

# COOPERATIVE EXTENSION

## 2020-2021 Annual Report

Christopher B. Watkins, Chair

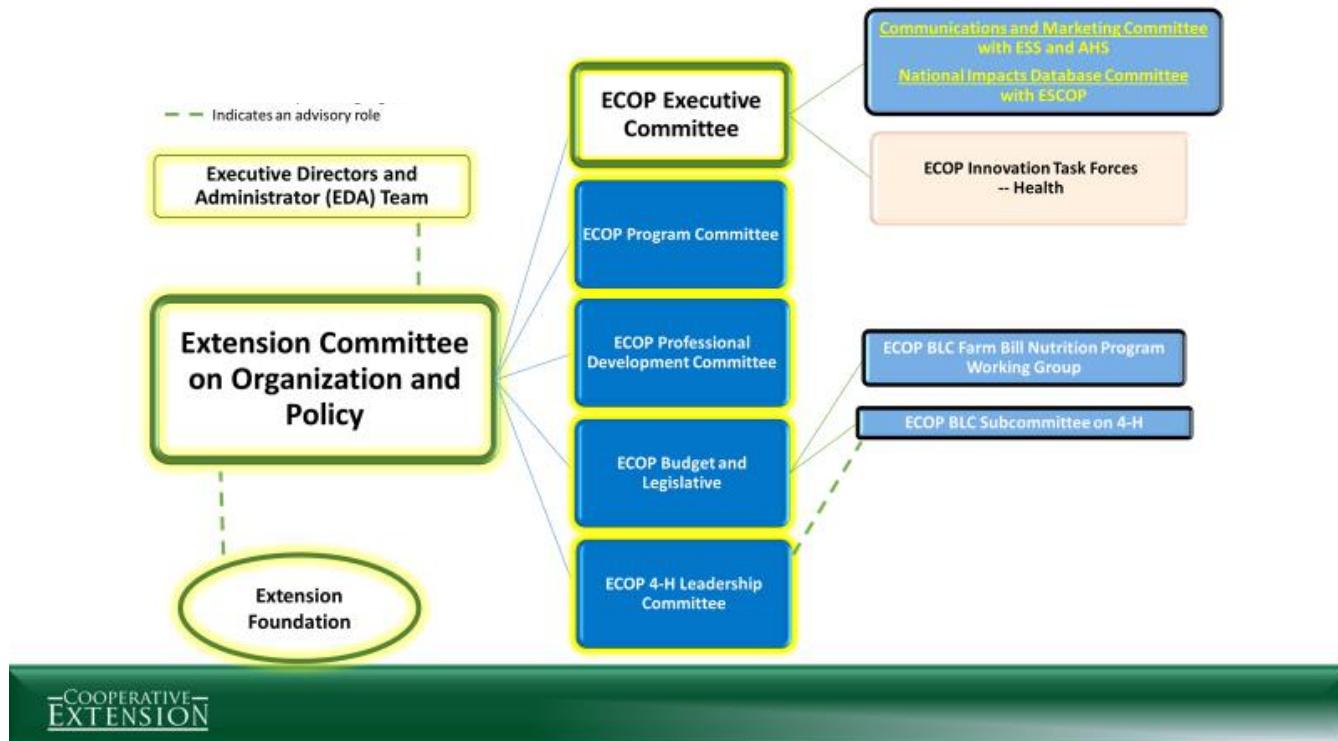
Director, Cornell Cooperative Extension, Cornell University

### INTRODUCTION

The [Cooperative Extension Section](#) (CES) is led by the Extension Committee on Organization and Policy (ECOP), a 15-member board representing the [five Cooperative Extension regions](#). ECOP's role is to identify and implement member-driven opportunities designed to enhance resources, relationships, and recognition for the Congressionally established Cooperative Extension System (<sup>1</sup>System). ECOP conducts business for the System, around four core themes:

1. Increase **visibility and recognition** of the Cooperative Extension System as a provider of evidence-based education and services and as a valuable partner to federal and national non-federal entities through improved communications of program impacts and successes.
2. Support the professional success of Extension leadership through tailored **professional development opportunities** including training, webinars, in person meetings, networking opportunities and more.
3. Expand federal and non-federal **resources** available to Extension.
4. Identify **ongoing and emerging CES priorities** and national issues and provide mechanisms for collective action.

The chart below explains the organizational structure of ECOP in 2020-2021.



<sup>1</sup>The Cooperative Extension System is the nationwide transformational education system operating through land-grant universities in partnership with federal, state, and local governments. The Extension Committee on Organization and Policy (ECOP) is the representative leadership and governing body of Cooperative Extension.

Located at: Association of Public and Land-grant Universities (APLU), 1220 L Street NW, Suite 1000, Washington, DC 20005 | 202.478.6029

## A BANNER YEAR

2020-2021 has been a banner year for ECOP, in terms of programmatic and operational leadership and return on investment. Since the adoption of the [2020-2023 Strategic Directions for ECOP and CES](#) and the 2020-2021 Annual Action Plan and Ongoing Priorities for the Cooperative Extension Section (CES), much work has been accomplished by ECOP's Standing Committees' workplans to [align national-level efforts with CES priorities](#). From these plans, the ECOP Budget and Legislative Committee (BLC) led the development of the [Advocacy and Education Toolkit](#) to provide ECOP leadership and CES with consistent messaging and resources focused on national advocacy and education priorities, including [diversity, equity, and inclusion](#); [climate mitigation, resiliency, and adaptation](#); [economic and workforce development](#); [health equity and well-being](#); [4-H and positive youth development](#); [urban programs](#); [broadband access and digital skills](#); and [community nutrition education](#).

From an operational and process perspective, 2020-2021 ECOP priorities included operationalizing strategic directions; reviewing structure and operations; streamlining structures and processes; enhancing communications, consistent messaging, and visibility; exploring measurable impacts; developing targeted national priorities and partnerships; and articulating return on the investment in national-level activities.

## STANDING COMMITTEE ACCOMPLISHMENTS

**ECOP Executive Committee:** This committee conducts ECOP business requiring immediate attention when ECOP is not in formal session.

### Executive Committee Accomplishments

- Provided Health Innovation Task Force Oversight
  - Health Framework
- CDC Partnership COVID-19-\$9.9M Invested by CDC in CES for COVID 19 vaccine outreach
- 1994 Engagement
- Support of the Research Infrastructure Package
- Liaison Appointments Approvals
- Budget Carryover Discussions
- Support of the development of an MOU Between EXF and National 4-H Council
- Approval of Extension Foundation Workplan
- Joint COPs Agenda Planning
- Review of the Extension Resource and Partnership Development Initiative
- Advising the Workforce and Farm Bill Committees

## NATIONAL PROGRAM LEADERSHIP

**ECOP Program Committee:** Guided by the ECOP mission, vision, values and goals, and Annual Action Plans, this committee identifies and recommends action on emerging future programs, program related issues, and delivery systems important to Extension.

### Program Committee Accomplishments

**ECOP Program Action Teams**-The ECOP Program Committee, with Ivory Lyles, University of Nevada-Reno, as Chair, has developed Program Action Teams (PATs) for each of ECOP's priority areas, bringing together Extension experts to advance programmatic resources and partnerships. Each of the PATs has an [Extension Foundation](#) Catalyst and [NIFA](#) Liaison assigned to them, as well as ESCOP experts. A strong partnership between the ECOP 4-H Leadership Committee and [National 4-H Council](#) leads the 4-H positive youth development priority area, as well as advancements in the health arena. Through the [New Technologies for Ag Extension Program](#), NIFA has provided supplemental funding to the Extension Foundation around ECOP/CES national priorities. Additionally, there is interest from other partners and agencies in providing national-level support and advance Extension's visibility, communications, programs, [impacts](#), and demonstrate the value of ECOP's investment of [Cooperative Extension Section](#) assessments.

**4-H Leadership Committee:** This committee provides leadership for Extension's 4-H Positive Youth Development Program that is reflective of the vision and mission of 4-H.

### 4-H Leadership Committee Accomplishments

#### Engaging More Youth:

- Expanded the 4-H Pathways program through new funding to offer a third Institute.
- Competition of the National 4-H Equity Plan and development of implementation teams.
- Expanded implementation of 4-H at Home with guidance from Program Leaders Working Group and exploring long-term strategic implications of virtual PYD.

#### Governance and Alignment:

- Continued to align and coordinate national 4-H governance policies, programs, processes, activities, and events for effective delivery across the nation reflective of the vision and mission of the 4-H Program.
- Coordinated communication with the Program Leaders Working Group and discussions on data collection and management needs for the 4-H Program.

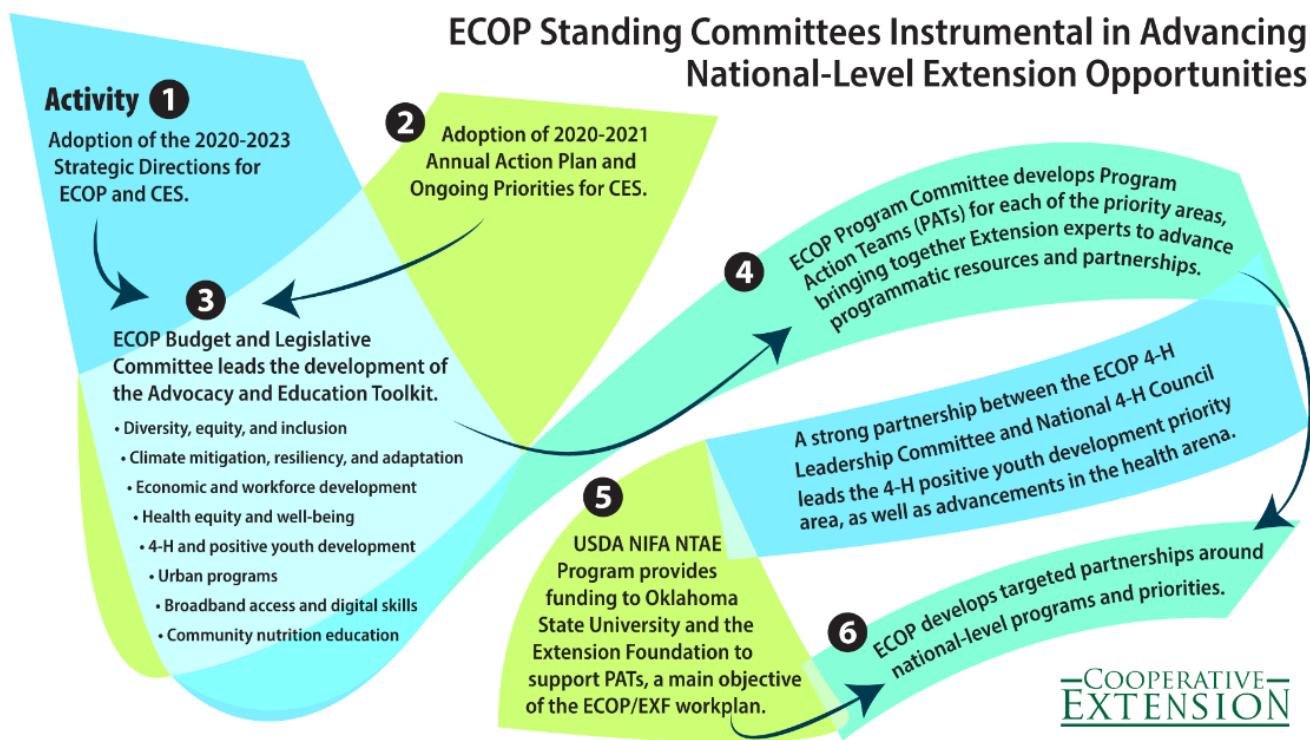
#### Marketing:

- Promoted and marketed the 4-H program, building and sustaining a unified brand.
- Implemented the National Crisis Communications Playbook.
- Continued to coordinate with National 4-H Council on Cause Marketing.

#### Resources and Fund Development:

- Generated new resources for the 4-H Program.
- Advocated for expansion of existing Youth Nonprofit 2018 Farm Bill funding, supported OJJEP's Youth Mentoring Grant, and continued working with members of the 4-H Congressional Caucus.

The chart below details the flow of strategic alignment activities and collaborations around ECOP priorities.



## PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT LEADERSHIP

**ECOP Professional Development Committee:** This committee identifies, recommends, and delivers professional and organizational development opportunities for Extension Leaders and other Extension professionals.

### Professional Development Committee Accomplishments

- Considering a virtual orientation for new members separate from NEDA. 28 Directors and Administrators have started their role in the last three years.
- Solicited nominations for Excellence in Extension Award. Established criteria and requested budget from ECOP for Excellence in Extension Team Award.
- Recommended, assisted, and/or coordinated Learning for Leaders Events
- *Urban Agriculture: Needs, Opportunities, and Actions*
- *Inclusive and Equitable Organizations – An Evidence Based Model\**
- *Improving Inclusivity in Our Institutions and ECOP\**
- *Leaders Encouraging Collaborations with Diverse Communities\**
- *4-H Equity Strategic Plan\**
- *Distinguishing Urban Extension in the System Landscape*

\* Result of small group dialogue around racial equity during the 2020 NEDA Annual Meeting.

## BUDGET AND LEGISLATIVE COMMITTEE LEADERSHIP

**ECOP Budget and Legislative Committee:** This committee establishes the federal legislative, budget, and advocacy agenda and strategies for the System.

### BLC Accomplishments

- Led the development of the [Advocacy and Education Toolkit](#) to provide ECOP leadership and the Cooperative Extension System (CES) with consistent messaging and resources focused on CES advocacy and education priorities. These resources include priority language, talking points, and CES background information for consistency in messaging with [APLU Board on Agriculture Assembly \(BAA\)](#) Committees and Sections, the BAA Experiment Station Committee on Organization and Policy [ESCOP](#), legislators, partners, University Congressional and Government Affairs staff, and related advocacy groups. Look to these links for additional information: [2018 Farm Bill](#), [Related Legislation](#), [How Laws Are Made](#), and the [Federal Budget Process](#).
- Worked with ESCOP BLC and other partners to represent Extension's legislative and budget priorities.
- Supported the BAA Unified Ask and provided input on federal appropriation request including the importance of capacity lines and needed attention to 1890 Extension and Evans-Alen budget lines.
- Worked with the EDA Team to support the advocacy efforts for the COVID-19 Supplemental 4 Proposal.
- Provided input to the BAA Strategic Realignment Committee's recommendation of NIFA funding lines.
- Established Farm Bill Nutrition Program Working Group to determine the System's priorities in the 2023 Farm Bill reauthorization of 2023 around SNAP-Ed and EFNEP and why.
- Continued to develop an advocacy schedule to maximize the impact of Extension advocacy through the budget and regulatory cycle.

### Additional Advocacy Activities

**Support of Research Infrastructure**-ECOP and the Cooperative Extension Section fully support the research infrastructure proposal and values this critical facilities funding. ECOP Chair Chris Watkins, Cornell University, has on several occasions signed-on to letters and memos to stakeholders and key decision-makers to support this proposal. Additionally, ECOP and EDA Team Members have provided feedback and support in the development of the above documents.

**2023 Farm Bill Activities**-ECOP deployed a survey of 2023 Farm Bill priorities to Extension Directors and Administrators. A CES Farm Bill Advisory Team is in the process of looking at the raw data. Additionally, the team is exploring recommendations around SNAP-Ed, and [Data Science for the Public Good](#).

## **RETURN ON INVESTMENT**

During the 2020-2021 year, ECOP leaders have endeavored to capture and articulate the return on the investment that Extension Directors and Administrators provide for the functioning and productivity of the organization in terms of operations, programs, and advocacy. Successes include:

- ECOP CES Strategic Alignment
- More focused processes and targeted priorities
- Consistent advocacy and messaging
- ECOP 2022 Seed Funding of Priority Areas
- Extension Human Resources Survey to determine the number of Extension staff (regardless of FTE) working on Extension issues.
- New and targeted partnerships around system priorities, including CDC, Commerce, NRCS, NOAA, Climate Hubs, and USDA Urban programs.

**Finally, this year, ECOPs efforts, partnerships, and collaborations resulted in \$35m+ in additional funding for the Cooperative Extension System.**

## **ADDITIONAL METRICS**

- Staffing
  - 2 Full-time National Office positions funded by Cooperative Extension Section/ECOP Assessments by APLU
  - 1 Full-time contractor funded by Robert Wood Johnson Foundation grant
  - 5 Regional Executives devoting 0.25 effort to National System Matters funded by Regional Associations
- ECOP Monday Minute (49 issues)
- ECOP-Related Meetings Coordinated by National Office Staff (113)
- Learning for Leaders Events (6)
- NEDA Planning Committee Meetings (12)
- BAA Meetings (16)

## **CONTACT US**

- [www.extension.org](http://www.extension.org)
- <https://advocacy.extension.org>