

## Frequently Asked Questions – designEXT

### General Questions

#### Where will regional directors and assistant directors land?

Roger has talked with the individuals who will be affected and asked them to provide information about their expertise, experience and interests that fit different opportunities within the new model. Each individual will land in a position that meets both his or her skills and the organization's needs.

#### Will there be opportunities to be considered for various leadership positions in the updated OSUE structure, including and beyond area leader?

There will be a variety of opportunities for those interested to pursue leadership positions. As additional leadership opportunities are identified, they will be shared with the organization.

#### How will we explain the model to county commissioners?

No communication between you and your county commissioners is necessary at this time. OSUE Administration is working with CFAES Government Affairs and developing talking points for use with commissioners. Regional directors will work with county offices to determine the best strategy for following up with commissioners on what the restructuring means for each county specifically. Please DO NOT begin conversations with commissioners about the area leader concept and backfill until you are asked to do so by the director and with the talking points available.

Most counties will not see a change in service, because many of the initial changes are administrative in nature to help our organization function more effectively and efficiently, often behind-the-scenes. As a result, our county personnel will be better able to deliver programs that meet local needs. The new model will impact counties differently, so individualized explanations will be shared as necessary per county.

The new model is reducing the local administrative role of some educators, and those educators will be able to focus more time on local programming and interaction with clients and stakeholders, as well as accessing resources. They may also have additional time to participate in regional or statewide programs, which also reflects positively on the educator's home county.

In the counties where an individual is selected to become an area leader, we will work directly with that county to develop a backfill arrangement that meet the needs of the county. Other counties that no longer have an educator with administrative responsibilities may be able to provide collaborative/reciprocal programming.

#### How do we explain to county commissioners or taxpayers within our county why our area leader might spend a significant portion of his or her time working with other counties?

The vast majority of counties will have a net gain of FTE devoted to programming. A limited number of counties will have a portion of their programming FTE redirected toward administration of a multi-county administrative unit. If an area leader's programming is reduced in his or her county, a backfill should be able to meet the majority of gaps in programming. In addition, for those counties where educators have been able to return to 100 percent programming and no longer have CED responsibilities, yet benefit from the area leader's support and collaboration, it makes sense that educators in non-area leader counties can offer some programming to the county that hosts the area leader throughout the year to provide reciprocal value. This helps provide a seamless customer and commissioner experience and allows educators additional opportunities to share their expertise across county lines – a win/win for everyone.



**What about counties that are working together on grants, camps and other programs when the counties have now been split by different county groupings?**

These types of working relationships will continue to function, and it is expected that cross-county projects will continue. Programming should not be constrained by any county combinations that have been set up to address administrative functioning.

**What is my role until I know more information about how this restructuring affects my county and me?**

We recognize the restructuring of our organization can bring a level of uncertainty and can be distracting to your work. However, we need each of you to be dedicated employees to and within the organization. Please continue working for the overall good of the organization's mission and vision. At the end of the day (and the restructuring), there should be very little disruption to clientele. The customer experience will only benefit from the changes that are being made. They will experience the same type of interface as they call, email, visit the office or participate in local programming. In fact, as the system begins to benefit from the support of the Operations and Learning and Organizational Development teams, the dedicated support from area leaders, and the forthcoming impact area team resources, clientele should continue to thrive under this new model.

**How do I respond when my colleagues are sharing information (i.e. rumors, speculation, the Extension grapevine) that has not been shared with the system?**

It is imperative that, as professionals, we wait until we receive official communication from OSUE Administration before we share any news and/or information with others. Engaging in rumor discussions can and has had detrimental effects on our organization's credibility and with some of the plans that have not been fully developed and approved. If you have questions about something you have heard and would like clarification on its accuracy or want to share general questions or concerns, please contact any member of the OSUE Administrative Cabinet. Remember, rumors, speculation and public sharing of grievances or concerns can have very serious impacts on our stakeholder support with very real implications for funding. A professional approach to seeking valid information is critical, as is our ability to share accurate information in the approved format and with the right stakeholders at the appropriate time. Please be patient as we work through many challenging and complex decisions. The end goal is to have a highly functional system that supports the needs of the clientele and funders, while offering timely and relevant operational and programmatic support and resources to all of our OSUE professionals.

**How does this plan affect levy-funded counties?**

This model should not affect the levy-funded counties in any significant way. The county offices will still be responsible for determining how to fill local positions and identify local educational programs to meet the needs of the county.

**Area Leader Questions**

**How will the area leaders be determined?**

Area leaders will be appointed by the Operations team leadership, much like current county directors are appointed by regional directors. The final map for new county combinations and the position description for area leaders will be shared broadly over the next few weeks. Those individuals who are interested in pursuing an area leader position are encouraged to let their regional director know their intent. Regional directors will also be reaching out to some potential candidates whom they feel have the desired competencies, if those candidates have not already expressed an interest. The area leader position is not limited to those currently holding CED roles. The appointment terms and stipend are being determined and will be shared shortly.

### **What are the county combinations? How are they determined?**

The county groups are not determined yet. We requested input from everyone in the system, with some parameters, about how the counties could be grouped. The deadline for receipt of that feedback was November 30. The feedback is currently being organized and summarized for use in the development of a final map for consideration by OSUE Administrative Cabinet. A small work group will be working over the next two weeks to design a map that best meets the administrative needs of the entire organization.

### **What is the “compensation package” for area leaders?**

There are multiple considerations that factor into the total compensation package of area leaders. The area leaders will have access to additional professional development opportunities; some additional financial compensation for their expertise in handling this administrative role; and some funding to the area leader’s home county for previous programmatic responsibilities that revert to others in the county office. The cost and viability of the compensation package is being evaluated and will be shared when the area leader position is distributed broadly in the near future.

### **What is the percentage of programming versus administration?**

Extension administration will define the broad administrative duties of the area leader. This position is **NOT** a combination of regional director and county Extension director positions. Some current CED and RD tasks will now be handled by the Operations and Learning and Organizational Development teams. The remainder of CED tasks will be shared among others in the county office. This distributed leadership approach will allow county teams to continue to have ownership for and collaboration around critical county functions. For instance, most county professionals would say they want there to be transparency about county budgets and they want to have some input into annual budget discussions. They also want to have significant input on what legislative visits within their county might include. They also would likely want to maintain the role of relationship building and communication with commissioners. Through this model, the area leaders will be responsible for the administrative accountability of the county operations, but will work closely with county teams to ensure there is a good balance between roles and functions. With much of the business operations efficiencies and professional development now being led by the Operations and Learning and Organizational Development teams, more time will be available for area leaders to focus on critical tasks like hiring, coaching and mentoring, fiscal planning, conflict management, and giving support to counties for county-level plans of work.

As a result, the administrative tasks that an area leader acquires **do not** translate into a simple doubling or tripling of percentage of time spent on these tasks. Rather, everyone will see the benefit of the distribution of functions and the economies of scale that are experienced as professional support (administrative and programmatic) are increased across the system. We expect there to be some flexibility in the percentages of time allotted to administration versus programming for each area leader position based on the county combination needs and the expertise of the area leader. Some positions may be less than 50 percent administrative, and some may be more.

### **How are we going to pay for the backfill? What is the strategy for backfilling positions?**

A pool of funding will be available for backfill, and specific details will be negotiated with the counties as needed. Specific backfill strategies will be determined to best meet the needs of the counties from which the area leaders originate and what particular program backfill needs are identified. We anticipate there will be a significant level of flexibility to use backfill funding to best meet the needs of the county. For instance, the funds might be used for: moving another part-time professional to full-time to address gaps in programming; hiring temporary positions or subcontracted positions to meet specific programmatic seasonal or topic specific needs; or covering a percentage of the cost for another educator. There are many options that can be

assessed and implemented based on unique county circumstances. The backfill determinations will be made together with the area leader, the county from which the area leader originates, and the director of Operations.

**What if an area leader changes his or her mind and wants to go back to the 100 percent educator role?**

The area leader roles will follow a similar process as the appointment of CEDs. This appointment will have a specific negotiated term length, at which point the appointment will be reviewed and continue as is, or it will be adjusted. Most backfill positions will be temporary or term to match the negotiated appointment of the area leader to facilitate a return to a 100 percent educator role when desired. This process will be handled by the Operations team.

**Can an A&P educator supervise a faculty member?**

Yes. It is important to remember that annual performance reviews are conducted by OSU Extension to help employees achieve their maximize potential as they fulfill the roles and responsibilities of their positions. Performance reviews are performed by OSU Extension. Annual performance reviews are conducted for all employees of the organization regardless of position type. Performance review is a human resources function.

The Department of Extension is the academic home, or TIU, for approximately 70 faculty members. The department manages the processes that allow these faculty members to achieve tenure and be promoted in rank. This process is separate from the process used to assess annual performance, and it is conducted with guidance from the Office of Academic Affairs.

The promotion of administrative and professional (A&P) educators is managed by OSU Extension, not the Department of Extension.

The Learning and Organization Development team and the Operations team will provide training and support to area leaders to ensure that expectations for performance are uniformly understood and applied. Area leaders also will meet annually to calibrate their evaluations of all personnel they supervise – including office personnel, program assistants and coordinators, and educators. Through this process, we will ensure that all personnel in a similar job group receive the same rating for comparable work.

**Will area leaders have authority to hold educators and staff accountable for their work?**

Yes. The area leader will coach, mentor and be responsible for evaluating performance to create a cohesive, proactive area team of professionals. The area leaders will receive input, tools and support from the Learning and Organizational Development and Operations teams to help build “self-managing teams.”

**Stewardship Roles**

**What are the differences in the roles of area leaders and county stewards?**

- Many administrative responsibilities required of the previous CED role will be moved to area leaders, the Operations team and the Learning and Organizational Development team.
- Duties that will remain with county personnel are tasks that office teams have typically shared in the past and that we know counties will want to keep (e.g., building and maintaining strong relationships with county commissioners, local stakeholders, public officials, etc.) and that counties will want to have a central role in planning (e.g. budget, hiring county personnel).
- The area leader will be responsible for the administrative tasks/administrative oversight (ensuring budgets follow policy, working with HR, initiating HRAs, DocuSign process,

conducting performance evaluations, etc.); but the county stewards will support and influence those processes – ensuring that local needs are met as processes are completed.

Below is the **proposed** distribution of leadership functions by position or team.

Functions to be managed by the **Operations Team**:

- Leadership for hiring, coaching and mentoring area leaders.
- Leadership for area leaders in developing staffing plans and in the process of hiring, supervising, and evaluating educators, program and administrative staff.
- Leadership for policy communication, guidance, and implementation support.
- Leadership for reviewing and evaluating local business procedures.
- Leadership for reviewing and evaluating risk management procedures.
- Support for area leaders in (a) preparing and managing county budgets; (b) resource management, analysis and development; and (c) fund development and management.
- Leadership for developing and communicating strategies for profitability and competitiveness including providing leadership for grants and contracts.
- Support for area leaders in managing facilities and equipment.
- Support for area leaders in managing conflicts and conflict resolution practices.
- Support for area leaders to develop their career paths and professional development plans.
- Liaison with CFAES IT, Business Operations Center, etc.

Functions to be managed by the **Learning and Organization Development Team**:

- Leadership in the development and provision of professional development educational trainings for program and support staff including early-career (onboarding, mentoring), mid-career (career pathing and development, operational and competency trainings), late-career (succession planning).
- Leadership in professional development trainings for area leaders to ensure uniformity and consistency in position performance. Early training opportunities will center around understanding the multicounty leader role, conducting county and multicounty needs assessments and designing county and multicounty strategic plans around the impact areas. Subsequent and ongoing training opportunities will include performance management and coaching; working with public officials; communicating impacts/impact area evaluation processes; working with advisory committees, the CFAES Office of Equity and Inclusion, CFAES Advancement and local donors; branding; working with media, internal communications, risk management, and others.
- Professional development training and support in transitioning to an impact area emphasis in programming. For example, conducting local needs assessments and strategic planning (creation of plans of work for single counties and multicounty groups).

Functions to be managed by the **area leaders**:

- Supervise, mentor, and coach county educators, local staff, and county teams. Area leaders will observe and write evaluations of program personnel, including educators; will write teaching observations; and will handle other appropriate supervisory tasks.
- Leadership for the process of hiring county educators and other county personnel (will work collaboratively with county educators on the hiring process).
- Provide management for resource portfolio expenditure approval (major expenses, e.g., travel), and reconciliation, grant management, backup for county level for timesheets and travel reimbursements. Accountability for local guidance and support in developing county budgets.
- Support and guidance for county personnel in conducting legislative activities (e.g., biennial budget visits, CFAES Legislative Luncheon participation, building and maintaining relationships with county commissioners, advisory committees, etc.).
- Provide administrative leadership and accountability in conducting county needs assessments and development of county strategic plans.
- Provide administrative leadership and accountability for risk management.
- Conflict management.

As citizens within our Extension organization, we are all responsible for ensuring our county offices are operated effectively, efficiently, and in ways that realize our vision and mission. Functions to be **managed collaboratively by all personnel in each county**:

- Providing a positive work environment for all staff members in the county unit by demonstrating teamwork and interdisciplinary programming; modeling effective listening, oral and written communication skills; and collaborating with educators and support personnel to support all county operations.
- Local leadership for building and managing relationships with public officials including state legislators, county commissioners and stakeholders (e.g., advisory committees). Local leadership for planning and conducting legislative visits and working with advocates to attend the CFAES Legislative Luncheon, etc.
- Manage county operations (e.g., approve timesheets and travel reimbursements, participate in the determination of county-level operational procedures, approval of eRequests).
- Guide and support the day-to-day activities of personnel.
- Participate and support the process of hiring county educators, as well as other program and office support personnel; support hiring of SNAP-ED and EFNEP as appropriate and requested by those program leaders.

### **Why won't county stewards get a stipend?**

The goal of this effort is to create self-managing teams within counties. The tasks county stewards will handle at the local level are not administrative in nature; rather, they are functions that must be performed to ensure the overall well-being of the office. Most professionals will find they are only asked to give leadership for a few items (that will be negotiated annually) that they are likely excited about doing (e.g., social media, leading EAC meetings, attending commissioner meetings). Other functions county stewards would participate in include budget discussions, county plans of work, and community awareness. These are all functions that historically involved or should have involved a county team approach anyway.

### **Operations Team ▪ Learning and Organizational Development Team**

**Will the Operations team and the Learning and Organizational Development team really be in place before the beginning of 2018?**

Learning and Organizational Development and Operations leadership will be identified in the next 30 days and will begin planning incremental implementation of each team.

### **How will the OSUE structure changes affect local program and support staff positions?**

This structure will not affect local program and support staff positions. No one will lose his or her job based on this change in our model.

### **During the transition, do we continue to work with our regional director and/or a new area leader?**

You will continue to work with your current RD until you are notified that we are transitioning into the new areas. The intention is to have this be a gradual implementation that allows for a thoughtful and smooth transition from working with your RD to working with your area leader.

### **As the plan goes more public, how do we respond to client requests for information about the plan? In other words, to whom do we refer these questions?**

Contact Cheryl Buck, Extension communication manager, with any questions. ([buck.19@osu.edu](mailto:buck.19@osu.edu))

*- approved by OSUE Executive Team – December 5, 2017*