

**Signature Program Guidelines for Extension Community Development**

***Introduction***

The Extension Community Development (CD) program has taken steps in recent years to expand the number of Extension educators with a formal CD appointment. As the number of Extension educators grow, the need to put in place a more structured set of programs and impact metrics becomes of paramount importance. There are some key reasons why this is the case:

* The ability to tell the story of the value and impact of the Purdue Extension CD program depends on our willingness to embrace a core set of educational programs that align with needs of constituents located in counties across the state. By doing so, we are able to build metrics that help showcase the impact of our work in various parts of the state.
* As the value of our work gets noticed, we garner the interest of other Extension colleagues and with a variety of external partners. So, we have more Extension colleagues serving as advocates for our program and more agencies and organizations that are willing to invest their own resources to partner with —and invest in the work of -- our Extension CD colleagues.
* In an environment where the efficient and effective use of resources is critical to the operation of Purdue University and its Extension programs, we must be able to show that the Extension CD program matters and that continued investment in this program is vital to the well-being of Indiana communities. Signature programs help demonstrate how we have helped move the needle on issues that are important to the long-term vitality of communities in the state.
* The continued growth of the Extension CD program can only be realized if we can clearly articulate our major focus areas, have in place strong signature programs that align with these focus areas, and show the ability of our Extension CD team to be nimble in its ability to produce and deliver new signature programs that respond to the emerging needs of our stakeholders.

***Key Elements of Signature Programs [[1]](#footnote-1)***

The following are the characteristics that designate an Extension CD program that elevate it to “Signature Program” status:

1. Aligns with the strategic blueprint and/or priority issues of Purdue University Extension.
2. Incorporates a conceptual framework that is rooted in sound research.
3. Involves the delivery of multiple educational sessions that provide target audiences with a more in-depth information/training on a specific topic/subject.
4. Embraces a series of short, medium, and long-term outcomes that are designed to track the impact of the program on participants over time (i.e., individuals and/or communities).
5. Employs a core set of metrics that all CD educators use to report activities and outcomes associated with the program via Digital Measures.
6. Represents a program that is implemented by CD educators in multiple counties in the state.
7. Launched in partnership with campus-based administrators, faculty/specialists and/or regional CD educators.
8. Offers training to Extension educators wishing to implement the program in their counties.
9. Has Institutional Review Board approval (IRB) for the collection of quantitative and/or qualitative information from program participants.

***General Expectations of CD Educators: Signature Program Work Plan***

The expectation of how many signature programs a CD educator is to conduct annually is based upon the educator’s formal community development appointment. Additional responsibilities associated with an educator’s CD work at various FTE appointments are offered as guidelines. That is, the higher the person’s formal CD appointment, the greater number of signature, spotlight and other activities the individual is expected to successfully undertake. Spotlight programs represent in-depth educational programs being carried out in one or two counties, but is not available for implementation on a statewide basis. Oftentimes, it represents a program that a CD educator has developed in response to a unique need of his/her stakeholders and/or is a specific area of expertise that the educator possesses that is relevant to our CD work. Please note that all educational programs that an educator proposed to carry out as part of his/her plan of work should be done with the knowledge and support of the person’s District Director and County Extension Director. We urge you to have your proposed spotlight program reviewed by the CD Program Leader and/or Assistant Program Leader.

Some of the general expectations for any Extension Educator with a Community Development appointment is as follows:

* Participate in the CD team conference calls held periodically over the course of the year;
* Participate in the CD Update Workshop held annually;
* Secure and utilize the County Data Snapshot documents prepared by the Purdue Center for Regional Development (PCRD), both with your advisory committee and with key stakeholders;
* For Extension educators with a 50 percent CD appointment or higher, to develop and have an active Community Development Advisory Committee.

Aside from these general requirements, the following are the guidelines with respect to the development and/or delivery of Extension educational programs.

**Table 1. Program Activities of Educators with Varying FTE Appointments in Community Development**

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| --- | --- | --- |
| **CD Appointment**  | **Signature Program** | **Other Recommended Activities** |
| 25 percent or less | One signature program | Short-term CD-related program activities (such as single sessions on specific CD topics) |
| 26-49 percent | Two signature programs | * 1 Spotlight program
* Short-term CD-related activities
* Engaged in grant-related activities, as appropriate
 |
| 50-74 percent | Three signature programs  | * 1 Spotlight program
* Short-term program activities
* Partner with other CD educators on program delivery activities
* Engagement in grant-related activities
 |
| 75 percent and higher | Four signature programs | * 2 Spotlight programs
* Involvement in short-term CD-related programming
* Involved in program activities with other CD educators
* Active in the development of funding-related proposals
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***Specific Expectations Associated with Signature Programs***

There are a core number of Signature Programs that are now place in support of the Extension Community Development Program. These are listed below. Please note that there are specific expectations that are associated with each of these programs, so it is important to review these requirements prior to including them in your annual plan of work. The guidelines associated with each Signature Program can be accessed on the Extension Community Development website under the section labeled “For CD Educators” located under the ABOUT US option.

Please note that new Signature Programs will be introduced in the future and as such, the CD team as a whole will decide on an annual basis if any existing Signature Program should discontinued in light of the changing needs of our stakeholders.

**Table 2. List of Current Purdue Extension CD Signature Programs by Themes/Goals**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Community Development Thematic Area/Goal** | **Current Signature Programs** |
| **Leadership & Civic Engagement****Goal:** Equipping a new generation of leaders, organizations and stakeholders | * Community Leadership Development
* Facilitative Leadership
 |
| **Community and Organizational Development****Goal:** Increasing the capacity of local people to act on current and future opportunities | * Beginner’s Guide to Grant Writing
* Hometown Collaboration Initiative
 |
| **Economic & Business Development** **Goal:** Helping communities create jobs, retain businesses and provide resources for business owners | * Business Retention & Expansion
* Community/Regional Entrepreneurial System
* Digital Ready Businesses
* Work Ready: Skills for Tomorrow’s Workforce (in process)
* Skills for Success
 |
| **Local Government** **Goal**: Increasing the effectiveness of local governments, boards and committees | * On Local Government
* American Citizen Planner
 |
| **Quality Places****Goal:** Enhancing communities’ quality of life and quality of life | * Enhancing the Value of Public Spaces
* EVPS: Creating Healthy Communities
* Conservation through Community Leadership
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**Questions?**

Please free to contact either Bo Beaulieu (CD Program Leader) or Michael Wilcox (Assistant Program Leader) if you have any questions regarding the expectations of an Extension CD educator.

**Prepared and Updated by:** Bo Beaulieu & Michael Wilcox, June 2019

1. Adapted from the Purdue HHS Signature Program Guidelines [↑](#footnote-ref-1)