

Frequently Asked Questions – designEXT

Timeline and Funding

Q: This whole restructuring process seems like administration wants it to be fast tracked, but it is still moving very slowly. Is there a good dependable timeline for the restructuring?

A: We want the process to be accomplished in a timeframe and manner that results in some immediate benefits to the organization while reducing some of the strains on the system. Any “hurry up and wait” instances in the projected timeline are a result of making sure that all aspects requiring human resources, legal, finance, and college leadership approvals are met. Sometimes the projected timeline is accurate, and sometimes the wheels of progress move a bit more slowly than anticipated. While we understand this can be a bit unnerving, please be assured that the end goal is to improve program and operational support for the organization so we can optimally meet the mission of Extension and bring value to our communities and to our clientele.

Q: What plans are in place for the long-term financial sustainability of this model? There are concerns that at some point, it is going to come back to the counties to contribute financial support to maintain the system.

A: Funding has been earmarked at the state for this purpose. We will NOT be asking counties to come up with any funding to cover this model.

Q: Assuming these administrative positions are being paid from state dollars, are you planning to increase the educator cost share next year?

A: Outside of unforeseen state or federal fiscal shortfalls, we anticipate maintaining our recent practice of \$500 annual increases in cost-share for the foreseeable future. We are not increasing county cost share to pay for changes implemented as a result of the designEXT process.

Q: Where is the money coming from for all of these new administrative positions?

A: The designEXT effort actually reduces the total administrative FTE count by 10.6 FTE and therefore reduces overall administrative FTE costs. The elimination of CEDs releases the CED administrative stipend, which is being used in designEXT to provide the stipend for area leaders. The additional new cost of implementing designEXT is exclusively for program FTE through program gap support to counties. Funds to do this will be allocated from state and federal Extension appropriations.

Q: Will the funding for all of these new positions affect our ability to hire state specialists?

A: We understand there are specialty areas that are not adequately supported. That said, reducing county-based program FTE is not seen as an appropriate way to obtain that support. Our priority now is to be able to fill new county positions as counties provide the cost share. We will continue to work with the academic departments to obtain specialty support where it is needed. If there are specific needs, please forward that information to the director or the appropriate assistant director.

Q: When you calculate the costs of paying area leaders and providing \$25,000 for area leader program gap support, why doesn't it make more sense financially and organizationally to simply hire one full-time regional director per existing EERA?

A: While it sounds like it would be less expensive, the actual cost of hiring one full-time administrator for each EERA would be much more than we are spending on designEXT. The cost of salary and benefits for five additional full-time administrators for nine EERAs would exceed \$1M.



Then, if those individuals were selected from our current educator positions, we would have to rehire full-time educators behind them and cover any difference in salaries and benefits beyond the cost share.

Another rationale for choosing this model is that it provides us with what we believe is the best option to improve organizational effectiveness. Following multiple administrative cuts during the last two decades, several retirements of key personnel, and recent centralization of the CFAES business services center and human resources, a number of Extension-specific support systems were affected, including:

- Extension-specific onboarding, professional development/continuing education and program support.
- Dedicated time and attention to Extension-specific strategic and business planning, budgeting, revenue generation, business efficiencies/effectiveness, hiring and performance development.

Hiring area leaders will increase access to frequent, consistent and timely support for educators. There also will now be a variety of support structures in place, specifically the Learning and Organizational Development and Operations teams, to allow for a more consistent process of coaching and mentoring Extension employees, particularly those new to the organization.

Area Leader Questions

Q: How were the new areas determined?

A: A summary of the process for determining the approved map of new county combinations (and area leadership needed) was distributed at the Extension annual conference and via a call for the formal expression of interest by potential area leaders (distributed February 19, 2018).

Q: Who is making the final selection of area leaders? What happens if no one in a particular group of counties applies for the area leader position?

A: The individuals who requested area leader packets were sent information, with a deadline to submit their formal interest by March 1, 2018. Emails also were sent to anyone who had self-nominated, been nominated by others, or had responded to the call for interest shared via the all-Extension listserv. All submissions will be reviewed by Operations team leadership, regional directors, and CFAES HR. Appointments will be made by Director Rennekamp. If no one in a particular group of counties applies, Operations team leadership will reach out to potential candidates who have shown relevant leadership capacity.

Q: Will area leader positions have a set term of appointment (i.e. one, three or five years)? What is the process if someone decides he or she does not want to continue in an area leader position and wants to return to his or her previous position? Will that be an option?

A: The area leader roles will follow a similar process as the appointment of CEDs previously. This appointment will have a specific negotiated term length, at which point the appointment will be reviewed and continued as is, or it will be adjusted. Any area leader who chooses not to continue in an area leader position will have the option of returning to his or her previous appointment following the appointment of a replacement area leader. Most area leader program gap support will be temporary or term to match the negotiated appointment to facilitate an area leader's return to a 100 percent educator role when desired. This process will be handled by the Operations team.

Q: Who supervises the area leaders?

A: Area leaders will be supervised by the Operations team, but the supervisor has not yet been named. We are awaiting final approval from CFAES HR to announce this individual.

Q: Has any thought been given to combining the area leader position with some type of specialization leadership?

A: We have considered an ability for the area leader to specialize (e.g., in farm management) and offer some programming to counties across the state, IF he or she can provide an area leader program gap support plan that ensures all of the needs for the county from which he or she originates are addressed.

Q: What does the typical month look like for an area leader? How much time per month should be spent in the counties? How much time will have to be spent in Columbus? Are these time commitments realistic with 50 percent committed to programmatic responsibilities (that we know will still be more than 50 percent)?

A: Answering what a typical month for an area leader looks like is a lot like answering what a typical day in the life of an educator looks like. It will depend on the counties, the area leader and the season. However, we do not expect area leaders to physically be in each of their counties every week, nor do we intend for them to be “circuit riders” and have offices in each county. Most area leaders will be able to maintain a high level of contact and engagement with the limited number of counties under their leadership. We believe that between occasional visits, frequent phone calls and emails, Zoom meetings, and area retreats (perhaps quarterly), a high level of interface will be possible without overly taxing the area leader. Remember, they are not adding a full-time administrative role on top of a 100 percent programming role; rather, they will be reducing their programming and should receive some benefit of economies of scale for the administrative function. In addition, not every county needs the same amount of attention every week and there are often cycles to programming.

Very little time will be required in Columbus. Most ongoing training and support (weekly to begin and then monthly) after the initial three-day training will occur through Zoom meetings or via an Operations team member visiting the area leader in his or her own area. We anticipate a quarterly group face-to-face meeting in Columbus.

Q: What are the county combinations? How are they determined? (*updated March 8, 2018*)

A: A multi-faceted process was used to solicit feedback on critical factors (both quantitative and qualitative) that must be considered when mapping out the smaller administrative units. The following steps were taken to ensure a robust conversation with multiple stakeholders occurred:

- An initial small group (included experienced county Extension directors and regional directors) contributed input on factors that should be considered in identifying smaller administrative units. The feedback from these individuals led to a systemwide solicitation of comments about what factors needed to be considered and any suggested maps (45+ responses were received).
- These responses were analyzed for themes on critical factors, a full assessment of proposed county combinations was summarized and shared with Administrative Cabinet.
- Another small group discussion was held with the regional directors who were able to share knowledge about the partnerships and information about counties where no county-level feedback was provided, as well as a host of other considerations known to them through their day-to-day work within their regions. We also included input from four additional educators who are currently assisting with RD responsibilities, because we felt they had a strong understanding of county administrative roles and programming expectations,

were aware of county partnerships (internal and external) and could speak for their peers from a similar perspective.

- This data was closely reviewed by Cabinet, most particularly the regional directors. Themes from the input (e.g., commissioner partnerships, history of working closely, shared services or positions, partnering agencies and organizations, geographic proximity, similarities/commonalities between counties, and other factors) were identified and used to begin designing a map that would best incorporate the systemwide feedback, but also meet the needs of the number of employees supervised. We also considered the demands of building partnerships and funding support in counties where these challenges exist.
- A sounding board was invited to provide final feedback, which included representatives from JCEP/ESP, CES, and the regional support staff. In addition, we asked Jesse Buxton to review the data and maps in his role as county fiscal officer and how this role will interface with the business office and fiscal. The recommendations and input were considered, and where appropriate, incorporated into the final map that was approved by Administrative Cabinet and shared at the Extension annual conference on January 23, 2018.

Q: What is the “compensation package” for area leaders? (updated February 25, 2018)

A: 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.

A financial analysis as well as benchmarking against national peers for comparable roles was performed. The following stipend and area leader program gap support amounts were approved:

- **\$7,500 annual stipend:** We have confirmed that retirement benefits are calculated on aggregate earnings (all earnings and compensation), not base pay. In addition, retirement is based on an employee's highest three years of earnings, not his or her last three years.
- **\$25,000 annual area leader program gap support amount:** We believe the success of any area leader program gap support will depend on how well it meets the programming needs of the county hosting the area leader. Therefore, we don't want to be too prescriptive. We have suggested several options including seasonal employees, part-time employees, contract employees, adding FTE to someone who is currently part-time, or providing honorariums to colleagues (e.g., other educators) who provide various programs (e.g., Quality Assurance, PAT) for the new area leader.

Q: What is the percentage of programming versus administration?

A: 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 distributed 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 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 stewardship 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) is increased across the system. To minimize the time, efforts, or funding complexities necessary to negotiate varying appointments, all area leaders will begin as 50/50 administrative/program splits. Adjustments can be made in the future if this isn't the right balance.

Q: How are we going to pay for the area leader program gap support? What is the strategy for addressing this support? Is it realistic to expect to find qualified part-time people for \$25,000 to cover any program gaps, particularly when the position is more technical (pesticide recommendations or money management for families) and not organizational?

A: Funding will be available for area leader program gap support, and specific details will be negotiated with the counties as needed. Individualized strategies will be determined to best meet the needs of the counties from which the area leaders originate and what particular program support needs are identified. We anticipate there will be a significant level of flexibility to use program gap support 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 implemented based on unique county circumstances; this could include seasonal employees, part-time employees, contract employees, adding FTE to someone who is currently part-time, or providing honorariums to colleagues (e.g., other educators) who cover various programs (e.g., Quality Assurance, PAT).

We believe the success of any area leader program gap support plan will depend on how well it meets the programming needs of the county hosting the area leader. The area leader program gap support determinations will be made together with the area leader, the county from which the area leader originates, and the director of Operations.

We anticipate that most counties will not choose simply to use the \$25,000 for a part-time program gap supported position. Instead, we are already hearing from individuals about creative ideas for how they would use the program gap support. Specific alternative ideas shared have included:

- Payment to other educators from across the area or state to provide education, convening/facilitation, or other locally determined needs (e.g., teaching Quality Assurance, PAT, or Real Money. Real World)
- Payment toward seasonal or summer assistance
- Subcontract for Extension-affiliated partner/professional to cover a project or series (e.g., multiple parenting series or co-parenting after divorce)
- Subcontract for 4-H project/process support (e.g., camping, teaching, staffing, event management, grant management)
- Subcontract for school-enrichment programs (e.g., STEM, financial literacy)

Q: What, if anything, will change at the county level?

- A:**
- CEDs not migrating to an area leader role will return to a 100 percent educator appointment.
 - A limited number of counties (approximately 20) will have a portion of their programming FTE directed toward administration of a multi-county administrative unit. These area leaders will spend approximately 50 percent of their time as administrative leaders to a small county combination (most between three to five counties). The other 50 percent of their time will continue to be devoted to programming in their area of expertise and addressing county needs.
 - If an area leader's programming is reduced in his or her county, program gap support funding (from the state office) will be used to meet any anticipated gaps in programming.
 - The changes should feel seamless to clientele at the county level. There should be no loss of programming as a result of the change in administrative structure.
 - A renewed culture of stewardship will help us to better leverage the strengths of all local employees.

Supervision Questions

Q: Can an A&P educator supervise a faculty member?

A: The Office of Academic Affairs has confirmed that there is nothing in university policy which prevents someone who does not hold faculty rank from being the immediate supervisor of a faculty member so long as the annual faculty review is done by the TIU (tenure-initiating unit).

The Department of Extension is the academic home, or TIU, for approximately 80 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. Individuals who hold faculty rank in the Department of Extension will be evaluated by the chair or associate chairs, with input for the review provided by individuals the chair deems appropriate. There are many examples of this type of supervisory relationship across campus.

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

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 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 ensure reliability between 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.

Q: Can someone pursue faculty with one of the new positions since 50 percent of his or her time will be spent on administrative matters?

A: Yes. All promotion committees start by reviewing the job description and the biographical narrative, which would reflect this appointment. Areas of specialization and themes could include

their programmatic expertise and organizational capacity building for the administrative portion of their work.

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

A: 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-stewarding teams.”

Stewardship Roles

As stewardship teams, all county personnel will share responsibilities for achieving operational effectiveness and educational impacts (mission effectiveness). Operational effectiveness includes such things as planning and managing local finances in conjunction with the county fiscal officer; building relationships with elected officials, advisory committees, and other stakeholders in partnership with the director of Government Affairs; and ensuring that personnel are supported and that office communication is effective. Educational impacts (mission effectiveness) will include developing a county plan of work based on the outcomes of a locally-conducted community assessment that identifies critical impact areas in which Extension programming will serve the highest local needs and enhance and expand communities’ awareness of Extension’s unique and vital local contributions. The county plan of work will guide the county team’s coordinated efforts in achieving and documenting meaningful impacts for local residents and stakeholders.

As employees within our Extension organization, we are all responsible for ensuring our county offices are operated effectively, efficiently, and in ways that reflect our vision and mission. This doesn’t mean all personnel are equally responsible for managing the budget, communication with elected officials, conducting needs assessments implementing every aspect of the county plan of work, etc. Rather, like all effective teams, teammates will assume different roles and responsibilities. Someone may want to lead the team’s fiscal efforts, while another person may choose to lead the team’s outreach to elected officials, and yet another may guide the community needs assessment. Teams will work together as stewards of county operations and decide together how to share their responsibilities.

This also doesn’t mean that counties will be left on their own to figure out how to share operational and impact responsibilities. The Learning and Organization Development team will provide training and tools, and area leaders will provide support and expert guidance to county teams in accomplishing their stewardship arrangements.

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

A:

- 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 Finance, CFAES HR, CFAES IT, Ohio State Legal Affairs, 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 multi-county leader role, conducting county and multi-county needs assessments and designing county and multi-county 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; compliance with university 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 multi-county 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, as well as write teaching observations and 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 employees 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 within 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 CFAES Legislative Luncheon, etc.
- Act as a liaison to the area leader to manage county operations (e.g., oversee timesheets and travel reimbursements, participate in the determination of county-level operational procedures).
- Guide and support day-to-day activities of personnel.
- Serve as a point person to the area leader during the hiring of county educators and other program and office support personnel; support hiring of SNAP-ED and EFNEP as appropriate and requested by those program leaders.
- Initiate HRAs in conjunction with the Operations team; larger counties that currently have a staff person designated to initiate HRAs will continue to do so; an area leader will be an HRA approver.

Q: Why won't county stewards get a stipend?

A: 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.

Communication with Stakeholders

Q: How will we explain the model to county commissioners?

A: 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 area leader program gap support 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 their time on local programming and interaction with clients and stakeholders, as well as accessing resources.

In the counties where an individual is selected to become an area leader, we will work directly with that county to develop a area leader program gap support 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.

Roger and Adam Ward have met with the CCAO leadership and are working to schedule some appointments with a subset of county commissioners to ensure that the 20 counties where area leaders will be selected are comfortable with the model and area leader program gap support strategies. We also have plans to hold a Q&A session through CCAO for commissioners to have all of their questions asked and concerns addressed. **No communication between you and your county commissioners is necessary at this time.** OSUE Administration is working with CFAES Government Affairs to develop 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.

Q: 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?

A: The vast majority of counties will have a net gain of FTE devoted solely to programming. A select number of counties will have a portion of their programming FTE redirected toward administration of a multi-county administrative unit. In these counties, area leader program gap support should be able to meet the majority of identified programming needs. In reality, there should be very little, if any, disruption to clientele. The changes should feel seamless to clientele at the county level. 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.

Q: When will the area information be released to the counties as a whole? (the rest of the staff have not received the information, only what we've told them from the conference).

A: A number of professionals received the new area map at annual conference, but we will follow up with all staff in the next few weeks to ensure that they have received it. In addition, we will work with every county as area leaders are identified to ensure they understand how this model will affect them and their direct supervision.

Q: 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?

A: It is imperative that, as professionals, we wait until we receive official communication from Extension 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 yet 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 Extension Administrative Cabinet. Remember, rumors, speculation and public sharing of grievances or concerns can have 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 Extension professionals.

Operations Team ▪ Learning and Organizational Development Team

Q: How will the Extension structure changes affect local program and support staff positions?

A: 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.

Q: During the transition, do we continue to work with our regional director (RD) and/or a new area leader?

A: 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 and adopting county steward leadership roles.

Q: 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?

A: Contact Cheryl Buck, Extension communication manager, with questions. (buck.19@osu.edu).

General Questions

Q: Where will regional directors and assistant directors land?

A: 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.

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

A: Over time, there will be a variety of opportunities for those interested in pursuing leadership positions. The goal is to effectively implement the model and then, as additional leadership opportunities are identified, they will be shared with the organization.

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

A: 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.

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

A: 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 Extension mission and vision.

Q: How does this plan affect levy-funded counties?

A: 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 identifying local educational programs to meet the needs of the county.

Q: Do the impact areas have leadership or guidance for implementation in the counties?

A: The impact area construct of the model will be discussed more during the next few weeks.
Look for an update from Roger soon.

*~approved by OSU Extension Executive Team (December 5, 2017)
Reviewed by OSU Extension Administrative Cabinet (updated March 8, 2018)*