

# COOPERATIVE EXTENSION 2020 ANNUAL REPORT

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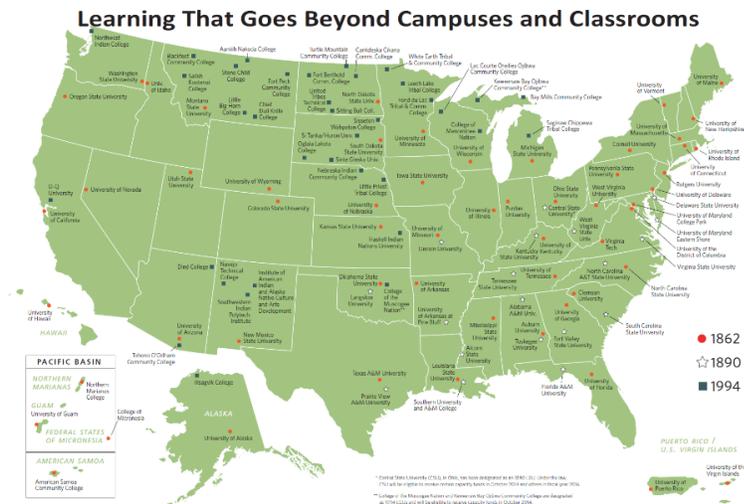
The [Cooperative Extension Section](#) (CES) is led by the Extension Committee on Organization and Policy (ECOP), a 15-member board representing the [five Cooperative Extension regions](#). ECOP's role is to identify and implement member-driven opportunities designed to enhance resources, relationships,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

- 1) Build partnerships and acquire resources.
- 2) Increase strategic marketing and communications.
- 3) Enhance leadership and professional development.
- 4) Strengthen organizational functioning.

For 2019-2020, these core themes translated to the following five emphasis areas and activities.

## Increasing Resources for the System

- The COVID-19 pandemic provided a unique opportunity for Extension to assist communities and share resources across the nation through the web-based [impacts of COVID-19 and resources for response](#). Well over 100 resource sites from every Extension Region, federal and national partners and farmworkers resources was shared through this collaborative website. Sample resources include Delaware State University *How Families Can Manage Well-Being During COVID-19*, University of Illinois *Resources for Responding to COVID-19*, Rutgers 4-H *from Home*, University of Florida *Agriculture, Industry and the Public*, Washington State University *Out of School Learning Resources*.
- ECOP leaders partnered with [ESCOP](#), Land-grant University research leaders, on developing and providing advocacy for a \$380 million proposal to be considered in COVID-19 supplemental funding. Extension has been a significant part of the dialogue. This COVID-19 focused proposal for federal funding has been the primary focus of development activity.
- Working with the APLU Director of Governmental Affairs, Agriculture and International Development, ECOP Leaders began developing opportunities for Extension, including building a schedule for Advocacy for Extension; working closely with the ECOP Budget and Legislative



Committee (BLC) to create justifications for advocacy priorities; ECOP advocacy training opportunities, and ECOP-relevant federal budget line asks.

- ECOP Leadership played a key role to organize a Capacity Funding Working Group charged to update content and advocacy strategies. Recommendations of the Capacity Working Group include, 1: That the [BAA Budget and Advocacy Committee](#) (BAC) identify a growth trajectory for NIFA priority lines. That way, the BAC can determine a growth plan for capacity funding lines that is anchored in an advocacy team and clear justification of need; 2: That the BAC work within the BAA structure to develop a communications plan to reach high-value audiences informed by advice from communicators, advocates, and decisionmakers; and 3: That there is coordination with key groups in developing an annual capacity building, engagement, and advocacy calendar. An implementation team will be leading these efforts over the coming year.
- The ECOP BLC 4-H Advocacy Sub-Committee proposed strategies to better engage 4-H youth, parents and volunteers in advocating for the BAA budget priorities in general and Extension lines in particular. The 4-H Leadership Committee in conjunction with the ECOP BLC 4-H Advocacy Subcommittee are partnering with [National 4-H Council](#) (Council) on increasing the Department of Justice's Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP) funding for 4-H positive youth development programs.
- The Extension Health Director continued to leverage the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation funding, via Council, into health and wellness-related opportunities and is engaged with HHS SAMSHA program on USDA NIFA Rural Health and Safety program on funding opportunities. The ECOP Health Innovation Task Force, an initiative in systems development, has marked progress in year 1 with updating [Cooperative Extension's National Framework for Health and Wellness](#), developing The Big Idea; identifying, uniting, and potentially piloting a nationally viable program devoted to concurrently enhancing community health, educational pathways for youth, and jobs.
- ECOP began participating in the [Land O'Lakes American Connection Project](#) Coalition. With over 100 organizational and industry members, Coalition members have aligned on the following principles: 1) to push for a robust federal investment in broadband infrastructure; 2) to support strong coordination at the federal level to deploy these resources in coordination with the states; and 3) to support improved broadband mapping.

## Leading on National Extension Issues & Policies

- The SNAP-Ed Program Development Team (PDT) is action-oriented, proactive, and focused on long-term projects. This team represents all Extension Regions and is comprised of Family and Consumer Science Program Leaders and other university administrators, SNAP-Ed program coordinators, an office manager from the LGU, and a federal partner from USDA NIFA. In 2019, an EFNEP Coordinator was added to the team to help facilitate coordination among SNAP-Ed, EFNEP, and other Land-Grant University extension low-income nutrition education programs. The SNAP-Ed PDT team is working with the APLU Director of Governmental Affairs, Agriculture and International Development and the CES/ECOP Executive Director on strengthening advocacy and representation in Farm Bill priorities and processes.
- A push this year addressed the challenges that 1890s have related to the carryover provision language of Section 1444 of the National Agricultural Research, Extension, and Teaching Policy Act to be consistent with the Smith-Lever carryover provision. Because of this push, the issues have been successfully resolved through NIFA programs.
- The CES/ECOP Executive Director and ECOP members continued their engagement with NIFA leadership on the updated Plan of Work and REEport systems. The Plan of Work and REEport systems are undergoing a system redesign to streamline reporting processes and improve the quality of data collected in compliance with the Agricultural Research, Extension, and Educational Reform Act of 1998 (AREERA). This collaborative and coordinated effort is the result of recommendations from the 2015 POW Panel of Experts Report and the mandate from NIFA's

Director to re-engage stakeholders and reduce the burden of reporting on land-grant university partners.

- NIFA received a Congressional Directive called the Extension Design Initiative and invited ECOP to participate in the process of framing the conversation. The ECOP Executive Committee provided names of three ECOP Leaders to participate in a NIFA-hosted small group convening. From this convening, a report will be created to frame and guide next steps.

### Strengthening Partnerships and Visibility

- The BAA Communications and Marketing Committee (CMC) works in concert with other entities in the Land-Grant University System, including the lobbying team at Cornerstone Government Affairs, Council on Government Affairs, various committee chairs, and individual Extensions, research programs, and institutions to protect and increase levels of federally appropriated and awarded funding. Through participation by CES/ECOP, ESCOP, and the Administrative Heads Section (AHS) representing Cooperative Extension, research, and academic programs, the CMC has produced a strategic roadmap for communications. Implementation of recommendations are being considered for the next phase of this communications work.
- ECOP and ESCOP maintained their co-liaison relationship with the ECOP Chair-Elect serving as the ECOP liaison to ESCOP. The CES/ECOP Executive Regional Administrator and Directors periodically meet with the ESCOP Regional Executive Directors. The ECOP and ESCOP Chairs who normally meet on a quarterly basis, made DC visits to connect Experiment Station and Extension interests with federal agencies and national organizations. Prior to the pandemic, the team visited several of these partners to discuss ECOP/ESCOP interest and priorities for the future.
- While ECOP has worked extensively with [eXtension Foundation](#) since 2015 with collaboration around a variety of issues, this year CES/ECOP gained so much more. eXtension generously provided a variety of resources to increase System capacity. At no other time in history than in 2020 has eXtension collaborating with ECOP on issues such as Climate, Health, Racial Equity, with online impact collaboratives, Fellowships, NTAE wrap-around services, and Trust in Food stories partnerships offered the System an edge in an ever-changing world. The CES/ECOP Executive Director serves as an ex-officio member of the eXtension Foundation Board of Directors and routinely connects the eXtension Foundation Chief Executive Officer with the CES/ECOP EDA team and the ECOP Executive Committee to maintain transparency in collaboration.

### Enhancing and Providing Professional Development

- The ECOP [Learning for Leaders series](#) explores new and emerging System ideas and learning opportunities for Extension Directors and Administrators. During the past year, this series has engaged Extension Leaders on *Extension's Leadership on Climate and Extreme Weather; Crisis Response Opportunities and State/Regional Strategies: Farmer Mental Health; Leading Through COVID-19 and the New World of Virtual Extension; and Positioning 4-H and Extension for Investment*. Learning opportunities also included *Building Extension Understanding and Leadership in a Time of Systemic Racism* and the *Coming Together for Racial Understanding* program with 136 participants from 35 Institutions, and a *National Action Dialogue on Extension Futures* hosted by eXtension and ECOP. The National Action Dialogues (NAD) included 382 participants from 69 Land-grant Universities representing all five ECOP regions and program areas along with 18 partner organizations.
- Each year, the ECOP Assistant Director leads the process of soliciting nominations for ECOP Professional Development Committee's Regional and National Excellence in Extension Awards and the ECOP Program Committee's Excellence in Diversity Award. This year a new Team Award for Excellence in Extension was approved, and nominations will be sought with the others in 2021. These awards are presented to the winners at the APLU Annual Meeting to increase national attention on the role of Extension - one that is fundamental to the lifelong education and

development of residents in communities around the nation. More information is available at [www.aplu.org/CESAwards](http://www.aplu.org/CESAwards).

- ECOP celebrated two Silver Anniversaries of key partners. In February the 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the attainment of 1994 land-grant status of Tribal Colleges and Universities was marked by the presentation of [this resolution](#) to American Indian Higher Education Consortium (AIHEC) at the Legislative Summit. In September, the ECOP Chair presented the [Extension Disaster Education Network](#) (EDEN) with a resolution honoring 25 years of program excellence, exemplary contributions to the Cooperative Extension System, and celebrating the emergency management community as key partners at the local, state and national levels.

## Supporting Organizational Functioning

- The [EDA Team](#) in a system-wide process drafted ECOP's Strategic Directions into to a 3-year time frame. The [2020-2023 Strategic Directions document](#) was finalized and approved and will set the course for ECOP's future. This aspirational frame for ECOP's mission, required activities, and strategic priorities includes: Increasing visibility and recognition of CES; supporting the professional success of Extension leadership; expanding federal and non-federal resources available to Extension; and identifying national CES priorities and issues and provide mechanisms for collective action.
- Discussions began this year between the ECOP Chair and Chair-elect and representatives from 1994s to explore ways to be more inclusive and engage the 1994 institutions in ECOP opportunities to strengthen Extension collaboration across the System.
- The CES/ECOP National Office provided consistent, ongoing alignment across a variety of different Extension-related efforts including: the 2020-2023 CES ECOP Strategic Direction, Capacity funds messaging, the ECOP annual budget, ECOP Chair priorities, eXtension Catalysts efforts, the Communications and Marketing Committee of the Board on Agriculture Assembly, BAA unified messaging, and Federal budget line advocacy. This alignment will serve to strengthen CES/ECOP impacts, advocacy and funding opportunities in the future.
- The CES/ECOP EDA team reviewed the ECOP Operating Guidelines and provided additional clarity on roles and responsibilities of ECOP Standing Committees. The updated approved guidelines are posted to the ECOP website [www.extension.org/ecop](http://www.extension.org/ecop).
- With the hiring of a permanent Cooperative Extension System/ECOP Executive Director, the Acting Executive Director and Assistant Director organized a two-month, on-boarding process. This process has successfully oriented the new Executive Director for future strategic and operational leadership of the National Office.
- Part of the charge to the CES ECOP Executive Director Search Advisory Committee was to review the National Office staffing model, including the EDA Team roles, and recommend National Office staffing alternatives as necessary. This process is underway and will be informed by the developing of the document *National Office of the Cooperative Extension System/Extension Committee on Organization and Policy*. The final document will articulate the value of the National Office and the EDA Team in strengthening, promoting, and bringing visibility and resources to the exemplary work of the Cooperative Extension System.

The interactive version of this document if available at [bit.ly/ces-rpt2020](http://bit.ly/ces-rpt2020)