

Ohio State University Extension Community Development Program Review

**Final Report from the
External Review Committee**

September-November 2019



THE OHIO STATE UNIVERSITY

COLLEGE OF FOOD, AGRICULTURAL,
AND ENVIRONMENTAL SCIENCES

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Preface

Purpose

The purpose of a program review is to guide program development on a continual basis. A program review is a process that evaluates the status, effectiveness, and progress of programs and helps identify future direction and priorities. Program reviews are a standard practice in higher education (Halonen and Dunn, 2017). The Ohio State University Extension Community Development (CD) program review is a voluntary practice for self-study and external review.

The Review Includes Five Elements

- *The State of Community Development in Ohio*
- *Ohio State University Extension Community Development Internal Self-Study*
- *Ohio State University Extension Crowdsourcing Insight Summary: Community Development*
- External committee visits and final report
- Key stakeholder communication throughout the process

Context

Ohio State University (OSU) Extension embarked upon a multi-year effort to build the Extension organization of the future. That journey began with the [Vice President's Conversation on the Future of Extension](#). The overall goal of that effort was to ensure that OSU Extension remains relevant and responsive to the needs of Ohioans well into the future.

Data gathered through the *Vice President's Conversation* was used as a foundation for an organizational restructuring effort called designEXT to put ideas into action. One of the designEXT steps includes partnering with individuals and communities to co-create multi-faceted solutions for current and emerging issues.

The OSU Extension Community Development Program Review is the second of a series of OSU Extension program reviews.

ONE Thing

Our land-grant mission –

OSU Extension delivers knowledge from Ohio State to every county in Ohio, and we work WITH people right where they live to strengthen their own lives and communities.

*(excerpt from OSU Extension Interim Director update,
Jackie Kirby Wilkins – August 2019)*

Contact

Ohio State University Extension Program Reviews are conducted on behalf of Dr. Jackie Kirby Wilkins, interim director of OSU Extension for the College of Food, Agricultural, and Environmental Sciences (CFAES). The OSU Extension Community Development Program Review was led by Dr. Julie Fox and Dr. Greg Davis, with support from Michelle Gaston and Terri Fisher.

extension.osu.edu/strategic-initiatives/ohio-community-development-program-review

Table of Contents

Introduction and Review Process	4
Situation	6
Impacts of OSU Extension CD Work on Extension Priorities	7
Recommendations	10
Communication	10
Alignment with University and Extension Mission and Goals	12
Current and Relevant Programming	12
Engagement with Partners	13
Staffing	14
Summary and Conclusions	16

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Introduction and Review Process

Ohio State University Extension plans to remain relevant and responsive to the needs of Ohioans well into the future. To do so, a program review is being conducted in each of the four Extension program areas, 4-H Youth Development (4-H), Community Development (CD), Family and Consumer Sciences (FCS), and Agriculture and Natural Resources (ANR). These reviews evaluate the effectiveness and impacts of programs and help identify program development and direction for the future.

The OSU Extension **Community Development** external program review was conducted on behalf of Dr. Jackie Kirby Wilkins, interim director, OSU Extension, College of Food, Agricultural, and Environmental Sciences. Multiple elements were prepared prior to the review and presented to the review committee including:

- *The State of Community Development in Ohio*, an environmental scan of social and economic conditions in the state and profiles of community development organizations that are internal and external partners with OSU Extension Community Development
- *Ohio State University Extension Community Development Internal Self-Study*, a report highlighting OSU's history and current state of community development efforts
- *Ohio State University Extension Crowdsourcing Insight Summary: Community Development*, a summary of results from a survey of OSU Extension personnel
- Ohio State University Extension Community Development impact reports
- OSU Extension's organizational chart

An external review committee was enlisted consisting of the following individuals selected by Dr. Greg Davis for their expertise in community development practices and leadership roles in the National Association of Community Development Extension Professionals. The committee members included the following Extension faculty members:

Doug Arbogast, Ph.D.
Extension Specialist – Rural
Tourism Development
West Virginia University Extension

Notie Lansford, Ph.D.
Professor and Extension Economist
Department of Agricultural Economics
Oklahoma State University

Lynette Flage, Ph.D.
Assistant Director – Family and
Community Wellness
North Dakota State University Extension

Stacey McCullough, Ph.D.
Assistant Director – Community,
Professional and Economic Development
University of Arkansas Cooperative
Extension Service

Committee duties included:

- Pre-meeting teleconference call – Approximately three weeks prior to the in-person reviews
- Review of prepared reports
- Two days in Columbus, Ohio for in-person interviews
- Post-meeting teleconference call – Approximately three weeks after the in-person reviews
- Preparation of final report

The external review committee visited Ohio State on September 16-17, 2019. The committee conducted eight stakeholder group interviews representing Advancement, county personnel, the Extension Executive Cabinet, the Dean's Cabinet, external partners, state faculty and staff, internal partners/faculty, and external partner - Central State University Extension.

After the interviews were completed, the committee discussed strengths of OSU Extension's Community Development program, areas for improvement, and opportunities for consideration by OSU Extension. Highlights from this discussion were shared briefly with Dr. Greg Davis, associate director and department chair, and David Civittolo, interim assistant director, Community Development prior to departure of the committee.

A follow-up conference call was held on October 16, 2019 to gather additional information, further analyze the data, and organize the final report. The committee requested and subsequently received additional impact data regarding community development programs from Dr. Greg Davis. This report reflects the culmination of the external review committee's analysis and recommendations.

Situation

Ohio State University Extension's CD program staff deliver evidence-based programs and services to individuals, organizations, and communities to develop skilled, informed, engaged leaders, as well as sustainable and livable communities. The OSU Extension CD program area dates back to the 1960s. What started as a few USDA-funded regional specialist positions in the Appalachian region of Ohio grew to roughly 100 FTEs spread across the state in the 1990s.

Today, there are roughly 20 FTEs focused on CD programs. These positions are split between the state and county level. State-level positions include an assistant director, four field specialists, two educators, and administrative and support personnel (one support staff and one program assistant). County positions include six county community development educators, one county community development program specialist, and four joint community development/agricultural and national resources educators. County positions require a local contribution to be matched with state dollars. The CD program is also supported with positions funded through the Sea Grant College Program, the Alber Enterprise Center, as well as other state and local units. It was also clear through study documents provided to the review team and the interview process that the CD unit actively engages with individuals and organizations within the university and across the state to advance its research, teaching and Extension missions.

Community development educational programs and applied research efforts in Ohio are aligned within the following areas of emphasis:

- Economic Development
- Leadership Development
- Organizational Capacity Building
- Community Planning

These emphases help link resources, research and long-term support for the overall priority areas of OSU Extension including:

- Health and Wellness
- Workforce Development
- Thriving Across the Lifespan
- Sustainable Food Systems
- Engaged Ohioans, Vibrant Communities
- Environmental Quality

In the *Ohio State University Extension Community Development Internal Self-Study* report, the CD unit identified the areas of civic engagement, leadership development, and rural vitality as opportunities for expansion if additional resources (primarily staff) were available.

Impacts of OSU Extension CD Work on Extension Priorities

Community development professionals provide technical assistance and evidence-based programs to citizens who want to make sure their communities survive and prosper. OSU Extension staff meet people where they live to deliver innovative and accessible resources and partnerships. They work to help communities become a better place to live, work, and play. Community development as a profession is defined by national occupational standards and a body of theory and experience. The International Association of Community Development defines community development as “a practice-based profession and an academic discipline that promotes participative democracy, sustainable development, rights, equality, economic opportunity and social justice, through the organization, education and empowerment of people within their communities, whether these be of locality, identity or interest, in urban and rural settings.”

“Community Resource and Economic Development (CRED) Extension Professionals work WITH communities to support activities that encourage broad participation and result in social, environmental, and/or economic improvement as defined by the community.” (National Association of Community Development Extension Professionals)

Recently, Oklahoma State University recognized the central value of community development to society. In the fall of 2018, administration from Oklahoma State University funded a holistic, integrated Rural Renewal Institute, integrating a team of five researchers from varied disciplines: (1) plant and soil science, (2) ag education, communications, and leadership, (3) biosystems and ag engineering, (4) Center for Rural Health, and (5) School of Entrepreneurship. Community development research and Extension work are at the core of the 10-year plan for this Institute.

OSU Extension CD faculty and staff clearly make a difference in improving the society, environment, and economy in Ohio. Multiple programs are offered to help Ohioans address local issues and make Ohio a better place to live, work, and play. Several impact reports and narratives were provided to the review committee. These reports demonstrate accountability towards OSU Extension’s overall priorities, how CD priorities dovetail with those priorities, and positive impacts as a result of CD programs. In many instances, they also show how CD collaborates with other units and entities to deliver quality programs.

Health and Wellness:

The use of organizational capacity building and community planning techniques can be applied to almost any issue to help inform strategic actions that leverage assets and solve problems. Two examples of CD efforts demonstrate how these are being used to address issues related to health and wellness. In one southeastern Ohio county, CD has been engaged in a multi-phase project with community leaders to assess, understand and plan strategies to address health care concerns and service gaps facing the county. Substance abuse and mental health concerns are two of the critical needs facing community and health across Ohio and the country. In Highland County, a county-wide health survey found that more than 70 percent of resident respondents indicated that they personally know someone who takes an illegal drug. The survey informed the Highland County Health Report and resulting priorities for partnership and outreach to address this issue, as well as concerns such as cancer, heart disease, and obesity. A full copy of the report can be viewed at go.osu.edu/communityhealth.

Workforce Development:

In addition to capacity building and planning techniques, connecting communities to resources and networks available and supporting them in implementing strategies resulting from those techniques is necessary to achieve significant impacts and transformational change. Despite a relatively small staff, CD personnel appear to play this role well. For example, after strategic goal setting with the CD educator in Highland County, a nonprofit agency secured \$90,000 from the Ohio Capital Improvement Fund to expand their facility and increase manufacturing by 10 percent. This enabled the organization to launch two new programs that train workers to develop manufacturing job skills, adding to Highland County's skilled and trained workforce. Similarly, in one of Ohio's fastest growing sectors, CD worked with the Ohio Travel Association (OTA) to conduct an industry-wide needs assessment. As a result, the OTA Board of Directors initiated dialogue and collaboration with other state-level organizations to foster job development and retention among Ohio's tourism workforce.

Thriving Across the Lifespan:

Collaboration with and support for other entities across Ohio on issues of shared interest is a strength of CD. With funding from the North Central Region Center for Rural Development, CD faculty partnered with the Guernsey County Planning Commission and Community Improvement Corporation to update the county's comprehensive strategic plan. Implementation of this plan has resulted in a number of outcomes related to youth development. For example, the *Safe Routes to School* initiative resulted in a \$820,000 grant to create safe, convenient, and fun opportunities for children to bicycle and walk to and from school. The Education and Workforce subcommittee put into action one of their goals of *increasing workforce ready students by 5 percent*. To do so, all school districts in two counties joined five major manufacturers to develop a job description for a career specialist, with a five-year goal to fund that position.

Sustainable Food Systems:

While Extension has a strong history of supporting rural areas, Ohio is one of the leading states to recognize the interdependence between rural and urban and to extend programming accordingly. Cuyahoga County (home to the city of Cleveland) is one of the six counties in Ohio with a dedicated CD educator. In a recent example of this work, 60 traditionally underserved Cleveland residents participated in a series of trainings to learn how to start a small-scale, local food enterprise. Trainings included hands-on agriculture production workshops and field trips. After the program, local food entrepreneurs created 10 new businesses that generated more than \$65,000 in sales in their first year of operation.

Engaged Ohioans, Vibrant Communities:

The bulk of OSU Extension CD program efforts fall within this emphasis area. Major programs include but are not limited to Business Retention and Expansion (BR&E), leadership development, and strategic planning. The impacts of these efforts are impressive. For instance, a BR&E program conducted in one community identified a local manufacturer that wanted to expand. With this knowledge, community leaders worked with the company and state of Ohio to secure funds to support the expansion, creating 25 new full-time jobs and resulting in new investments of \$3 million in the local community.

Long-term impacts of leadership development programs are often hard to measure without a significant investment in longitudinal evaluation. As a result, the impact story from these programs tends to focus on short-term outcomes that can be collected in post-training surveys completed by participants immediately following educational events. In 2015, 100 percent of participants completing surveys in OSU Extension CD team building and leadership

development workshops indicated they gained a better understanding of their own strengths and those of their coworkers. Of those respondents, 100 percent also indicated that they plan to use the information gained in the workshop to build stronger working relationships with their coworkers and would recommend this workshop to others.

This final example highlights how CD programs can help Ohio communities become more vibrant. After completing a community-wide strategic planning process facilitated by CD faculty, Gallia County leaders were able to raise \$195,000 in public and private donations to launch a comprehensive county marketing campaign. In implementing another strategy included in that plan, county leaders worked with a local university to create and offer a new technology-based curriculum and degree to support the growth of a high-tech company that had recently located in the community.

Environmental Quality:

Balancing between economic development opportunities and environmental stewardship can be complicated. The review committee found evidence that CD faculty have been effective at working with partners and stakeholders within the university and beyond to tackle issues related to environmental quality while supporting other OSU emphasis areas. After receiving funding from the Economic Development Administration (U.S. Department of Commerce), faculty engaged in a three-year effort to study social, economic, and environmental impacts of shale development in 22 rural counties in eastern Ohio. Partners included regional economic development districts, Eastgate Regional Council of Governments, Northeast Ohio Four County Regional Planning and Development Organization, Ohio Mid-Eastern Governments Association, and the Buckeye Hills-Hocking Valley Regional Development District. They also engaged local economic development professionals and officials and worked to connect public and private partners. Key economic data were identified and measured to assess regional economic changes and identify high growth industry clusters and employers in the eastern Ohio region influenced by oil and gas development.

Efforts in this emphasis area also focus on direct support for farmers. An on-farm solar energy development program developed at Ohio State has garnered interest from institutions in other states, including Purdue, Michigan State University, University of Wyoming, and Nebraska. The program focused on energy policy, net metering policy, renewable energy technology, and case studies designed to help farmers identify on-farm energy applications and conduct an assessment to inform energy investment decisions. Nine farmers who attended the program have since installed an on-farm solar system to offset a portion of the electric needs for their farms. Combined, these systems will generate roughly 382,800 kWh annually while offsetting nearly 512,952 lbs. of CO² greenhouse gases per year. In addition, five participants used information from the program to evaluate their solar project proposals and determined it was not a good investment for their business and/or farm. The on-farm solar program and materials have been included in other OSU Extension program area events, such as Agronomy Day workshops, the Small Farm College (Wooster and Wilmington), and the Agriculture Lenders Series.

Recommendations

It is clear to the review committee that the OSU Extension Community Development program area is highly valued, respected, productive, and committed to achieving OSU Extension CD's mission, vision, and values. OSU Extension leadership should be commended for organizing an exemplary review process demonstrating sincere interest in evaluating the status, effectiveness, and progress of programs to carefully consider future direction and priorities. All of those who participated in the interviews are eager to support this program area as it establishes its future direction and priorities. This review is timely since, according to the *Ohio State University Extension Community Development Internal Self-Study* report, "significant opportunities exist to expand in the areas of civic engagement, leadership development, and rural vitality." However, "limited staffing inhibits the ability to address these opportunities."

After reviewing the reports and documentation provided to the committee and carefully considering the comments of those who participated in the interviews, the committee is offering the following recommendations for future direction and priorities, organized under the topics of communication, alignment with University and Extension mission and goals, current and relevant programming, engagement with partners, and staffing.

Communication

Key findings:

Without exception, every group interviewed indicated the CD program area needs to better communicate who they are, what they do, and the value they bring to Extension, the university and the state.

Better communication, in this case, is viewed as a way to inform and enhance visibility. With an extremely broad mission, OSU Extension's CD personnel are addressing a wide and diverse set of needs and issues. In fact, the community development profession is quite broad and diverse. This by its nature, creates a challenge to effectively describe and define its purpose, mission, goals, and objectives to a broad range of constituents. One person said that "CD is more wonky than other areas of CFAES," meaning its breadth and diversity touch many sectors and audiences throughout the state. It is cross-cutting and multifaceted, which imposes opportunities and challenges considering the high level of need and demand and limited resources.

People are not talking about Extension CD work, in part, because they have difficulty defining it. There is a need for communication to upper administration as well as partners and clientele. Success stories are needed locally. According to one participant, "CD needs a big story – a big win." The shale/gas programs were successful and are good examples of stories to tell. Business Retention and Expansion programs were also noted, but these impacts were known by limited numbers of individuals interviewed.

A more specific definition of CD in Ohio may be needed. What are the core responsibilities of CD faculty and staff? The majority of those interviewed struggled to define the areas of emphasis and organizational structure. County commissioners and other partners should have specific reasons to ask for a CD educator and a clear understanding of how the field specialists and educators are benefitting the state. Commissioners need to be aware of CD resources and expertise and the programming available.

Communication recommendations:

Coupled with better communication, definition and priorities is marketing and elevating the visibility of the CD programs. Part of this is telling the success stories and getting the word out to both internal and external partners and audiences. County commissioners, for example, help pay for local Extension work, and they are less likely to fund a CD person or a joint CD/ANR person if they do not understand what CD can do for them. Likewise, upper administration or advancement personnel will find it difficult to “sing the praises” of CD unless they clearly understand its mission, vision, and areas of emphasis and have tangible, quantified examples of resonating success stories.

The statements above regarding communication of mission and visibility are not to say that CD is failing to do these things. Rather, the committee has the distinct impression that there are areas for improvement for the betterment of CD, Extension, Ohio State, and ultimately, the state of Ohio.

Develop a clear, consistent, and easy-to-understand message of the work that CD provides and how it relates to Extension’s overall priority areas and multidisciplinary issues that Ohioans are facing. This message should be provided internally to staff, to other program areas, and to administrators. It should also be provided externally to faculty and community partners, commissioners, and the Ohio State Office of Advancement.

Along with this, develop clear public value statements based on impactful CD programs. Find an internal and external champion who can “talk-up” the work of CD regularly on your behalf. The external champion ideally should be someone who has participated in and benefited from CD programs. Train all staff in CD on public value messaging. Connect with states that do a good job with public value messages. In today’s economic climate, decision-makers like to know the private value of Extension programs (evaluation data) but are just as interested in the public value of this work. Ensure staff talk about the private and public value when relaying impacts to others.

When communicating about CD work, use language the public can understand. Consider a review of the four emphasis areas of programming CD provides: economic development, leadership development, organizational capacity building, and community planning. Are there ways to reorganize, more clearly define, and/or simplify this message to better help clientele understand the programs available that will help make a difference in their lives and communities?

These recommendations are consistent with those presented in the OSU Extension CD *Ohio State University Crowdsourcing Insight Summary* report where a significant concern shared by most of the participants was communication. Participants emphasized the importance of publicity and promotion of the CD program. A recognized number of participants were not aware of the CD program and its contribution to OSU Extension in their respective counties. The report recommends that CD increase its publicity in all counties of Ohio, which can be achieved through a marketing strategy as well as building and maintaining partnerships with communities and community leaders as recommended by many of the participants. In addition, participants suggested more collaboration between CD and other OSU Extension programs for more efficient and effective programming.

Alignment with University and Extension Mission and Goals

Key findings:

The mission of Ohio State University Extension is ***We create opportunities for people to explore how science-based knowledge can improve social, economic and environmental conditions.***

The mission of OSU Extension CD is ***helping communities enhance their well-being and create social, economic, and environmental conditions in which they can thrive.*** Its vision is to be ***a leader in community development education and partner in the implementation of strategies to achieve community and organizational goals.***

Interviews suggested that leadership is needed around coordination of teamwork within the entire Extension system. Leadership is needed to help integrate all program units around economic outcomes, human capital development, and workforce development. Also consider how all these topics interface with CD, 4-H, ANR, and FCS. The CD program area is seen as a good fit to be able to accomplish these overarching goals for the organization.

Alignment with the university and Extension mission and goals recommendations:

Consider ways to incorporate CD's vision into opportunities for the overall Extension organization. Are there opportunities for staff development based on CD knowledge and expertise (evaluation, facilitation, community development for all)? Within this context, a review of the four emphasis areas of programming CD provides (economic development, leadership development, organizational capacity building, and community planning) may be useful to consider opportunities to reorganize, more clearly define, and/or simplify this message. This simplification could better help clientele understand programs offered and make these alignment opportunities with the overall Extension organization and staff development opportunities easier to define.

Current and Relevant Programming

Key Findings:

The *Ohio State University Crowdsourcing Insight Summary* provided multiple examples of pressing issues OSU Extension CD staff could address to best meet the needs of Ohioans. Themes included workforce development, economic development, drug and alcohol challenges, and collaborations and partnerships with communities and elected officials. Many of these issues are currently being addressed by CD professionals and fit well within their scope of work and emphasis areas, yet there are significant issues that are not being adequately addressed. Interviews also suggested that programs are developed and based on local needs that can be identified through local assessments. These include recent Extension programs in shale development and leadership development for township officials.

Administrative suggestions for current and relevant programming included entrepreneurship and intentional connections with others on campus. Questions on the changing population, health challenges, transportation, what is left in small towns (strategies for shrinking smart), brain drain, and what matters to communities were raised. Specific questions included, "how is Extension CD making a difference, and what are the ways staff can help with workforce development/upskilling/re-tooling?"

Current and relevant programming recommendations:

There were multiple references to reducing the breadth of programming to focus on greatest

strengths, value, and outcomes. Like many organizations, Extension has difficulty letting go of good programs in order to begin new programs that may be more relevant at a point in time. If CD will better define and prioritize its roles in Ohio, then staff assignments and staff replacements over time may be transformed into higher value impacts and outcomes, and better integrated into the overall Extension system. This not only has the potential to enhance CD, but more importantly, enhance the public service benefits to the citizens at large. This yields good public accountability coupled with public support.

Multiple conversations around elected officials came up. CD has a rich and successful history with training for township leaders and may want to consider renewing and expanding these successful programs to include other units of local government, particularly county commissioners. Programming for these elected officials helps them in their work and builds political capital for Extension when staffing needs are considered.

The CD team should consider more transdisciplinary work around central issues. Examples are the farm crisis task force and opioid task force. Sometimes it takes a crisis to make these issue teams connect, but it is suggested that the CD team continue to identify opportunities for transdisciplinary work programs and initiatives, and actively engage leadership and faculty in other disciplines to explore program potential.

Engagement with Partners

Key findings:

OSU Extension CD partners in delivering evidence-based programs and services to individuals, organizations, and communities to develop skilled and engaged leaders, sustainable and livable communities, and greater vitality with a more defined sense of purpose. It was immediately clear that internal and external partners all had great respect for the work done by CD professionals, but most were not clear about the entire scope of work of CD specialists and educators. They would often connect with Extension at meetings but did not always work with them directly on community-based programs or projects. All partners recognized that Extension's staff were "over-stretched," so they did not always feel comfortable reaching out because of an anticipated response of "being too busy."

Ohio State campus research faculty expressed a desire to work more with Extension, and there are some examples of successful partnerships that have taken place. A research project regarding re-use of industrial land was noted as a good relationship with Extension and campus faculty that continues to this day. Other faculty are told they should work more with Extension, but again, Extension's response is often that they are too busy to take on a new project or initiative.

Partners indicated that Greg Davis is a phenomenal connector. Other CD staff members are being called because they are great to work with and are facilitators and connectors as well. One partner during interviews indicated, "When you've had them as a partner, it's great; but when you don't have them as a partner, it is challenging to get any partnership going."

The promotion and tenure structure sometimes conflicts with CD needs. Faculty research projects are typically short-term and emphasize academic publications; whereas CD projects are often long-term with emphasis on community involvement. However, there are many opportunities for additional engagement with campus faculty and Extension programmatic development. It can be a challenge to reconcile these needs, but there are models of transdisciplinary engagement that could be applied if all parties were receptive and adaptable.

Engagement with partners recommendations:

While additional partnership opportunities were noted within the College of Food, Agricultural, and Environmental Sciences, many opportunities for partnerships were also identified beyond the traditional groups of faculty that are located in CFAES.

One suggestion included identifying and using “connectors” to connect CD with the wide range of resources that exist within the university. Like many Extension programs, CD has more opportunities than resources. The panel heard several people talk about leveraging CD resources through interdisciplinary and cross-college connections. Moreover, CD already has established many external partnerships, but individuals and organizations on all levels are extremely busy. Therefore, finding and/or developing people who are well networked is a real need. These “connectors” may not personally have the expertise needed, but they have relationships with those who do.

Consider ways to partner further with county commissioners in defining local Extension efforts, especially as they relate to CD work. Several of the groups recognized that county commissioners play a very large role in directing local Extension programs; and while it is important to maintain a good relationship with the county commissioners who help fund local programs, it is also imperative that they not dictate local programming, hamstringing the potential value of the local Extension office. Citizen advisory boards are not always being effectively utilized and may also provide suggestions in furthering local CD efforts.

Staffing

Key findings:

Staffing numbers have been reduced dramatically in the CD area since the 1990s at land-grant universities across the country. In OSU Extension CD, there are currently seven county educators, four dual-program county educators, four field specialists, a program assistant, the assistant director (state program leader) and 13 others including Sea Grant in the OSU system working on CD-related programs. There are fewer split/combo county educators than there once were that incorporate CD and ANR, or CD and FCS, or CD and 4-H. Multiple people during the interview process suggested the need for more of these positions. A county staff member with this combination of responsibilities commented that “CD is a breath of fresh air! CD has a lot of positives, gives a lot of flexibility, and there should be more combination roles – all counties could have a combination. Have it everywhere! Best part of Extension is together.... Working on an issue.... Not within a silo. Program areas should be meeting together. There is value in this.”

Specialists in CD have been on staff longer than county CD staff, and some are near retirement. There is no succession plan in place. Conversations should begin on this to ensure the valuable work and the relationships developed will continue. Several of the people interviewed commented on the need for a CD succession plan.

Some interviewed felt that all Extension professionals do CD work, but again, many within Extension and many external partners don't understand what that means. There was some concern that others feel FCS is doing the same work as CD, so there should be an effort to differentiate between the programs or to work together more on interdisciplinary issues.

Staffing recommendations:

Expand the CD reach and be responsive to local needs by partnering with other program areas for staffing and cross-training (4-H, ANR, FCS). Dual-appointment personnel at the local level (such as ANR/CD) have become scarce, but there seems to be clear potential for enhancing the value, role, and visibility of all programs by appointing more dual-role individuals at the local level. Since young people are the future of every community, is it logical to consider 4-H/CD Extension staff? Even if a formal CD appointment is not made, it seems prudent for CD to seek partnerships with 4-H for the long-term. Are more field specialists needed? While current field specialists are in high demand, additional needs were identified that field specialists could help to address.

Summary and Conclusions

Key findings:

During the external review interviews, virtually every group interacting with the panel had very positive things to say about the OSU Extension CD programs and personnel. People see dedicated, professional, committed individuals with extensive experience. Here we re-state the key findings and share some related thoughts.

- CD leadership is responsive, open-minded, proactive with opportunities, likeable.
- CD has a hard-working, high-quality team.
- There are multiple resources and partners available within the college and across campus.
- There is high demand for community development work – a broad suite of issues identified and potential priority areas.
- CD work has recognized value and relevant programs. Partners value current programs and others are willing to pay for CD programs and services.
- There are positive collaborations (faculty in college and other program areas in county).
- CD personnel are appropriately proactive and reactive to issues statewide/locally.

Multiple quotes supported the work of CD professionals during the face-to-face interview process. “CD is a breath of fresh air.” “Organizations are often willing to pay for their services, that is, there is tangible, measurable value in several aspects of the work being done.” “CD has been proactive on the energy issues, especially shale oil and gas.” “Research faculty have found CD professionals to be good collaborators.” “There are success stories from cross-college collaboration.” “Community engagement is a success for OSU.” “Extension plays a role in informing OSU of local conditions.” “Greg Davis is a great connector and mentor.”

There is a high demand for CD work when considering the issues Ohioans face today. The issues of workforce development, leadership development, entrepreneurship, and healthy vibrant communities are all identified as critical to the future of the state. CD can be that glue that holds all program areas together, or a “one-stop” connector. This work has resonated with business owners and entrepreneurs, and pairing CD work with 4-H, ANR, or FCS may help the visibility of this important work.

The ultimate challenge for OSU Extension is to define, communicate, and measure the scope of work that is and will be performed with existing resources. It will also be important to successfully leverage those resources with the other Extension program areas as well as the land-grant mission of The Ohio State University as a whole.

This challenge is important because, according to the *State of Community Development in Ohio* report, “Ohio is a diverse state.” It is both rural and urban, with transportation routes enabling commuting for employment. Economic activity varies across the state and includes manufacturing, agriculture, and service employment. Construction continues throughout Ohio. Specific opportunities and needs for community development vary across the state by region, by county, and in some cases from community to community. There is no one consistent community development model or approach. Among the community development organizations, there was no indication in their public reports of a specific model followed. It is clear to the public that staff are trained in a discipline and focus their efforts in areas that directly represent the

organization itself (e.g. planning commissions know planning and focus on community planning). Generally, the responsibility for a community development activity or approach is determined by that effort's geographic scope. For example, local efforts are led by a local organization (e.g. local chamber of commerce), county-level efforts led by a county-level organization (e.g. county economic development board), multi-county efforts are led by a multi-county or regional organization (e.g. regional planning commission), and statewide efforts are led by a statewide organization (e.g. JobsOhio) or economic development groups. Similarly, there are more than 1,600 township boards of trustees and 87 boards of county commissioners in Ohio that implement a variety of community development approaches in carrying out the respective statutory responsibilities of the political subdivision. Because of OSU Extension's reach throughout the state, it has the potential to help connect these dots or build the capacity to do so across the state.

The external program review committee would like to commend OSU Extension for proactively embarking upon a multi-year voluntary practice for self-study and external review in order to build the Extension organization of the future and ensure that the organization remains relevant and responsive to the needs of Ohioans in the 21st century and well into the future. Every land-grant institution in the country should dedicate time and resources to this valuable process. The process OSU Extension has embarked upon could serve as a model for every land-grant institution in the country.

While the depth and breadth of issues identified in this review may seem daunting given the current level of funding and staffing, it is the hope of the external review committee that these findings will lead to an ongoing process of engagement of OSU Extension CD with the key stakeholders both on-campus and off-campus. This provides a foundation to guide program development on a continual basis; evaluate the status, effectiveness, and progress of programs; and identify future direction and priorities.

As noted in the *Ohio State University Extension Community Development Internal Self-Study* report, the challenges facing communities are continuous. While OSU Extension CD has worked for more than 60 years to address opportunities and concerns, there is without a doubt continued need for Extension CD programming. How OSU Extension confronts these challenges will depend largely on the organizational decisions it makes with respect to the allocation of resources.