

Tennessee Extension

County
Program
Advisory
Committees
Guidebook

Real. Life. Solutions.

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INSTITUTE OF AGRICULTURE
THE UNIVERSITY OF TENNESSEE

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Tennessee Extension

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Best Practices for Establishing Program Advisory Committees

The success of the Tennessee Cooperative Extension Service relies on the active participation of Tennesseans in carrying out county-based programs. We strive to involve local people and Extension staff together to ensure an effective Extension program. Advice and guidance from a strong, well-constructed, and managed advisory committee made from local volunteers is essential and a tremendous asset for success. They help ensure the local and statewide Extension program is relevant and addresses the highest priority needs can be an asset to your programming and outreach efforts as Extension agents. Starting and maintaining one often takes a backseat to the day-to-day operational needs of the job. This document overviews the benefits of program-specific advisory committee, and outlines steps to getting your committee well-grounded. There are additional handouts available on the Marketing Toolkit.

Why Do You Need an Advisory Committee?

Extension's mission is to help Tennesseans improve their quality of life and solve problems through the application of research and evidence-based education about agriculture and natural resources, family and consumer sciences, 4-H youth development, and community economic development. Strong county Extension committees are the essential link between citizens and the programs and priorities of Cooperative Extension. We are striving to increase knowledge, improve practices, and change lives. To accomplish this, each program-specific agent must determine:

- Who are your stakeholders (“the people”)?
- What are their needs?
- Which representatives of the identified stakeholder group(s) would best contribute to the successful functioning of the advisory committee?

Within county Extension offices, there are often two types of advisory committees. The first is the **County Agriculture Committee** –managed by the county director; they provide guidance and support for the overarching issues and activities of the entire county Extension office. They are a mandatory group as per [Tenn. Code Ann. 49-50](#). The second is a **Program Specific Advisory Committee** – Ag & Natural Resources (ANR), Community Economic Development (CED), Family & Consumer Sciences (FCS) or 4-H Youth Development (4-H) and is managed by the individual Extension agent.

These committees can serve several functions that benefit Extension. Some examples of their roles include:

- Ensure a broad-based Extension program is available to all citizens
- Provide insight to identify and prioritize local needs, issues and opportunities to address
- Provide crucial and critical feedback on current programming
- Brainstorm and execute future programming offerings
- Offer a forum for program stakeholders to communicate their opinions, share their expertise, and help coordinate services with other community organizations for partnership
- Support, market, represent and advocate the Extension program to community leaders, policymakers, and key decision-makers
- Identify and help obtain volunteer and/or financial resources to implement programs

Remember, one of the most defining factors of an effective advisory committee is the attitude of the Extension Agent working with the group. If you are genuinely desiring and seeking out their input and involvement, the members are often more engaged and active.

Top 9 Reasons to Have a County Extension Program-Specific Advisory Committee

1. **Program Sustainability for Future Generations** — If the right individuals are members of your committee, they can assist in making sure the vision for Extension is carried out long after you ride off into the sunset.
2. **Tell the Extension story** — Volunteers can be our best form of marketing. Inspired and empowered, advisory committee members can be our best advocates to county residents, legislators, county commissioners, and other decision makers
3. **Offer individuals in your county a new leadership development experience** —In Extension, we develop people. Many Extension advisory committee members have gone on to accept other leadership roles because they gained the confidence and skills by being part of an Extension advisory committee.
4. **Make new connections, develop new advocates, and form new friendships in your county** — As an Extension professional, you can never know too many people or be too connected. Your advisory committee members also appreciate the connections they form with you and other members.
5. **Have community input into your programming** — Your advisory committee can help you achieve Extension’s purpose, which is creating learning partnerships that help adults and youth enhance their lives and communities.
6. **Help conclude programs that are no longer relevant to your county’s needs** — Sometimes giving up sacred programs is challenging, but if your committee is telling you to and supporting you when you do so, ending a program will be easier.
7. **Make your work life easier** — Advisory committee members can assist you in prioritizing the programs that are most important to carry out during the upcoming year.
8. **Give input about your programs** —The work you are doing is meeting the needs of your constituents. Advisory committees can be a barometer to gauge if you are making a difference in your county.
9. **Assist your successor** — Having an effective advisory committee in place is the best gift you can give a new agent coming into your county. Program-specific advisory committee members can assist the new agent(s) in understanding the needs of your county, introduce the new agent(s) to key leaders in your communities, and provide a support system while this individual is getting established.

Resources:

Denny, M. (2018, July). Extension Advisory Committees: An Introduction. Retrieved March 14, 2023, from <https://extension.msstate.edu/sites/default/files/publications/publications/p2899.pdf>

Ohio State University Extension. (2018, February). Ohio State University Extension Advisory Committee Guidelines. Retrieved March 14, 2023, from

<https://extension.osu.edu/sites/ext/files/imce/PPHandbook/Extension%20Advisory%20Committee%20guidelines-18Feb14.pdf>

University of Kentucky, & Kentucky State University. (2022, May). Kentucky Cooperative Extension Service Council System. Retrieved March 14, 2023, from

<https://psd.ca.uky.edu/sites/psd.ca.uky.edu/files/KYCES%20Councils%20Publication%20rev%20June%202022.pdf>

Vettern, R., & Klapperich, C. (2017, August). *Working Effectively With Advisory Councils and Other Leadership Groups*. <https://www.ag.ndsu.edu/publications/leadership/working-effectively-with-advisory-councils-and-other-leadership-groups#section-0>. Retrieved March 14, 2023, from <https://www.ag.ndsu.edu/publications/leadership/working-effectively-with-advisory-councils-and-other-leadership-groups#section-0>

Steps for Developing an Effective Advisory Committee

1. Establish the purpose of the county program-specific advisory committee.

Before you can start to build the membership of your committee, you need to clarify its purpose and scope. For example, a program-specific advisory committee whose priority is to increase partnership collaboration and communication will likely have different membership than one whose primary purpose is to organize activities or raise funds. Remember that your county program specific advisory committee is meant to guide and challenge you, as an Extension professional, to think outside the box, take calculated risks, reach underserved and nontraditional audiences, and help make your programming better.

When working on this step, ask yourself the following questions:

- Do I want an advisory committee that can advocate for my program and increase its visibility, both internally and externally?
- Do I want a working committee that can take on specific tasks to support my Extension activities, or do I want an advisory group that can provide informed input as I plan new activities or develop policies and procedures?
- Do I need the advisory committee as a structure for keeping partners engaged and community members informed, or would it be most helpful to have a small group of people with specific skills and connections that can help me get things done?

The nature of Extension is such that, in most cases, a well-oiled, effective advisory committee will need to do all of the things listed above. Recognize that this will be a tall order for anyone volunteering to serve on such a committee. It is up to you to pick the right people, keep them well-informed and regularly engaged, and demonstrate your appreciation through some form of incentive or recognition of their efforts.

2. Recruit members that fit with the committee's purpose.

In the beginning, it is natural to first turn to people you already know or those who have already expressed interest in being involved in your program area. While this base of supporters is a good start, think strategically about whom you want to serve on your committee and the skills they will need to be of greatest benefit to your programming efforts. Make efforts to recruit members who have differing views from your own, are known to be creative or imaginative (big-picture types), and may challenge you to think critically. Additionally, consider recruiting members who have not traditionally been clients of Extension programming in your county but may represent a potentially underserved group that could benefit from Extension's services. Place emphasis on not appearing to simply place people on the Advisory Committee in order for government and institutional quotas are satisfied. As you recruit members, ask for suggestions from other agents, regional Extension program leaders, partner agencies, and others.

Examples of these potential members could include:

- Current or former Extension agents
- Current or former volunteers
- Representatives of partner organizations
- Representatives from key community-based organizations that serve target audience(s)
- Representatives from your community's cultural, racial, and ethnic minorities
- Other criteria may include a diversity of opinions, experience, a balance of age and gender

representation, geographical location, socio-economic status, program areas, or membership from specific partners

By federal law, advisory committee members should be selected on a nondiscriminatory basis without regard to “race, color, religion, sex, age, national origin, gender, disability, or veteran status”.

The skills you look for as you build your committee depend on its purpose.

- If it is primarily to raise funds to support your Extension program, seek out members with grant-writing, event-management, business, or marketing skills.
- Need members to articulate and advocate for your mission? Skills in public speaking or journalism might be helpful.
- If you need help with program policy and procedures, skills in management and attention to detail will be important
- All members should be able to communicate well, listen and learn, and provide constructive advice.
- They should be enthusiastic about Extension and have a genuine interest in helping with your mission.

3. *Develop structure and clarify expectations.*

It is important to help your advisory committee members develop as a team and establish a strong sense of ownership in the process from the very beginning. Your first meeting will be devoted to getting members acquainted with you, each other, learning about Extension and your current programming efforts in the county. If this is a brand-new committee, a necessary task to immediately follow the introductions will be the development of the committee’s basic operating procedures. This includes items such as these:

- whether there will be officers
- how often the committee will meet
- meeting structure and guidelines
- term(s) of service

Even if some of these have been set up in advance and you’re re-establishing an advisory committee, the members should review them and suggest improvements. Once members have established basic operating guidelines, continue to engage them by starting discussions about the work they were recruited to do. Before determining exactly what that work should be, they need to understand what your program is all about and what their mission and level of involvement will be.

- **Orient members to Extension programming efforts.** Describe long-term goals & objectives and current activities. Include information about current audience(s) you serve, partnerships, past or current struggles or barriers to success, and other program basics. The goal is to provide enough information that committee members will understand what you do and how things work, in order to then offer suggestions that make sense. Provide information in writing for members to review and refer to later.
- **Review the advisory committee’s mission.** If committee members were not involved in creating the mission, they should review it and see if it reflects why they are there. It should be something they all feel reflects what they want to be. Let them know in advance if there are any requirements dictated by Extension administration, your funding source, or other entities that may limit changing the mission.
- **Clarify the committee’s expectations and limits of authority.** Your advisory committee should be there to make recommendations, give opinions, and offer assistance, but has no

decision-making authority. Ensure that members know how their advice will be used, and how final decisions will be made. Develop good communication with your program area-specific advisory committee so that members see that their work is recognized and taken seriously.

- **Establish membership guidelines.** Committees should consist of 12-20 members who can aid your program. Have a rotation set up so members do not become stagnant or burned out. Members should serve no more than 2 consecutive terms for a total of 6 consecutive years.

4. ***Empower the committee to develop a clear plan of work.***

Advisory committee members may request direction on what their specific role(s) should be and what activities they will be involved with, but in order for them to be fully invested, they need to develop their own plan of work based on the information you provide. It is strongly recommended that you walk them through a planning process.

- Facilitate a conversation with committee members about which aspects of your program would benefit from their support. Examples might include volunteer recruitment and training, fundraising, or community awareness.
- Conduct a needs assessment. Discuss which of the identified aspects need support right away and what level of support is needed. Ask the committee to select one or two actions for short-term goals and at least one or two more for long-term goals. This step of allowing committee members to establish these priorities will help ensure their commitment and support of your efforts moving forward. Make sure the priorities set are realistic and fill a real program need.
- Help the committee establish measurable objectives and specific activities for the chosen priorities.

The purpose of a county Extension program-specific advisory committee is to make your job as an agent easier and more focused. With proper planning and preparation on your part as to the purpose of the committee, recruitment and orientation of relevant members, and establishment of clear and appropriate guidelines and expectations, your advisory committee can serve you well.

5. ***Be Willing to Accept Unfavorable Feedback.***

In order to be an effective Extension educator and program planner, one must be willing to accept unfavorable feedback from Advisory Committees. If one is honest with themselves, it will help them improve.

Resources:

Denny, M. (2018, July). Extension Advisory Committees: An Introduction. Retrieved March 14, 2023, from <https://extension.msstate.edu/sites/default/files/publications/publications/p2899.pdf>

Ohio State University Extension. (2018, February). Ohio State University Extension Advisory Committee Guidelines. Retrieved March 14, 2023, from <https://extension.osu.edu/sites/ext/files/imce/PPHandbook/Extension%20Advisory%20Committee%20guidelines-18Feb14.pdf>

Vettern, R., & Klapperich, C. (2017, August). *Working Effectively With Advisory Councils and Other Leadership Groups*. <https://www.ag.ndsu.edu/publications/leadership/working-effectively-with-advisory-councils-and-other-leadership-groups#section-0>. Retrieved March 14, 2023, from <https://www.ag.ndsu.edu/publications/leadership/working-effectively-with-advisory-councils-and-other-leadership-groups#section-0>

Roles and Responsibilities of the Advisory Committee

(NOTE: Extension staff should review this list of expectations to reflect the responsibilities of the program-specific committees in their county. This can serve as the basis for a job description if needed)

Purpose & Function of Member:

1. Meet with Extension agents for the purpose of reviewing local program-specific needs and concerns.
2. Identify needs which Extension educational programs can address through informal observation, analysis and feedback and periodic formal needs assessments.
3. Help strengthen program efforts through identification:
 - a. new and underserved audiences
 - b. new and underutilized marketing methods
 - c. new and underutilized community resources
4. Provide support to determine programming priorities and help set appropriate goals for upcoming work.
5. Ensure the necessary volunteer leadership for conducting program-specific Extension programs.
6. Assist with implementation of programming and evaluating Extension programs annually.
7. Advocate for Extension with funding agencies, stakeholders, and the public.
8. Increase public awareness of Extension programming and resources.

Qualifications:

Committee members need to represent and establish rapport with current or potential clientele groups while at the same time seeing the broader picture of county and community needs. Members should be able to function in a group with good communication, critical thinking, and decision-making skills. We value diversity, visionary thinking and individuals who can help identify emerging issues. Members need a basic understanding of Extension's mission and identify with a commitment to the mission. It is expected that members will meet with the committee whenever possible.

Benefits:

Members will:

- Affect the lives and futures of individuals, communities and the county as a whole.
- Develop personal working relationships with community leaders and Extension staff.
- Enhance their own leadership and program development skills while contributing to helping develop others
- Gain satisfaction and fulfillment as they see progress in various program initiatives
- Gain insight to other local county programs through local collaborations and other UT/TSU programs as well
- Receive opportunities to experience Extension trainings, forums, and workshops on leadership and volunteer programs.

Resource:

Kentucky State University & University of Kentucky. (2022, July). Duties & Responsibilities County Extension Council Member. Retrieved March 14, 2023, from

<https://psd.ca.uky.edu/sites/psd.ca.uky.edu/files/CEC%20Position%20Description%20rev%20July%202022.pdf>

Kentucky State University & University of Kentucky. (2022, July). Duties & Responsibilities Program Area Council Member. Retrieved March 14, 2023, from

<https://psd.ca.uky.edu/sites/psd.ca.uky.edu/files/Program%20Council%20Member%20Position%20Description.pdf>

University of Kentucky, & Kentucky State University. (2022, May). KENTUCKY COOPERATIVE EXTENSION SERVICE COUNCIL SYSTEM . Retrieved March 14, 2023, from

<https://psd.ca.uky.edu/sites/psd.ca.uky.edu/files/KYCES%20Councils%20Publication%20rev%20June%202022.pdf>

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Timeline for Developing an Extension Advisory Committee

Note: Individual Annual Plans (IAPs) are submitted to the Regional Program Leader November 1. County Extension Directors will review and submit IAPs for their unit on or before November 1st deadline. Timelines can be adjusted to meet deadlines set by the County Director for submission of the IAPs.

- 1) July
 - a) Set date(s) for Advisory Committee meeting
 - b) Complete a needs assessment data review
 - i) Talk to County Director and co-workers about needs of the program
 - ii) Review data sources to share with committee and to enter in the SUPER Needs Assessment module, including: census, school enrollment, Census of Agriculture, local media, commission meeting minutes, etc.)
 - iii) Survey needs of members of the general public and industry
 - iv) Identify potential audiences
 - c) Identify and contact individuals who might make good members
- 2) Late August - Early September –
 - a) Send invitations to the committee members at least two-weeks beforehand. With the invitation, include:
 - i) Draft agenda
 - ii) UT-TSU Extension brochure (if applicable) or other general marketing materials
 - iii) County program highlights and/or impacts
 - iv) Data related to discussions (note data review above)
 - v) UT-TSU Extension website links (County and State)
 - vi) Tennessee 4-H Youth Development website
 - vii) Any other websites relevant to your Extension work
 - b) Meet with Advisory Committee
 - c) After the meeting, enter data
 - i) Members of Committee in to SUPER Enrollment
 - ii) Committee findings in the SUPER Needs Assessment module
- 3) Late October –
 - a) Submit Individual Annual Plans (IAPs) to the County Director
- 4) November 1 –
 - a) Submit Individual Annual Plans (IAPs) to the Regional Program Leader

Resources:

University of Florida/IFAS Extension. (2014, February). Advisory Committees: A Guide for UF/IFAS Extension Faculty. Retrieved March 14, 2023, from

<https://extadmin.ifas.ufl.edu/media/extadminifasufledu/Extension-Advisory-Handbook-2015.pdf>

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Community Recruitment Worksheet for Finding a Committed and Enthusiastic Advisory Committee

Identifying Possibilities

Once you have a position description, you need to approach possible candidates to fill those positions. Answer these questions to help identify possible members to get your committee going. These are some groups you may want represented on your program-specific advisory committee. You do not need to have representation from all areas, but a good cross section should be represented. Be sure to look for diversity in every aspect! This makes your committee stronger.

Organizations/Agencies	Most Powerful Leaders	“Rising Stars” Within This Organization	Former 4-H’ers/ Extension Supporters Within Organization	Contact(s)
Local businesses (large or small)				
School systems (local, city, PTO/PTA organizations, student council, etc.)				
Agriculture Producers & Businesses				
Non-Profit or Civic Groups (United Way, Rotary, Lion’s Club, etc.)				
Law enforcement (city, county, judicial)				
Social services/public health (medical, financial, health departments, disabilities, etc.)				
Higher Education/Career Development				
Media Outlets (radio/newspaper/tv)				
Government (city, county, chamber of commerce)				
Childcare Organizatons (daycare, preschools, Head Start, caregivers)				

Youth Organizations (YMCA, Boys/Girls Club, Community Center, sports organizations, school clubs)				
Community Organizations (faith-based, retirees, neighborhoods, etc.)				

In your county, who are the “movers and shakers,” the organizations that have had strong success coordinating projects that involve multiple organizations and agencies?

Organizations That Coordinate Multiple Activities Within Multiple Groups	Most Powerful Leaders Within the Organizations	Strongest Advocate for UT/TSU Extension Within the Organization

Review your resulting list of names. Circle names that are on two or more of the lists. This is your primary pool of potential advisory council members.

Identify how you can reach these candidates to recruit them for positions.

People With These Qualifications	Contacts (People who can help me reach these people)	Strategies (How can I best reach these people?)

Write a message to sell the member(s) on the job.

1. Why should this job be done? What is the need for Extension in this county or community?
2. What will the benefit be to Extension, this county, and/or this community if this person’s job as an advisory committee member is done well? What will the work accomplish? What difference will it make?
3. What will be the benefit to the advisory committee member in doing the job (skills gained, community/county connections made, etc.) It’s the WIIFM (what’s in it for me) factor.

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Knowing Your Local Policymakers and Community Leaders

Local: (county government)

County Mayor/Executive _____

Chair of your county commission _____

Name your county commissioners (by district)

When does the commission meet? _____

Have you requested to be added to any communication regarding meeting dates and agendas? _____

Do you personally know the commissioner representing your home district? _____

Do you know the name of your County Mayor/Executive aide or secretary? _____

Community Leaders

List Community organizations and Presidents/Chairs of these groups (i.e. Lions Club, Fair Board, etc.)

School System(s)

Director of Schools _____

Chair of School Board _____

Name your School Board Members (by district)

When does the School Board meet? _____

Have you requested to be added to any communication regarding meeting dates and agendas? _____

Who are the Department Heads with the board of Education (i.e. Transportation, Truncency, Curicullium, etc.)

Pricipals at the schools

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Advisory Committee Member Data Sheet

Name: _____

Mailing Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ ZIP: _____

Email: _____

Telephone (home): _____

Telephone (cell): _____

Preferred Contact (circle one): E-mail Home # Cell #

Biographical Information:

Community involvement and/or leadership roles:

Skills, experiences, expertise, and special interests that you feel would help you carry out the mission of the Extension Advisory Committee and Extension program in _____ County:

(For Office use) SUPER data

Term (first, second, etc.) _____

Original Appointment _____

Last Appointment _____

Term Expires _____

Icebreakers for Meetings

Getting people comfortable in a group setting before the meeting can be the best investment of 10 to 15 minutes that you can make. Icebreakers increase creativity, influence the exchange of ideas, establish team identity, and create a sense of community. All of these factors are important in building an effective advisory committee.

Successful icebreakers for these types of groups generally consist of having members share memorable information with each other, by creating innovative ways to get people to introduce themselves or having group members collectively work on a problem where everyone has to contribute. Icebreakers can help facilitate this exchange of information and comfort in doing so at the very start of the team-forging process (Forming).

The following examples of icebreakers will help members feel relaxed and ready to focus on the agenda, as well as connect with others in the group. Choose the ones you feel fit your meeting and your group the best each time.

1. Nametags

- a. Prepare nametags for each member and put them in a box. As people walk into the room, each person picks a nametag (not their own). When everyone is present, participants are told to find the person whose nametag they drew, introduce themselves, and say a few interesting things about themselves. When everyone has his/her own nametag, each person in the group will introduce the person whose nametag they initially selected and mention something of interest about that person.
- b. *This helps participants get to know and remember each other.*

2. Brainstorm

- a. Break the meeting into teams of four or five individuals. Give each team a topic. Pick topics that are fun and simple, such as "What would you take on a trip to the desert?" or "Your favorite things about our county." Give your teams two minutes, no more, and tell them, "This is a contest and the team with the most items on their list wins." Encourage the teams to write down as many things as they can and not to discuss anything, just list things as quickly as possible. At the end of minutes, the team with the most items on their list wins.
- b. *This helps people share ideas without fearing what other people will think.*

3. Fact or Fiction

- a. Have everyone write down three surprising things about him/herself, two of which are true and one of which is made up. Each person, in turn, reads his/her list and then the rest of the group votes on which "fact" they feel is the "false" one. If the group does not pick a person's made-up "fact" correctly, then that person wins. A group can have more than one winner. At the end, the whole group votes on which of the "winners" of the final round had the most deceiving "fact."
- b. *This helps people get to know and remember their group members.*

4. Free Association

- a. The goal of this icebreaker is to have small groups generate as many words or phrases as they can that are related to a particular topic that focuses on the objective of your meeting. Give the group or groups a key word you want them to associate with and then give them two minutes to list, as quickly as possible, as many words or thoughts that pop into their heads. For example, if your county is trying to decide on whether to reduce travel and increase the use of videoconferencing, you might use the word "videoconferencing" and have people list as many words or phrases as they can that they associate with the key word. For example they might say: "saves money," "saves time," "impersonal," "get distracted," "data quality."
- b. *This reveals what people are thinking, similarities in viewpoints, and possibly even problem areas or topics that need addressing or further discussion.*

5. Desert Island

- a. Group people in teams of four or five and tell them they will be stranded on a desert island. Give them 30 seconds to list all the things they think they should take. Each person has to contribute at least three items. At the end of 30 seconds, tell the teams they can take only three things. Have the person suggested each item on the list tell why he/she suggested it and defend why his/her item should be one of the chosen three.
- b. *This helps the team learn about how each of them thinks, understand each other's values, and learn how each solves problems.*

6. Commonality Plus

- a. Group your meeting participants at tables. Ask each group to list 10 ways that everyone in the group is similar. Let them know that they cannot list body parts or

clothing and that what they select cannot have anything to do with work. One person at the table should be tasked to make their list. At the end of your time limit, have each group share its list with all meeting members.

- b. This is a great opportunity for your group members to learn about each other's hobbies, families, and common interests.*

7. Line Up

- a. As people enter your meeting, hand each one a piece of paper with a different number written on it. Ask the participants to arrange themselves in numeric order without using their voices or hands or showing their number.
- b. This helps the team think of other ways to communicate with each other and work together to achieve a common goal.*

8. Positive Event

- a. Explain to your group that research has shown “positive” events at work occur three to five times more often than “negative” events. However, the “negative” events have five to 10 times the impact. Research indicates a strategy to decrease the negative impact: At the end of the day, take a couple of minutes to reflect on the day and identify three positives that occurred throughout the day and why they happened. Describe to your group that you are going to complete a “mini version” of this strategy. Have each person identify one positive event/experience from his/her day and tell the group about it and why it happened.
- b. This helps the group develop positive energy and mindfulness.*

9. Participant Bingo

- a. Give each member a bingo sheet that has been tailored to your advisory committee. Explain that each square contains a statement and that members must circulate among the people in the room and find someone who has the skill or experience or fits the description for each box. Have that person sign his/her name in the box. You might want to time this activity and give a prize to the person with the most signatures when you call time. See Sample on next page.
- b. This helps people get to know and remember their group members.*

Coffee shop, café, restaurant, bar or lounge	Faith community	Sporting event
Workplace	Other	Retail store, bank or business office
Grain elevator or ag business	School concert, play, meeting	Family gathering

Participant Bingo – Sample

10. When, Where, and How

- a. Have advisory committee members select a partner. Have the partners discuss how they could share information about Extension opportunities at these locations. See Sample on next page.
- b. *This helps create a conversation about promoting Extension*

11. Tic-Tac Toe (sample below)

- a. Provide each person a copy of the tic-tac-toe grid. Have them wander around the room and have individuals sign a space where they have (or could) promote Extension and/or its programs. You can give prizes for each tic-tac-toe (three in a row), or for the number of spaces filled for just trying! (Linely, 2007)
- b. *This helps people get to know each other and discover things they may have in common*

Served on an advisory committee previously: _____	Drove a vechile on the highway before licensed: _____	Was a 4-H member as a child: _____	Can name the US Secretary of Agriculture: _____
Won a blue ribbon at the fair: _____	Can name the UT Extension Dean: _____	Can play a musical instrument: _____	Has lived in the county for 25+ years: _____
Has ridden horses: _____	Likes to shop: _____	Speaks 2 languages: _____	Traveled outside the US: _____
Attended the last State Fair: _____	Likes attending committee meetings: _____	Is a college football fan: _____	Loves spending time with animals: _____

Extension Advisory Committee Sample Agendas

Agenda 1: Agenda for the First Meeting of a Newly Formed Committee

County Extension Program Specific Advisory Committee

<date>

<time>

<location>

1. Welcome by Extension agent — The Extension agent responsible for the committee introduces him/herself as the temporary chair, distributes copies of the agenda, and appoints a temporary secretary.
2. Introductions and Team building/icebreakers — Use a quick “icebreaker” activity that helps committee members get to know each other and how or why they got involved with the committee.
3. *Resources in Our Midst* — In 30 seconds or less, please share:
Your name
Your position
I usually can answer a question about _____.
I always have wanted to ask a question about _____.
4. Orientation and Education
5. The agent discusses the purpose of the committee and its functions. Involve your regional staff if needed.
6. Discuss expectations. Be realistic.
7. Review the mission and accomplishments of Extension in your county. Use your county’s most recent impact reports and/or agent narratives. Involve other Extension agents and volunteers.
8. Information/Input Gathering From Advisory Committee Members:
Carousel Activity
9. This is a facilitation method used to highlight what your county Extension office is doing well and to discuss one issue in each program area (Ag, FCS, 4-H) that advisory committee members “wish” your office would focus on in the future. (See instructions below)
10. Identify major areas the committee will address at future meetings.
11. Set the date, time, and place for the next meeting.
12. Commitment and adjourn: Post-it activity
13. Have committee members write down one thing they have learned about Extension that they will share with a neighbor, friend, decision maker, etc., and have them stick it on their new committee folder. Have a few people share their idea. The temporary chair adjourns the meeting.

Prior to meeting, an email to committee members should include:

- Draft agenda
- UT-TSU Extension brochure (if applicable)
- Data for them to look at related to discussions
- UT-TSU Extension website
- Tennessee 4-H Youth Development website
- Any other websites relevant to your Extension work

***Please note:** The first meeting is scheduled for two hours to take into account the need for more time to review the roles of a program-specific advisory committee member, complete orientation, and gather input from your committee members. Future meetings should be one to 1½ hours long.

Carousel Activity Instructions

Facilitator notes:

- **Supplies:** flip charts, colored markers, tape, sticky dots, timer
- **Prior to meeting:** Place four sets of flip charts around the room. On the first set of flip charts on one wall, write “Ag - Wish For” and on top of that, stack a flip chart that says “Ag - Doing Well.” On the next set, write one that says “FCS - Wish For” and on top of that, stack one that says, “FCS - Doing Well.” On the next set, write the same thing for 4-H. On the final set, write the same thing for Community Vitality.
- ***Note:** Starting with a positive list of things always is a good idea, then discuss what committee members wish for in the future.

Instructions for Activity:

- Break the participants into four groups.
- Make sure each group has a different colored marker.
- Have each group go to one flip chart paper with an area of Extension on it. (The first time around, have groups discuss ***“What are we doing well in Extension programming in this area?”***)
- Nominate a recorder for each group.
- Tell participants that as a small group, they will have two minutes at each station to read the question and any ideas already written, and add their own answers to the sheet
- Also tell them the goal is to come up with as many ideas as they can, try not to criticize and **have fun!**
- The next time around, with a new set of flip charts with the areas of Extension on them, discuss: ***“What would you wish for around Extension programming in the future in this area?”***
- After the groups have finished rotating around and have posted what they wish for in each area of Extension, then use the nominal group process (voting dots) to prioritize the suggestions. Discuss what you, as a local county Extension office, realistically can focus on in the next year, example: (one ag issue, one 4-H/youth development issue, one FCS issue, one community vitality issue). Discuss that you can address other topics that came up in future years. Note: Progress on the four issues chosen should be shared at future advisory committee meetings.

Agenda 2: Agenda for an Established Advisory Committee

_____ County
Extension Program Specific Advisory Committee
<date>
<time>
<location>

1. Welcome, check-in, and team-building activity
2. Review of mission and purpose of program-specific advisory committee work. Are we on track?
3. Assess progress of committee work under way. Committee reports and discussion. Adjust program plans if needed.
4. Discussion of new issues that Extension should be addressing. What issues? How should they be addressed? Do we have new creative approaches we should be using to address these issues?
5. Evaluate program-specific advisory committee meeting effectiveness and make decisions about needed changes in the way the meeting is conducted.
6. Summarize assignments for each member and/or committee.
7. Set the next meeting date, time, location.
8. Adjourn
9. Thank you for your attendance and participation!

Tennessee Extension

Sample Letter/Email to Prospective County Advisory Committee Members

Sample Letter to Prospective County Program Specific Advisory Committee Members

Note Please use proper letterhead for this letter

<Date>

Dear <Prospective Committee Member>:

The University of Tennessee (and Tennessee State University) Extension is (are) the educational outreach component(s) of our land-grant university, (universities) UT and TSU. As such, it holds a three-way agreement in partnership with UT (TSU), the state of Tennessee, and the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

UT-TSU Extension provides programming and educational services to individuals and the communities of Tennessee. As part of Extension's organizational procedures, we seek and depend on the advice, support, and counsel of citizens in the community. These support groups are known as UT-TSU Extension county advisory committees. Advisory committees play a vital role in the success of the educational efforts of the UT-TSU Extension.

Each county Extension office works with an advisory committee. Due to your expertise and skills, you have been chosen as a potential member of the Extension advisory committee in _____ County. We invite you to become part of this group.

Membership consists of individuals who can advise and assist UT-TSU Extension in program planning, implementation, evaluation, and promotion.

Enclosed is an overview that gives more detail about the UT-TSU Extension. Should you have any questions, please contact: <County Office Information>.

We will contact you soon to discuss your interest and the date and time of this year's meeting.

Sincerely,

Sincerely,

<Name>

<title>

_____ County

<Name>

<title>

_____ County

Tennessee Extension

Sample Letter/Email to New County Advisory Committee Members

<Date>

Dear _____:

We welcome you as a _____ County Extension Program Specific Advisory Committee member and Extension volunteer. You will be working with a dynamic and diverse committee to advise and assist Extension in program planning, implementation, evaluation, and promotion.

The purpose of the Extension is to create learning partnerships that help adults and youth enhance their lives and communities. As a volunteer for Extension, you assume responsibilities essential for maintaining strong linkages with county residents.

Your responsibilities are outlined in the enclosed Advisory Committee Position Description. To assist you in your duties, Extension provides training, educational materials, and individual support and guidance to help you fulfill your volunteer role.

We are looking at meeting <Day, Date, & Time> at the <Location>. We will provide coffee and a snack. Please check your calendar and email _____ by <Date> if you can attend. We will send you a follow-up note confirming the date.

What: _____ County Extension Advisory Committee

When: <Day & Date>

Where: <Location and Address>

Time: 7 – 8:30 p.m.

Purpose: Orientation/Organizational

Thank you in advance for assuming this important task of working with us to maintain strong linkages with Tennessee residents. We look forward to working with you on this Advisory Committee. Please call or email us at _____ if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

Name _____

_____ County Extension Agent

Tennessee Extension

Sample Recruitment Follow-up Reminder

Note Please use proper letterhead for this letter

<Date>

To: (COUNTY) Extension Program Specific Advisory Committee

Dear Members of the _____ County Advisory Committee:

Most of you have responded that <Day & Date> will accommodate your schedule. Please reserve that date for our Advisory Committee meeting, which will start promptly at <time> here <insert location>. *I will have coffee and snacks ready before the meeting.*

_____ **Advisory Committee**

<Day, Date, Year>

<Time>

<location>

<address>

Attached are two documents for your information and review: *(if needed)*

If you cannot attend, please contact me before the meeting. **Thank you** for taking part in this important planning process.

Sincerely,

-your name-

-Title -

Real. Life. Solutions.

Tennessee Extension

Sample Letter/Email of Recognition for Advisory Committee Members

Note: Please use proper letterhead for this letter

This letter along with a memento could be sent as a follow-up, or in observance of National Volunteer Week or Extension Month or National 4-H Week)

<Date>

Dear John:

In observance of National Volunteer Week (Extension Month or National 4-H Week), I thank you for your participation and help with Extension education in our community as an Extension Advisory Committee member. We truly value your contributions to the program. **I hope you enjoy this memento of your Extension activity.**

Sincere greetings and best wishes,

Joe Educator

<Title>

Tennessee Extension

Sample Thank You Letter/Email to Advisory Committee Members

Note: Please use proper letterhead for this letter

<Date>

Dear Amy:

Thank you for your leadership at yesterday's Advisory Committee meeting. Your commitment and enthusiasm are indeed contagious!

I am enclosing some additional reading materials that pertain to issues that we discussed during the meeting. Please let me know if you have any questions.

Please reserve <Date> for our next Advisory Committee meeting. I will send you a reminder before the meeting.

Sincerely,

-your name-

- Title-

P.S. Amy, I appreciated your assistance in helping me set up the chairs.

Thanks!

(McKinney, 2005)

Tennessee Extension

Extension Advisory Committee Member Annual Affirmation of Service

1. I, _____, continue to be fully supportive of Extension's mission, purpose, goals, and leadership.
2. I understand that committee membership requires the equivalent of ___ days per year of my time, including preparation and meetings. I can give that time during the 12 months ahead, and I expect to attend all committee and committee meetings unless I give the chair advanced notice of my need to be absent for good cause.
3. I intend to contribute my service to the work of Extension during the year and will help open doors to friends who may be interested in contributing to Extension's work.
4. If anything should occur during the year that would not allow me to keep these intentions of being a positive contributor to our committee, I will take the initiative to talk to the officers about a voluntary resignation to allow another individual to serve who can be fully involved.

Signed _____

Date ____/____/____

Please return the signed statement to the Extension office in the envelope provided.

Thank you.

(Andringa & Engstrom, 2002)