Writing County Impacts: Telling Our Extension Story

Diane Mashburn
Key Points to Remember

- Impact represent the entire county’s effort, not just one individual
- Each county must submit at least one impact per program area
- Due October 5th into AIMS

Why Impacts?

- Accountable for resources
  - Financial
  - Time
  - Support
- Accountability demonstrates our stewardship
Why Impacts?

- Internal accountability
  - Evaluation of programs
  - Ensures high quality, effective, and timely programs

Who Cares?

- Extension - Us!
- Stakeholders
  - Program Participants and volunteers
  - Program Supporters
  - Program Funders
Why?

- Justifies continued efforts
- Shows responsibility with resources
- Assists in expansion and development efforts
- Garners support for program
So Where is all this Info Going?

- NEW Impact Webform
- Link to be shared by end of the week
- Content the same, process is different
- Completed Template uploaded into AIMS before 4:30 p.m. on Oct. 5th
- Each county must have at least one impact per program area

How the Webform will work

- Program Overview
- Highlights
- Impact Report/Story
- Photos
How the Webform will work

- Total educational contacts for ENTIRE county program
- How many volunteers assisted your program?
- How much is their time worth?
  - Number of Hours X $25.43

How the Webform will work

- Indicators of Program Success
- Should come from AIMS data
- Strongest highlights
- Have ability to enter in your own highlight
- Must include 6 highlights
Now what goes here??

Three Basic Parts

- **Relevance**: What need is present?
- **Response**: What did Extension do in response?
- **Results**: What change occurred? So What?

Content of each may change with the situation.
Relevance

- AKA- Issue/Need/Problem Statement
- Why does our program matter?
- What are we trying to address?
- If possible, what is the situation in YOUR County?

Relevance

- Outline evidence of need
  - Health Stats
  - Current issues facing clients
- Figures strong, but not always required
Relevance

- Data Sources
  - U.S. Census
  - Ag Census
  - Department of Health
  - School District data

- Others- check validity of source

---

Relevance - FCS/CED Example

In rural areas of Desha County, many families and individuals are facing difficult economics times. Layoffs and business restructuring continue within the county. When, and if, citizens find new jobs, they are often for lower wages and benefits. Many forced off benefits are struggling to make ends meet with minimum wage jobs with no benefits. Citizens are increasingly responsible for financing their own retirements, but few have basic knowledge or skills.
**Relevance - CED Example**

A county struggling to overcome 20 years of limited economic development, change, or improvements for itself. Faced with vacant store fronts, declining population, and a stagnant economy, community leaders are searching for ways to re-invent Cleveland County and make it the talk of south-central Arkansas.

**Relevance - FCS Example**

Arkansas ranks 49th in the nation for overall health. Rural Arkansans have fewer opportunities to engage in health-promoting programs… The Extension Wellness Ambassador Program (EWAP) fills this gap by providing a lay health leadership development program… EWAP [will] increase access [to health programs] in rural communities by training volunteers around locally relevant health-related issues.
Response

- What did we do in response to relevance/situation?
- What did we put on to address issues?
- Did you train volunteers to deliver the program?
- Output numbers

Response

- Only section to put thing likes:
  - Number of programs conducted
  - Number of attendees
  - Materials created
  - Volunteers trained
- Output numbers
Response

Examples:
- Number of farmers enrolled in production risk management course
- Number of 4-H members enrolled in STEM projects
- Number of trials conducted
- Number of volunteers trained
- Curriculum developed

Response - ANR Example

Madison County Extension planned and implemented a year long multifaceted educational program to address the issues local producers face. There was a multi session pasture management field day, forage testing and feeding seminar, Beef IQ short-course, two herbicide application field days, a nutrient management course and other educational events where area producers and other respective clientele were able to gain knowledge making their operations more sustainable in the ever changing agriculture environment. The goal of these educational efforts were to help clientele increase efficiency.
Response - 4-H Example

Hands-on learning is the essence of 4-H. With that in mind, six monthly engineering activities featuring the Junk Drawer Robotics Curriculum, six monthly science technology activities and six monthly computer coding activities featuring the Hour of Code and other hands-on curriculum were conducted with 107 students in the 5th and 6th grade at Gurdon and 144 students in the 6th grade at Arkadelphia. Students worked in teams during the engineering and science technology activities and individually during coding exercises.

Results - Key Piece!

- Answering the “So What?”
- What changes occurred because of your program?
- Move from outputs to outcomes and impacts
  - Try to move as far to the right as you can ->
Results - Key Piece!

- Anyone can hand out things, talk to a group, etc.
- What is setting your program apart?
- What is the overall impact your program has on that situation you outlined?

Include dollar figures, if appropriate
- Only use in connection with actions
- Adoption saved producers $X per acre
- Participation in Extension Wellness classes saves the county $X in healthcare costs
- Contact your specialists for those economic impact figures
Results - Key Piece!

- Show the biggest impacts
  - Behavior changes are stronger than knowledge gain
- Remember, no participant numbers, sessions, etc. – these belong in the response section

Results

Outcomes - Impact

Short Term | Medium Term | Long Term
---|---|---
What the short term results are:
- Learning
- Awareness
- Knowledge
- Attitudes
- Skills
- Opinions
- Aspirations
- Motivations

What the medium term results are:
- Action
- Behavior
- Practice
- Decision-making
- Policies
- Social Action

What the ultimate impact(s) is:
- Conditions
- Social
- Economic
- Civic
- Environmental

Great ➔

Even ➔ Better!
Results - FCS Example

Participants in the Weight Loss Boot Camp lost 114.5 pounds, walked 2,543 miles with 50% decreasing blood pressure, 25% decreasing blood glucose and cholesterol. The 284 participants in Walk Across Arkansas exercised 485,363 minutes which potentially saved $41,000 in health care costs; 35 participants lost 187 pounds. Results from the Extension Get Fit program indicated a cost savings of $629,711. Yoga for Kids with 749 participants reported they were stronger, more flexible, and felt less stressed. The participants in the nutrition education programs reported an increase in knowledge and skills with 70% intending to make positive dietary changes.
Results - ANR Example

The first demonstration 45 head received two Corothon ear tags at a cost of approximately $4.00 a head. Pre-tag horn fly counts were near 150, face flies were at 5, and 13 treated for pinkeye. At 11 weeks the counts have dropped to 20 horn flies, 1-2 face flies, and zero pinkeye treatments. In the second demonstration, 35 head were treated with Co-ral 1% dust bags. (Horn fly counts started at 300-350, face flies 9, with 10 cases of pinkeye.) As of week 11, counts average 45 for horn flies, 3 face flies, and no new cases of pinkeye. The second method cost about $3.75 a head. Producers recorded near $24.00 per head pay increase on treated calves vs. non-treated calves.
Pictures

- Same as a 4-H Recordbook
  - Show action
  - Side by side comparisons - ANR demos
  - Avoid staged photos
  - Avoid certificate pictures
  - Supports message/impact
A Lawrence County Extension Wellness Ambassador helps a young participant in a cooking class with proper measuring techniques. Twelve Extension Certified Babysitters learned how to cook healthy meals and snacks for the kids that they care for and their own families.

Local pesticide dealers were invited for a scouting, identification and control field visit on the first soybean field in Arkansas that needed control for Kudzu bugs. Dr. Nick Seiter conducted an infield demonstration to show the how and when to control this new pest to these decision makers.
Helpful Tips - Audience

- Different audiences value different things
  - Money
  - Education
  - Health
  - Environment

- Convey that in impact statements

Helpful Tips

- Utilize data already collected
  - Evaluations
  - AIMS data (should match your impacts)

- Quotes, stories, etc. from participants
  - Reader will relate more

- Pictures!
Common Errors to Avoid

- No Impact Reported.
- Impact of program reported was very small.
- Dollars reported are not focused on the intended outcome of the program.
- Not showing economic impact when formulas are available or can easily be figured.

Common Errors to Avoid

- Title lacks description or creativity.
- Not proof-reading before submitting.
- Giving more credit to other organizations and agencies.
Common Errors to Avoid

- Writing in first person.
- Using acronyms or program names.
- Drawing an impact from a single activity.

Where to Find Resources & More Help

- Everything is on the AIMS Help Page
  - PDF of this presentation
  - Tip Sheets
- Utilize Communications as needed