



HANDBOOK

Ohio County Commissioners

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CHAPTER 136

OHIO STATE UNIVERSITY EXTENSION

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136.01 MISSION OF OHIO STATE UNIVERSITY EXTENSION (OSU EXTENSION)

Ohio State University Extension provides continuing education programs in agriculture and natural resources, home economics, community economic development, and 4-H youth development for the citizens of each county in Ohio. Major emphasis is given to economic development and to the related social and cultural needs of people.

The basic objective of OSU Extension is to help people utilize scientific data relating to agriculture, home economics, natural resources and related subjects to solve problems. The aim is an improved level of living for all citizens through increased understanding and use of up-to-date, scientific information. Programs are designed for both adults and youth.

Research-derived information is used in the development of educational programs. Major sources of information include: The colleges of agriculture and human ecology at OSU, the Ohio agricultural research and development center, the U.S. department of agriculture (USDA), and other land-grant colleges and universities.

The clientele, through advisory committees, aid in identifying needs and their perception of the future in order to develop effective programs. Thousands of Ohio's citizens help plan programs in each of the four program areas.

OSU Extension is a joint venture of the USDA, the state, and county. As such, the county program is an educational effort partially directed and funded by USDA, OSU, and county governments. Much of the program is county centered with major program decisions being reached at the local level. All programs are available to Ohio citizens without regard to race, color, creed, sex, national origin, or place of residence.

136.02 LEGAL BASIS FOR OHIO COOPERATIVE EXTENSION SERVICE

Funds made available by county, state, and federal governments to OSU Extension are appropriated for purposes as prescribed by state and federal statutes. Specific federal acts and sections of the Ohio Revised Code which relate directly to the operations of the OSU Extension include:

1. FEDERAL ACTS
 - a. Smith Lever Act, 1914 and Amended Smith Lever Act, 1972
 - b. Agricultural Marketing Act, 1946
 - c. Rural Development Act, 1972
2. STATE LAWS - OHIO REVISED CODE
 - a. Section 3335.35, OSU Extension Fund
 - b. Section 3335.36, Educational Program
 - c. Section 3335.37, County Support

These laws passed by the General Assembly and Congress are the legal basis for extension work in Ohio. In accordance with these laws and regulations, the Board of Trustees of the Ohio State University "...shall have the responsibility for expenditure of all money in the fund in accordance with state and federal law and memoranda of agreement between the University and the United States Department of Agriculture" (ORC 3335.35).

A major portion of available federal money requires matching funds by the state. Regular state appropriations and county funds are used to match federal funds and must be used for the same purposes for which federal monies may be expended (Smith Lever Act, Section 3, as amended 6/23/72).

State laws provide authority under which county commissioners may make appropriations for the support of extension programs to benefit the citizens of the county (ORC 3335.37).

136.03 COUNTY EXTENSION PROGRAM

OSU Extension focuses its efforts in four program areas that have been identified as needs in most counties. A brief explanation of the program areas follows:

1. AGRICULTURE AND NATURAL RESOURCES - Extension educational work with the agricultural industry includes elements of improving farm income, marketing,

utilization, distribution, and farm supply and assistance to agricultural producers, suppliers of agricultural production inputs, food processors, agricultural credit and finance agencies, and wholesalers, retailers and consumers of agricultural products.

The basic objective in this area is to help agricultural producers and those involved with agricultural businesses and industries develop a dynamic and economically sound agricultural industry. The degree of emphasis on each phase of the agricultural industry varies in different counties and in different periods of time. These variations are affected by changing needs pointed out by research and identified with the help of key leaders.

2. HOME ECONOMICS - The extension home economics program focuses on the economic, physical and emotional well-being of individuals and families. Programs that strengthen economic well-being include family financial management, home-based business and other methods of income generation, extending financial and other resources, purchasing strategies for food, clothing and other goods and services, protection from fraud and management of time.

Physical well-being is enhanced by participation in programs on nutrition, weight management, safe food handling, reduction of food-borne illness and selection of appropriate clothing when using pesticides.

Programs that enhance emotional well-being include parent education, providing infant enrichment, understanding adult development and aging, building self esteem and strengthening mental health, selecting clothing for self esteem, selecting day care, developing stress management skills, overcoming eating disorders and organizing support groups.

Leadership skills are developed through programs with extension homemakers and the family community leadership program. These educational programs provide participants both with information on the three areas of well-being and how to become involved in taking leadership roles in their communities including involvement in public policy formation. As volunteers, participants in these groups teach other clientele, thereby extending the information extension originally provided.

The expanded food and nutrition education program (EFNEP) targets low income homemakers with young children in 22 counties. Paraprofessional nutrition educators are trained to teach a specific curriculum to individuals and small groups of homemakers. This curriculum focuses on nutrition, food safety, food sanitation and wise use of resources to acquire food. Graduates of the program volunteer to assist the nutrition educators with new clientele thus extending the knowledge they have gained. In 11 counties, nutrition educators also target youth from low income families with a specific curriculum that has goals similar to the adult program with lessons that meet interests of youth.

3. 4-H/YOUTH DEVELOPMENT - Young people are our most important resources, and Ohio 4-H emphasizes programs that prepare this precious resource for responsibility. Through classical 4-H community clubs, 4-H short-term special emphasis groups and 4-H school enrichment groups, youth are offered a variety of ways to develop responsibility. 4-H helps boys and girls from diverse ethnic backgrounds and across economic boundaries enhance self-esteem and improve decision making, communication and leadership skills. The basic educational philosophy of "learn by doing" projects related to science, citizenship and leadership provide the focal point of life skill development. These practical projects encourage, support and reinforce the formal classroom educational process.

Since 1902, youth have become competent and contributing members of society through 4-H membership. Ohio 4-H recognizes what has made it successful. Adult volunteer leadership, hands-on learning experiences, community clubs, learning laboratories such as camps, fairs and projects clinics, and the successful funding partnership of public and private dollars cannot be discarded. Instead, they are adapted and enhanced to fit the needs of contemporary youth. On the threshold of a new millennium, 4-H has blended tradition with innovation to impact the lives of young people. 4-H provides the opportunity for a partnership with schools, community and business.

4. COMMUNITY RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT -The primary objective of the CRD program is to help individuals, groups and communities understand and make the best use of resources available to the community. Efforts are directed toward improving the social and economic well-being of communities. Emphasis is provided on environmental education, leadership and community economic development. OSU is authorized pursuant to Section 307.07(A) of the Revised Code to perform the functions and duties of an economic development director. For further information see chapter 79 of this handbook.

Small businesses and industry are an important part of the economic base of counties and thus a major educational effort is targeted toward retaining and expanding business and industry.

Extension also has leadership development programs designed for county commissioners and other elected and appointed officials in the public sector.

Community development programs are designed with local leaders to assist in solving community problems and adjusting to change. Programs are conducted to improve essential community services and facilities, develop public finance and tax policy and assist in organizational development.

Environmental education includes specific assistance in solid waste management and water quality. Smaller communities are provided help on alternatives to central

sewage collection and treatment facilities and for the development of private and small community water supplies.

136.04 CITIZEN COMMITTEE INVOLVEMENT

In order to effectively identify specific programs that are needed in each individual county, extension works through many committees of local farmers, homemakers, businessmen and community leaders. In most counties, there are committees from one or more of the following groups to help plan and carry out specific programs. These include:

1. County Extension Advisory Committee
2. County Extension Homemakers Council
3. County Home Economics Committee
4. County Extension 4-H Committee
5. Community Economic Development Committee
6. Other committees such as: Agronomy Committee, Dairy Committee, Swing Committee, Sheep Committee, Pest Management Committee

This list of committees is intended to be suggestive of the kinds of committees of local lay people who help extension professionals identify what programs should be conducted, and in many cases assist in carrying out the program. For example, in the 4-H program thousands of volunteers serve as volunteer leaders. The same is true in the home economics program where volunteers are also involved in teaching agricultural and community natural resource development programs.

136.05 DISTRICT AND STATE PROGRAM SUPPORT

The county program does not stand alone. There are many backup resources located at both the district and state level to support kinds of programs that are needed at the county level. In fact, in most counties for each dollar appropriated at the local level, there is an additional \$4 to \$5 invested in that county by way of program support from district and state levels.

136.06 EXTENSION PERSONNEL SERVING COUNTIES

1. STAFFING AT COUNTY LEVEL - Ohio law establishes the procedure whereby all money appropriated by federal, state and county governments are placed to the credit of the Ohio State University for use in conducting extension programs (ORC 3335.35). For this reason, all individuals hired to carry out extension programs are

employed by OSU. As such, all are subject to the benefits available to all other OSU employees (ORC 3335.36 and OAG Informal Opinion 160,7-23-52).

The size and type of professional staff in each county varies according to the needs and desires of the county. The professional staff includes individuals who fill such positions as county extension agent, agriculture; county extension agent, home economics; county extension agent, 4-H; county extension agent, community economic development; other specialized county extension agents in such areas as horticulture and environmental education.

In addition to extension agents, many counties have program assistants or nutrition educators to carry out a county program designed to meet the needs of the county. Agents may work in more than one county on a formal basis or may informally do programming in their area of specialization for clientele in neighboring counties.

2. **OPPORTUNITY AND PROCEDURES TO EXPAND STAFF** - The extent of staffing in each county is based on input from the people in the county. Within general statewide guidelines for funding, the county extension advisory committee may choose to identify the needs for programs as they view it and identify the types of personnel needed to carry out that program. The needs for personnel are then presented in the form of a budget request to the county commissioners who make the final decisions concerning the ultimate scope of the county extension program beyond the basic program support provided by state and federal funds. State and federal funds are available only if certain specified county funds are also provided.
3. **SPECIALIZED PERSONNEL** - In addition to the personnel employed to work in counties the OSU Extension provides other highly trained and competent professional staff who are available to help county personnel develop and carry out programs. They include:
 - a. State extension specialists in most disciplines within OSU colleges of agriculture and human ecology as well as some disciplines in the college of biological sciences and veterinarian medicine.
 - b. District specialists .
 - c. A staff of extension information specialists who assist in the preparation of publications and radio and TV programs. They work closely and directly with the press, radio, television and other channels of communication in disseminating up-to-date education programs.
 - d. Administrative, supervisory, and program development staff as necessary to properly administer, supervise and coordinate the total extension education program throughout the state.

136.07 FUNDING OF OSU EXTENSION

The funding for OSU Extension at both the state and local level is complex. The following major points should clarify this topic:

1. GENERAL SITUATION - OSU Extension is funded jointly by county, state, and federal governments. County appropriations are used to benefit the county and generally consist of funding for a portion of agents' salaries; program assistants, and secretaries; rent, office equipment, travel, supplies and other expenses necessary for operation of the county office. State and federal funds are used to pay salary and benefits of district specialists, state specialists, all operating costs of district and state offices as well as a portion of the salary and benefits of county agents.
2. SOURCES OF FUNDING - During FY 91-92 the budget of OSU Extension was approximately \$40,200,000. The funds were derived from the following sources:

SOURCE	AMOUNT	PERCENT
Federal	\$12,036,455	30
State	\$14,328,826	36
County	\$11,917,381	30
Non-tax (grants, gifts, rotary)	\$ 1,912,991	4

Expenditures were as follows:

Personnel (salaries & benefits)	83.3%
Supplies/operating costs	11.3%
Travel	3.5%
Equipment	1.9%

3. AUTHORITY FOR COUNTY SUPPORT - As indicated in Section 3335.37, county commissioners may levy a tax, within the limits prescribed by law, and appropriate money from the proceeds thereof or from the general fund of the county to be paid to the OSU to the credit of OSU Extension fund and expended according to state law for the benefit of the county.

State law provides that if more than 10 percent of the county appropriation in the preceding year remains unexpended for two years, that it must be returned to the county unless the commissioners agree to contribute it to OSU Extension for general purposes.

4. IDENTIFICATION OF NEED FOR COUNTY MONEY AND USE - The money appropriated by county commissioners to operate a county extension program goes through an approval process prior to submittal of a budget request to the commissioners. A budget is developed by the county extension advisory committee

and the county extension chairperson and is reviewed by the district extension director. The common items in the county budget include: partial salary of agents, salary and benefits of secretaries, program assistants and other county funded employees, travel, office rent, office supplies, office equipment, and other items necessary to the efficient operation of a county office.

5. STATE GUIDELINES FOR COUNTY EXTENSION AGENTS - The present arrangement for funding county extension agents is as follows:
 - a. OSU Extension pays the total salary and the employee fringe benefits from state and federal monies for one agent in each county, typically the county extension chair; and
 - b. When two or more agents per county are employed the county commissioners provide a designated amount of county support for each agent. The number of agents in each county is determined using the county staffing formula developed by OSU Extension. The formula is based on:
 - (1) Rural population, number of farms
 - (2) Number of households
 - (3) The five-year average support by the county

For calendar year 1992, the county cost per agent in excess of one agent was \$27,240.

6. DEPOSIT OF MONEY - The money appropriated by county commissioners is deposited at OSU and kept in an account reserved strictly for use by the county. The appropriated money can be forwarded in a single annual payment, or counties can be billed quarterly or semi-annually for their annual appropriation.
7. AUTHORITY TO EXPEND COUNTY MONEY - The chair of each county extension office staff has the authority to authorize expenditure of money only from that on deposit in the specific county account. Funds from each county account are expended according to the above guidelines and only with specific approval from the county agent chair.