

## Impact Writing Guide for County Faculty

Writing an impact report is just like telling a story.

***This is your story*** ... it is also a critical part of the Division of Agriculture's message. Stakeholders (today more than ever) want to know what return they are receiving from their investments in our research and educational programs.



Outstanding impact reports share common elements. They tell a human story related to **critical needs**. They provide a basic understanding of “**what was done.**” They provide **evaluation data** and other evidence of value as a result of the program. They demonstrate that the writer has a commitment to this program, and a connection to the community(s) they serve based on the content of the story.

### Why should county faculty write impact reports?

County faculty can write impact reports from a perspective that no one else can. Direct involvement in program planning and implementation makes you the only person prepared and qualified to speak to the program's overall value.

Writing an impact statement provides agents with an opportunity for systematic evaluation and process improvement. This scientific framework is the basis for all of the Division of Agriculture work.

In preparation for authorship of an impact report:

- print AIMS program planning and results data,
- access secondary data sources that relate to the program,
- review the collective county impact reports and notes in AIMS, and
- analyze the meaning inherent in the data.

## **Writing Tips** for communicating program value:

### **The critical decision of a Title:**

The title should answer the stakeholder's question, "**So What?**"

Consider using a title related to the problem or an impact that occurred as a result of the project . . . i.e.

- ***"Providing the Best Care for Arkansas Children in Washington County"***
- ***"Saving the Family Farm: Cutting Debt 18%"***

The title should communicate the **project's value** ... not just identify the project name. This approach increases the likelihood that stakeholders may actually read the impact report.

### **I. ISSUE: Who Cares & Why?**

Provide a brief description of the compelling NEED for this program. This establishes both relevance and "believability" for the reader.

Quickly identify a specific problem and the role of CES in helping provide a solution. **Direct quotes from clientele always infuse power and meaning into your story.**

### **II. What Has Been Done? (Program Information/Program Response)**

Provide key information about the program:

- structure,
- goals,
- scope(including county, multi-state reach),
- partnerships,
- challenges, and
- inputs and outputs (what we did-methods and audiences reached).

### **III. Results**

This is the bottom line. **Impact is NOT the # of participants.**

- Explain the overall value to your clientele and to the communities you serve.
- Impact numbers relate to changes in behaviors and/or adoption of practices by our external clientele (as a result of/or related to our educational programs).
- Long-term impact numbers can also include systemic changes related to public policy, environmental factors, social, and/or health conditions, etc.
- Secondary risk-reduction, sustainability, resiliency, and other benchmark data can be cited if linked to well-established theories/models, as is appropriate per discipline.
- Cost/benefit analysis can also be included to quantify economic impact (formulas for this can often be obtained from subject matter specialists).

### **CES Contact Person:**

Provide the name(s) of the designated contact person(s) for this program and report so that individuals wanting more information can readily locate key faculty.