of Office Assistant or similar tool to alert senders if you are planning to be out of the office.

WEB Mail -

The UW Extension CES Webmail system is a tool which allows you to send and receive messages from your CES account while on the road, at home or otherwise unable to check email on your office computer. The webmail system is accessed with a NetID. For more information and directions on setting up an account, see the Technology Services Helpdesk website at <http://www.uwex.edu/ces/techservices/helpdesk/email/webmail/>.

Listserves –

The WNEP directory link below provides information on email listserves for both WNEP and Cooperative Extension that are available for staff use. These lists are similar to an internal mailing list and provide easy email access to specific groups of staff. WNEP Coordinators should orient educators regarding use of this resource. Listserve names and their descriptions can be found at <http://www.uwex.edu/ces/wnep/mainlinks/directories.cfm>

Spam and Probable Spam -

Spam is very annoying unsolicited Email. The following web address will give some information on the University's efforts to address spam.

<http://www.uwex.edu/ces/techservices/fullstory.cfm?articleid=41993>

The next web address gives directions for creating a Junk email folder using Outlook or Eudora.

<http://www.uwex.edu/ces/techservices/helpdesk/SpamFiltering/>

- Writing a clear subject line will help reduce the possibility that your message is identified as spam by those receiving your email.
- Remember to check your spam folder regularly to ensure important messages have not been directed there.

Phone Communications –

The Coordinator of each project should set a standard for responding to phone messages on a timely basis. When planning to be out of the office especially for an extended time, a voicemail greeting can indicate when staff will be available (follow any preferences your county office may have for voicemail greetings).

Library Services –

Steenbock Library provides UW-Extension library services for work-related research. For information and directions on setting up a Library Express account see the Steenbock Memorial Library website at: <http://steenbock.library.wisc.edu/extension/cecty.htm> - choose "One time

Distance User Set Up”. An eleven digit ID and UDDS number is needed to access the account and can be obtained from Technology Services.

Interpersonal Communications:

Attendance at County Extension Staff Meetings and District Meetings –

The WNEP Coordinator is responsible to ensure that information is communicated to educators and other program staff, as well as ensuring that program commitments are achieved. Attendance at District meetings and trainings should be encouraged if at all possible, but there may be times when WNEP education sites may take precedence. It is the Coordinator’s responsibility to determine the best way possible to meet both program and staff communication needs.

The Coordinator is responsible for sharing pertinent information with those who are unable to attend. These meetings could include: WNEP Staff Meetings; Monthly District Wisline Conversations; Dean’s Wislines; District or State All Faculty and Staff In-services; District/State Family Living/WNEP In-services; Family Living/WNEP Wislines; etc.

Ways to Enhance Counties’ Communication with the State Office –

For each district there are persons serving in the roles of Family Living Liaison, WNEP District Representative, and WNEP Advisor. WNEP staffs are encouraged to utilize the expertise of these persons in their District to facilitate good communication with the state office.

- Family Living Liaison—Colleague who serves as communication and orientation link between all District Family Living colleagues and state Family Living colleagues, including the Program Leader.
- WNEP District Representative (Rep)—County-based colleague selected by WNEP colleagues in the District to serve as communication link and primary planner of District in-service/ meeting opportunities.
- WNEP Advisor—State-based specialist who serves as communication and orientation link for WNEP coordinators in a District.

WNEP District Reps/County Coordinators are encouraged to invite state liaisons and program leaders to district staff meetings and to visit county programs. These visits can provide a venue for state/county updates, question/answer time, sharing successes, concerns, etc. County WNEP staff are encouraged to write success stories showing the impacts of their programs. Coordinators can share these successes in annual reports, with state WNEP staff and with County Department Heads for their use in showing county impacts. There are additional resources available in the Evaluation and Reporting section of the WNEP website that will be helpful in writing impacts and success stories.

Colleagues who wish to communicate anonymously to the state program leader or staff may do so either directly or through their district representative, who is expected to treat the request as confidential.

Statewide Communication Tools:

- WNEP website: <http://www.uwex.edu/ces/wnep/index.cfm>
Staff are encouraged to visit the website often to familiarize themselves with valuable information and resources. Examples include: staff trainings, WNEP curriculum, state evaluations, staff directories, etc.

Counties are invited to submit current “Featured Unit News Articles” to the website.

These articles keep programs informed on all of the good work happening across the state and offer networking opportunities. To update or send website information, choose “Key Links” off of the WNEP Homepage.

- Wislines –
WNEP wislines are arranged to cover important topics such as: state evaluation tools, grant or report development, updates, trainings or other important topics. Taped copies of these wislines can be obtained from the program assistant in the State WNEP Office. To set up a Wisline, send your request to the WNEP state program assistant.
- Wisline Web –
This is an interactive training method using a web browser and phone line. Participants must register and login to the system with a username and password. First-time registrants will click on the “sign up” link to set up a new account. For web conferencing tips and tutorials go to: <http://www.uwex.edu/ics/slweb/tips.htm>
- WNEP News -
A newsletter developed and distributed by the WNEP state program leader approximately every other month.
- Professional Development
 - Recommended trainings and resources for WNEP Nutrition Educators and County Coordinators can be found at: <http://www.uwex.edu/ces/wnep/train/>
 - Use the following WNEP website link to learn more about professional development offerings: <http://www.uwex.edu/ces/wnep/mainlinks/calendar.cfm>.

District offerings can be found by choosing “Family Living Programs Professional Development Offerings” from the above link. The direct web address is: <https://www.uwex.edu/ces/flp/apps/flrc/prodev/>. It is the responsibility of each District Representative to update their district’s calendar. Colleagues may find professional development offerings available in other districts that may meet specific needs by checking this link.
 - Technology and software training –
These trainings can be found at: <http://www.uwex.edu/ces/techservices/training/>
A NetID password is needed for registration. Watch for e-mail notification of trainings.
- Educational displays -
Great display ideas can be shared with all WNEP programs by being placed on the WNEP curriculum website. Send your display photos and description to the Display Review Team via an Electronic Entry Form. The Display Review Team consists of state specialists and county staff. The review team is very helpful in their critique and may make additions or changes that will make a good display even better. Find more information, a checklist on creating displays, and the electronic entry form on the “Sharing Displays” link at <http://www.uwex.edu/ces/wnep/teach/index.cfm>
- Family Living Web Sites –
 - Family Living public web pages are at: <http://www.uwex.edu/ces/flp/>

At this site you can find information about the great variety of Family Living programming in Wisconsin.

- <https://www.uwex.edu/ces/flp/apps/flrc/>. The Family Living Resource Center is a NetID password-protected website of resources and archived materials for all Family Living colleagues. It is an expectation that all WNEP staff has access to and reads this information. This site contains monthly messages from the Family Living Program Leader and links to the following:
 - Nutrition for Family Living Newsletter
 - Food Facts for You Newsletter
 - Resources from Family Living specialists
 - WNEP resources that are for internal use only
 - A sidebar that lists a variety of pertinent WNEP links, including links to State Teams. Teams with resources that may be especially relevant to WNEP are “Eating Well and Being Active” and “Poverty and Food Insecurity”.

- UWEX Resources –
The Human Resources website, <http://www.uwex.edu/ces/hr/employees.cfm>, gives a complete description of information covering employment issues. Some examples of resources available through this link are:
 - Employee Assistance Office,
 - Academic Staff Promotions,
 - Criminal Background Checks,
 - Family Leave Request Forms
 - Staff Benefits Information.

- Staff Directories – It is expected that Coordinators and others will check their information for accuracy and provide updates as needed in the following directories:
 - Cooperative Extension (CE) Staff Directory (<http://www.uwex.edu/ces/dir/>) – All WNEP colleagues should be listed in this directory.

 - WNEP Staff Directories (<http://www.uwex.edu/ces/wnep/mainlinks/directories.cfm>) - WNEP colleagues are listed in several versions of lists as part of the WNEP web directory.