

A MOMENTUS YEAR

With the ECOP Chair goals of advancing [2020-2023 Strategic Directions for ECOP and the Cooperative Extension System](#), focusing on priorities as identified by member institutions, and building on successes and lessons learned during the recent past, 2021-2022 has been a highly productive and successful year for ECOP and the Cooperative Extension Section.

Highlights include the development of Farm Bill language, FY23 and FY24 appropriations requests, and leave behinds on Climate, Workforce Development, and Health. From a programmatic perspective, the ECOP Program Committee Program Action Teams advanced national-level work in Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion; 4-H Positive Youth Development (led by the ECOP 4-H Leadership Committee); Climate; Workforce Development; Urban Agriculture and Food Systems; Health Equity and Well-Being; and Broadband/Infrastructure. Community Nutrition Education through EFNEP and SNAP-Ed is also being advanced through ECOP priority efforts. Professional development opportunities included the 2022 NEDA Meeting, Learning for Leaders, ECOP orientations, and Section Updates.

From an operational and process perspective, the ECOP Chair and leadership continued the advancement of streamlining structures and processes; enhancing communications, consistent messaging, and visibility; exploring measurable impacts; furthering targeted national priorities and partnerships; and articulating the return on the investment in national-level activities. A partnership MOU between ECOP/Extension Foundation/National 4-H Council was developed and is being implemented. Additionally, identifying and sunseting priorities, efficient use of reserve funds, and associated operating guidelines were developed and approved. Through these accomplishments and the work of the ECOP Standing Committees and our partners, a \$163M return on investment in ECOP was realized this year and additional grant proposals for national level work are pending.

FROM THE ECOP CHAIR'S 2021-2022 ACTION PLAN

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.

1. Provide existing Cooperative Extension supporters, such as NIFA, USDA, and other aligned national advocacy groups with strong impact messaging and evidence.
 - a. Provide evidence to NIFA leadership, program liaisons, and other key personnel of Extension's role in providing value to their investments – leveraging of research and engagement initiatives of LGUs.
 - b. Engage with NIFA, and especially the new employees, to increase their ability to advocate for capacity-style funding and positioning Extension as central to integrated AFRI funding opportunities.
2. Increase understanding and valuation of the Cooperative Extension System amongst staffers and members in Congressional committee and home offices.
 - a. Create and disseminate resources, talking points, and guidance in support of Extension leaders and advocates carrying the message of Extension's importance to congressional offices in Washington and in their home districts.
 - b. Engage regularly and intentionally with elected officials, appointees, and staffers.

3. Develop new partners to tell our story.
 - a. Encourage ECOP Program Action Teams to include multiple non-Extension partners in planning conversations, to increase awareness of CES and build new advocates for CES success.

Expand federal and non-federal resources available to Extension.

1. Promote year-round advocacy strategies and strengthen a Unified Ask to increase NIFA capacity funding (Smith-Lever and 1890s Extension).
 - a. Engage ECOP and APLU partners, including ESCOP, to implement the APLU advocacy schedule throughout the budget and regulatory cycle.
 - b. Enlist and support Extension professionals (PILD attendees) and supporters (ECOP Budget and Legislative Committee, CARET, ECOP 4-H Leadership Committee, and the BLC's 4-H Advocacy Sub-Committee) to carry forward the value of Extension by equipping them with advocacy materials.
2. Strengthen and expand partnerships with non-NIFA federal entities and private funding entities by co-creating a roadmap to advance initiatives.
 - a. Continue current initiatives on private funding partnerships and those with non-NIFA federal agencies.
 - b. Intentionally seek collaborations and partnerships to increase programming with underserved communities, including urban programming.
 - c. Conduct regular outreach to key agencies and other prospective partners with intersecting missions including, but not limited to, NRCS, NSF, NOAA, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the Department of Health & Human Services, and others.
 - d. Through the Program Action Teams leadership, explore partnership potential with federal and non-federal organizations that have intersecting missions and values in the work areas of Nutrition, Health and Wellness, Positive Youth Development, Climate Change, Water and Food Security, Community Resource and Economic Development, Urban Agriculture, and Workforce Development.
3. Maintain a strong working relationship with ESCOP and appropriate ECOP committees to capture opportunities for collaboration and elevate the importance of Extension in LGU research enterprises.

Identify ongoing and emerging CES priorities and national issues and provide mechanisms for collective action.

1. Further advance the structure and support for deliberative, forward-looking, result-oriented actions from ECOP committees.
 - a. Develop a strategy to deploy reserve funding to support ECOP Committees in advancing System success.
2. Develop processes to bring forward new priorities and sunset developed topics.
3. Work with ECOP committees to ensure the Cooperative Extension System addresses nationally relevant issues through a Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion lens that reflects rural, urban, and suburban needs.

Support the professional success of Extension leadership through tailored professional development opportunities including training, webinars, in person meetings, networking opportunities and more.

1. Provide opportunities for Extension Directors/Administrators to learn from each other and think, collectively, how to position the System for future success. This includes but is not limited to an annual conference (NEDA) and periodic Learning for Leaders events.
 - a. Evaluate current opportunities and address gaps with special focus on sharing success stories and best practices for sharing those stories with external audiences.
 - i. Emphasize advancement towards a multicultural organization.
2. Continue to develop and improve upon the understanding about the role of ECOP and ECOP activities.
 - a. Provide regular updates on ECOP activities, through the ECOP Monday Minute and virtual Section briefings.
3. Support the administration of ECOP awards that recognize excellence in Extension and a commitment to diversity, pluralism, and innovation in programs that impact Extension audiences.

ECOP STANDING COMMITTEE ACCOMPLISHMENTS

ECOP has 5 Standing Committees, Executive, see below; [Program Committee](#), pp. 5-12; [4-H Leadership Committee](#), pp. 12-13; [Professional Development Committee](#), pp. 13-15, and [Budget and Legislative Committee](#), p. 15.

ECOP EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

This committee conducts ECOP business requiring immediate attention when ECOP is not in formal session.

Executive Committee Accomplishments

- Determined a process for identifying and sunseting resources and effective use of reserve funds
- Provided oversight of the development of the 2022 ECOP Spring Meeting Agenda
- Made recommendations on the CLD3 Data Science Proposal
- Reviewed of Sign-On Opportunities for Legislative Action
- Made ECOP Liaison Appointment approvals
- Held budget carryover discussions
- Reviewed and supported of the MOU between ECOP, the Extension Foundation, and National 4-H Council
- Approved the Extension Foundation and National 4-H Council Workplans
- Provided oversight for the 2022 Joint COPs Agenda Planning
- Advised the FY23 and FY24 Appropriations and 2023 Farm Bill Asks

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.

The ECOP Program Committee, along with Ms. Sandy Ruble, ECOP, conducted the annual National Extension Diversity Award to recognize the Extension program most successfully demonstrating diversity in programming. The applicants were superior, and a winner will be announced this fall. The committee is concerned that not all Extension regions provided nominees and will make a concerted effort to increase the number of nominees in 2023.

A major part of the work of the ECOP Program Committee this year has been the formation and implementation of Program Action Teams (PATs) in seven issue areas to provide a structure and mechanism for national-level cooperation and collaboration among Extension professionals in program development and delivery. An overall goal is to facilitate CES system-level resource and partnership development. The PATs offer promise as a vehicle for introducing CES to external audiences and demonstrating to them the scope and capacity of CES to be an effective partner and to benefit the various communities of the nation with programs that fit the CES mission.

Progress within each of the Program Action Teams (PATs) shows national coordination and a promise of implementation funding. The PAT leaders and the Program Committee worked closely with the Extension Foundation this year to submit \$185M in funding proposals and to receive \$1.1M in funding through the Extension Foundation. This includes \$175K directly for PAT coordination or special projects, \$645K in funded projects aligned with PAT topics through the USDA-NIFA New Technologies for Ag Extension cooperative agreement and \$370K in NIFA Commitment Letters designated for the Workforce and Health PATs.

In addition to resources identified above, the PATs have developed descriptive information and plans of work and, with the assistance and expertise of Extension Foundation, now has a web landing page pats.extension.org which provides information about each PAT and its leadership, as well as contact information. The internet-based landing hub can be accessed by PAT teams and by a wide audience of interested individuals.

Information about each of the PATs is as follows:

- **Workforce Development PAT** Contacts – Ivory W. Lyles, Robert Russell/NIFA-Carlos Ortiz
 - List of Members:
<https://www.dropbox.com/s/h7bjqkv0ioe0iid/Workforce%20PAT.pdf?dl=0>
 - Developed a strategic planning and structure process and invited leaders to participate.
 - Formed Implementation Teams to coalesce around a few top priorities and developed next steps. Sub-committees are:

- Workforce Development Ecosystem - Auditing the Current State
 - Engagement – Convening Stakeholders and Partners
 - Mission and Strategy
 - Linked closely with other PATs including Climate; Urban Ag and Food Systems; Diversity, Equity and Inclusion; 4-H Positive Youth Development and Health.
 - In partnership with the Extension Foundation, hired a Workforce Development Fellow to help support work moving forward and engage new partners for the system.
 - Two additional fellows are building the network of Extension faculty and staff who engage in workforce development activities at each institution and the registry of workforce development programs in the National Registry of Cooperative Extension Programs & Assets (NRCEPA). This registry will be used to identify, support, scale, and provide a snapshot of the Cooperative Extension System's depth and breadth of Workforce and Economic Development programming. Funding in support of the assessment is supported through a cooperative agreement with NIFA of \$70K.
 - The PAT is working with diverse, underserved, or underrepresented audiences. The PAT has been working with partners in Guam to help prepare a USDA RISE Grant submission. This submission is pivoting to a planning grant, with an emphasis on building the skills of Guam residents in agricultural production and entrepreneurship.
- **Climate Extension PAT** (Contacts – Jason Henderson, Adi Leigh Brown/NIFA-Eric Norland)
 - List of Members:
 - <https://www.dropbox.com/s/q4pzbi9wlcay7as/Climate%20PAT.pdf?dl=0>
 - Identified some Extension programs that are ready to be scaled up nationally.
 - Served as Extension's partnering group regarding national climate initiatives according to priority.
 - Developed letters of intent for national program grants.
 - Provided content on Climate to further develop the advocacy toolkit for climate, mitigation, resiliency, and adaptation.
 - Organized into three implementation teams, framed as follows:
 - **Climate-Smart Agriculture** – Cooperative Extension can support the adaptation, mitigation, and resilience of U.S. agriculture to climate change. Helping farmers, ranchers and landowners develop and adopt climate-sensitive practices on working lands will improve the profitability and sustainability of plant and animal systems in rural and urban environments. These practices will maintain adequate and safe food systems as supply chains strain under shifting climate conditions.
 - **Climate-Resilient Communities** – Cooperative Extension can work with rural and urban communities to develop climate sensitive community plans to support the adaptation, mitigation, and resilience of communities to climate change. In addition, these plans would also focus on supporting communities as they develop risk management plans

surrounding natural disasters – fires, floods, rising temperatures, and increased incidence of extreme weather events.

- **Ecosystem Services** – Cooperative Extension supports the protection and preservation of natural areas and resources amid changing climates. Translational research and Extension programs focused on adaptation, mitigation and resilience can help reduce atmospheric greenhouse gas emissions from agriculture and forest production. In addition, climate sensitive management practices for our forests, waterways, and other natural habitats can reduce the negative impacts of climate change.
- In response to the USDA Partnership for Climate-Smart Commodities Request for Proposals, the ECOP Climate PAT and EXF submitted the \$100M proposal, The Extension Climate-Smart Commodities Dairy Project. This partnership will demonstrate how climate-smart dairy commodities can be effectively and economically produced on diverse farm enterprises through innovative application of climate metrics and focus upon climate attribute markets, both voluntary and regulated. This activity included over 20 different institutions and industry partners.
- In response to a NOAA Climate-Smart Communities Initiative, EXF submitted the Extension Climate Smart Communities: Climate Resiliency for a Sustainable Future. This proposal included the concept of the Climate Corps, which presents an opportunity to rapidly increase adoption of climate smart practices while also creating a climate-literate population. The nationwide concept would engage individuals from kindergarten through retirement including farmers, ranchers and foresters in increasing climate-smart practices, climate literacy, and job skills, while implementing on-farm climate mitigation and community resilience. This is an opportunity to engage citizens of all ages and backgrounds, with a special emphasis on underserved communities, in developing effective strategies to support climate smart practices where they are. With an informed and engaged population, we can advance this work in innovative and impactful ways. Local and regional focused climate research is also core to advancing climate-smart practices. CES can lead and develop applied research Fellows programs and professional peer networks, support research grants, and regional policy development.
 - Funding was not received for the NOAA Climate Smart Communities grant. However, we have leveraged the effort put into this grant process by including this concept in the drafting of a National Framework for Climate Smart programming. The concept is to empower communities to address a variety of issues, nation-wide, that embrace local distinct cultural, social, economic, and ecological context and people, while providing nationally aligned-locally designed and implemented solutions. The Climate PAT, in partnership with Extension Foundation, could receive funding to develop an equitable application process to deploy the funding across the system.
- The PAT is working with diverse, underserved, or underrepresented audiences.

During the Climate Smart Commodities Grant development process, we provided outreach to all Climate PAT team members as well as our 1890's and 1994's institutions. Through this process we were able to engage and write into the grant multiple partners representing underserved dairy producers and 1890's institutions. During the initial stages of the grant development process, we engaged with faculty and staff from Insular Island and 1890's institutions and identified challenges to their inclusion in that particular grant that has informed our following work. We invited these participants to apply for the NTAE grant process to further develop their ideas for readiness of future grant possibilities.

- In partnership with the Urban Ag and Food Systems PAT, we submitted a proposal in response to the American Rescue Plan Technical Assistance Investment Program. Its goal is to ensure improved understanding of and equitable participation in the full range of USDA programs and services among historically underserved farmers, ranchers, forest landowners and operators through supporting the organizational delivery of technical assistance projects and establishment of technical assistance networks. Our submission for \$3.5M focused on Urban Agriculture and included 8 institutions, of which 6 are 1890's institutions.
- Upcoming plans include the following:
 - We will be submitting a CAP Proposal to USDA NIFA 7F: Extension, Education & USDA Climate Hubs Partnership opportunity. Deadline is October 6, 2022. We will be utilizing learnings documented from our last three grant submission processes. Based on analysis and feedback from partners in those prior instances, we will be following a new process informed by our learnings to accelerate and improve our grant formulation process.
 - Submit a conference/planning grant for hosting a Climate PAT Strategic Planning gathering. The purpose of which is to advance the goals and intentions of the three program implementation teams.
 - Working with the Extension Foundation's Communication team we are developing a new website to feature Extension's work in climate and showcase ways that potential partners and contributors could participate.
 - Updating before the next quarter the Climate Advocacy webpage.
- **Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion PAT** (Contacts – Rachel Welborn and Vonda Richardson, Co-chairs and Crystal Tyler-Mackey, Fellow/NIFA – Maurice Smith)
 - List of Members:
<https://www.dropbox.com/s/j34mjw4ypz1e71i/DEI%20PAT.pdf?dl=0>
 - Five priority areas have been identified for this PAT, with a workgroup for each. They are focusing by planning for 30 days at a time. Subgroups are meeting

monthly to work on 30-day implementation plans, with goals and deliverables every 30 days.

- The DEI PAT is working with ESCOP to collect key Diversity Contacts for Research and Extension. Once the list is compiled, they plan to survey the contacts regarding primary issues. Almost all the states have reported key contacts.
 - Organized logistics for utilizing grant funding and set up associated contracts.
 - Held an introductory session for new Coming Together for Racial Understanding (CTRU) states.
 - Launched the Administrators' Mini-Series, identified and launched new CTRU state teams, and launched learning labs.
 - The team has developed a survey that will begin to set a baseline understanding of the DEI climate in the LGU system. This survey will be launched soon.
 - Collaborations that work among 1862/1890/1994 – A scan through the system to identify DEI contacts at each LGU sparked initial learning at how diverse positioning of this work is among the various universities. This may provide opportunity for additional learning about models that work.
 - Community of Practice/Resource Repository - Extension has quite a few relevant resources and programs logged. The team is working to organize and validate links to materials, which will provide greater insights into where strengths and gaps exist.
- **Urban Ag and Food Systems PAT** (Contacts – Brent Hales, Bill Miller, Megan Hirschman, Jeff Young and NUEL Fellow - Cayla Taylor, Iowa State University/NIFA – Jessica Shade)
 - List of Members:
<https://www.dropbox.com/s/bb7lqjenu111ir/Urban%20PAT.pdf?dl=0>
 - NUEL Connect Extension subgroup:
<https://connect.extension.org/g/nuel>
 - NUEL website: <https://nuel.extension.org/>
 - Converted Urban Extension e-Fieldbook that will be reviewed and updated in the next quarter:
<https://online.flippingbook.com/view/191504237/34/>
 - Conducted strategic planning process and established implementation teams.
 - Aligned communications of Extension Foundation and NUEL.
 - Aaron Weibe, Extension Foundation, and the NUEL fellow, Cayla Taylor, worked together to rework the layout of the website and connect it to the NUEL Connect Extension site so that information on the website would be pulled from the NUEL Connect Extension site. This ensures that News items, the calendar and much of the other information on the site stays fresh and up-to-date. Aaron conducted an audit of the NUEL website and created NUEL subgroup in Connect Extension. Website was redesigned and widgets were integrated that directly connect to Connect Extension Subgroup.
 - The National Urban Extension Leaders subgroup held its first virtual chat on Friday, May 13 titled, *Reimagining Our Future... Together with Urban Extension Leaders*. During the 1-hour virtual chat attendees discussed topics on Lessons

Learned from the Pandemic, Working in Non-Conventional Spaces, Measuring Impact, and Ten Years from Now. There were 25 attendees who engage for the 1-hour discussion.

- The new NUEL website and Connect Extension group were launched in mid-May, just ahead of the National Urban Extension Conference (NUEC). NUEL's plan since December 2021 when it began working on building its communications capacity was to use NUEC as the springboard to launch its new communication tools. At the beginning of NUEC (May 23), Camden, NJ, the NUEL Connect Extension group had about 150-160 members. There are currently 638 members of the NUEL subgroup.
- In partnership with the Climate PAT, we submitted a proposal in response to the American Rescue Plan Technical Assistance Investment Program. Its goal is to ensure improved understanding of and equitable participation in the full range of USDA programs and services among historically underserved farmers, ranchers, forest landowners and operators through supporting the organizational delivery of technical assistance projects and establishment of technical assistance networks. Our submission for \$3.5M focused on Urban Agriculture and included 8 institutions, of which 6 are 1890's institutions.
- Upcoming plans include the following:
 - Continuing to build content for the subgroup, recruit new members to join, and encouraging NUEL steering/exec committee members to post resources to the subgroup.
 - Work on the development of Program Implementation Team (PIT) membership in three areas: Production Technologies and Practices; Access, Equity, and Justice in Food Systems; and Communities and Economies for Urban Ag with cross cutting theme around access, equity and justice.
 - Developing proposals for funding with appropriate program opportunities.
- **Health Equity and Well Being PAT** (Contacts - Roger Rennekamp, Kerry Gabbert - Fellow/NIFA - Suzanne Stluka, Sheila Fleischhacker, and Ahlshia Shipley)
 - List of Members:
<https://www.dropbox.com/s/14gurljbuqe2cn/Health%20PAT%20Leadership%20Committee.pdf?dl=0>
 - The Health Innovation Taskforce has been sun-setted by ECOP with responsibilities transferred to the Health PAT, with the suggestion that the PAT be known as the Health Equity and Well-being PAT.
 - The PAT is exploring with Lewis-Burke Associates potential funding from additional governmental agencies. This will be coordinated with ECOP.
 - Worked in various ways to increase the capacity of the Cooperative Extension System to better utilize data science to identify health inequities and to design precision interventions for particular communities or groups.
 - Twenty-four individuals were invited to become members of the Leadership Committee of the Health Equity and Well-Being Program Action Team. Members

of this committee include both administrative and program staff of Cooperative Extension as well as representatives of USDA-NIFA, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, partner organizations, and foundations. This team is benefitting from NTAE funds which help support this effort.

- The Extension Foundation (with funds provided by USDA-NIFA) supported the hiring of Kerry Gabbert of West Virginia University to devote a portion of her professional time to supporting the Leadership Committee of the Health Equity and Well-Being Program Action Team. She is also helping to track the progress of various work groups toward selected systemwide milestones and work to secure new partners and investors in Extension's health movement.
- More than 200 Extension professionals from across the country gathered in Kansas City, MO to participate in Cooperative Extension's National Health Outreach Conference hosted this year by the University of Missouri. Keynote speakers include Salma Abdalla of the Boston University School of Public Health, Andrea Everett, Community Development Extension Agent of Prairie View A&M University, Sara Bleich of the USDA Food and Nutrition Service, and Dan Meers, mascot for the Kansas City Chiefs. Attendees engaged in their choice of 45 concurrent sessions and 30 poster presentations on such topics as coalition building, systems change, workforce development, immunization education, diabetes prevention, and food insecurity. The 2023 conference will be held May 22-24, 2023, in Ithaca, NY.
- With funds allocated by USDA-NIFA and administered by the Extension Foundation, the Center for Community Health and Evaluation has hired two additional team members to assist with a systemwide assessment of readiness to implement Cooperative Extension's National Framework for Health Equity and Well-Being (www.aplu.org/CES-EqHealth); Executive Summary at www.aplu.org/CES-EqHealth-ES. The first component of this assessment is a survey of county-based Extension personnel. Thirteen land grant universities were invited to participate in this survey, with each distributing the questionnaire to a specified number of individuals. As of writing, more than 260 individuals have completed the survey. Results of the readiness assessment will be used to prioritize the recommendations contained in the Framework.
- One of the tools for implementation of the framework will be a common language playbook for how community-based Extension personnel can transition a portion of their work to supporting collective action which ultimately advances population health. The playbook is being developed by Community Initiatives, informed by an advisory group of health-focused community development professionals, and published by the Extension Foundation.
- The Extension Foundation and National 4-H Council are collaboratively funding a project to advance the utilization of data science to better identify health disparities and inequities. Through an agreement with Colorado State University, the Extension Foundation has purchased a portion of the professional time of Sue Schneider and Dan Goldhamer to conduct the project. Deliverables include identifying existing data hubs that contain data useful to Extension professionals, convening leadership of these data hubs,

and providing training to Extension faculty and staff on how to better utilize data in the work. Funding secured is \$300K for the project through NIFA.

- **4-H Leadership Committee PAT** (Contacts - Ed Jones/NIFA - Shannon Horrillo)
 - Note: The 4-H PAT's work takes place within the 4-H Leadership Committee, while the PAT provides a collaboration point with the other PATs. (See report from 4-H Leadership Committee below).
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- **Broadband/Infrastructure PAT** (access and literacy) – (Contacts - Damona Doye, Rachel Welborn/NIFA - Sarah Rocker)
 - Held a fully subscribed National Digital Education Extension Team workshop the 1st week of May. The Broadband Training program involved 30 individuals. About 25% had no broadband experience and 50% had limited experience. Most indicated that they were fairly or very likely to become active in broadband soon.
 - Developed a partnership with the National Digital Inclusion Alliance (NDIA).
 - Populated a webpage – an information sharing system for posting resources such as peer-reviewed curriculum, other educational resources, policies, procedures, best practices, and examples across the system that advance the efforts, working with Extension Foundation to host. (See: <https://connect.extension.org/g/broadband-access-and-digital-skills>).
 - The Broadband PAT recently released a Research Brief from the PAT.

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.

- The ECOP 4-H Leadership Committee was engaged and encouraged applicants for AFRI funds to support youth programming and data collection. The committee provided letters of alignment when the proposal is in concert with the strategic goals of the committee. The Committee is supporting National 4-H Council as it develops a strategic implementation plan for the \$50 million Landmark Gift from MacKenzie Scott. This gift will have long term impacts on the ability to deliver 4-H across the country.
- The Committee is working closely with National 4-H Council and National Institute of Food and Agriculture on the protection and modernization of the use of the 4-H name and emblem.
- The Committee is exploring solutions to concerns regarding liability for Extension faculty who are providing leadership in national and regional events. Diversity, Equity and Inclusion – it is recognized that there are a number of initiatives related to DEI and the committee suggest a DEI Summit to bring this work together and develop strategies on moving it forward. Attempts are in process to connect the work of the DEI task force for ECOP with the work of the 4-H committee.

- FRTEP – A FRTEP 4-H Professional Development Conference was held in Spokane, WA to improve work with tribal audiences and collaboration with 1994s. The FRTEP group nominated two individuals to help represent the group (Colville and Hopi Tribes). ECOP 4-H is in the process of creating a subcommittee/study group within ECOP 4-H to help facilitate those conversations. Associated with the discussions around FRTEP was the need to more closely collaborate with the programs in the territories. At the December meeting representatives of Guam, American Samoa, Micronesia, and Marianas Islands will participate in a forum on how to better support their unique needs and opportunities. 4-H Leadership
- Pipeline – A committee is working on the competencies needed to be a 4-H program leader. They are also exploring strategies to develop future program leaders. 4-H Advocacy Toolkit – a subcommittee is updating information for the ECOP Advocacy Toolkit related to 4-H. Changes in committee membership: Angie Freeland from the University of Arkansas has been appointed to replace Arch Smith who retired August 1st. Ed Buckner has resigned from the committee, and Allen Malone from Alabama A&M has been appointed as his replacement Ed Jones was contracted to support the ECOP 4-H Leadership Committee as the Executive Director starting April 1, 2022

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

This committee identifies, recommends, and delivers professional and organizational development opportunities for Extension Leaders and other Extension professionals.

Objective 1: Extension professionals are recognized for their accomplishments through timely and thoughtful review and selection of Excellence in Extension Award winners.

Response 1:

- The committee solicited nominations for Excellence in Extension Individual and Team awards. This was the first year for team award. The EDAs and Directors communicated about the call for nominations and two nominees were identified in each region. The top nominee from each region was evaluated and scored by the directors on the committee. The scores and nominations were discussed, and the national award winners were selected in each category at the July Joint COPs meeting. The committee chair, Lawrence, worked with Sandy to communicate with national and regional winners.
- The committee discussed concerns about the awards process.
 - The current scoring criteria tends to favor long-tenured state specialists who are departmental faculty over early career and/or local extension professionals. For example, criteria for scoring include publications and funding and impacts measured in participants will be larger in multi-state programs compared to multi-county or county programs. The committee will review alternative criteria and/or weighting or potentially a new award and will make a recommendation to ECOP.

- The number and quality of applications were less than expected for a national Excellence in Extension award. One region did not have a nomination for the individual award. We discussed how to lower the barriers to application. We have since learned that the EDAs will be encouraging the use of a “short-form” whereby individuals or teams can submit a pre-proposal of the application for review by a committee at the regional level. That committee will solicit full applications from the promising submissions. This strategy has work well in the North Central region.

Objective 2: New directors and administrators increase their knowledge and connections with the national Cooperative Extension system and their national peer group.

Response 2:

- The Professional Development Committee plans and hosts Learning for Leaders (L4L) during the ECOP First Friday in odd numbered months. Part of these L4L sessions have focused on new directors as will the pre-conference session at NEDA. The speakers featured are successful directors who can share their experience. Topics include:
 - January L4L: New Director Orientation, *What I Know Now that I Wish I Knew Then*
 - Format: Moderated panel.
 - Speakers: Jon Boren, Bev Durgan, Mark Latimore, Laura Perry Johnson
 - May L4L: *Extension and the New Normal, Strategies for Reconnecting with Stakeholders through Programming and Personnel.*
 - Format: Small group discussions in breakout groups.
 - Breakout 1: Current strategies as we emerge from the pandemic
 - Breakout 2: Given the lessons learned, how will Extension be different in 5 years?
 - Reconvene and share best practices.
 - September L4L: *An Orientation to the National Extension Leadership and Where Do We Fit in the National Scheme of Things?*
 - Format: Moderated discussion about the roles and responsibilities of ECOP, APLU, and NIFA, their structure, and how to get involved.
 - Panelists: Bev Durgan, ECOP; Doug Steele, APLU; and Brent Elrod, NIFA
 - September: New Director Orientation at the joint NEDA and ESCOP Meeting
 - Session in Sunday afternoon, Sept 25 for 90 minutes.
 - For new AES and CES directors.
 - Working agenda topics: (1) relationship factors that lead to integration; and (2) joint leadership and shared accountability in managing people (e.g., joint faculty positions).

Objective 3: Extension directors, administrators and other Extension professionals develop increased awareness of current and relevant Extension priorities identified by ECOP.

Response 3:

The Professional Development Committee shared the First Friday webinars with the ECOP

Leadership Committee that provided updates to the system about ECOP priorities. Still, some of our First Friday topics addressed current and relevant ECOP Priorities.

- March: *Role of Extension in Addressing Climate Response and Resiliency*
 - This session featured Jason Henderson and the work of the Climate PAT.
- The September L4L will provide insights to ECOP priorities and how to get involved.
- Each L4L provided ECOP Leadership the opportunity to provide a brief update to attendees on ECOP actions and priorities.

BUDGET AND LEGISLATIVE COMMITTEE (BLC)

This committee establishes the federal legislative, budget, and advocacy agenda and strategies for the System.

BLC Accomplishments

- The [Budget and Advocacy Committee](#) (BAC) supported ECOP BLC FY23 request and ECOP BLC is currently developing the FY24 request for Smith-Lever 3(b&c) and 3(d) for ECOP's consideration.
- Launched the ECOP web-based advocacy toolkit and continue to update advocacy materials.
- ECOP BLC has worked closely with ECOP [Committee on Legislations and Policy](#) (CLP) representative to prioritize 2023 Farm Bill needs for Cooperative Extension.
- ECOP BLC facilitated the *Extension Directors and Administrators Budget and Legislative Meeting* at PILD on April 5, 2021.

ECOP PARTNERSHIPS

ECOP/NATIONAL 4-H COUNCIL WORKPLAN ACCOMPLISHMENTS

National 4-H Council and ECOP's alignment and collaboration around our shared priorities of equity, health, scaling positive youth development (PYD) and Extension leadership capacity are generating a return on investment from both the public and private sector. Together we are making even more progress toward providing *all* young people access to opportunity.

- Earlier this year, National 4-H Council announced a **\$50 million** gift from writer and philanthropist MacKenzie Scott, the largest single gift in 4-H's 120-year history. The transformational gift is a direct reflection of Ms. Scott's interests in youth equity and mental well-being.
- A Task Force of Council Trustees and Extension leaders is developing recommendations on the use of the gift to maximize Council's support of Cooperative Extension's 4-H program. Chaired by Juliette Bell, Vice Chair of Council's Board of Trustees and former President of University of Maryland Eastern Shore, Task Force members include:
 - Jon Boren, Extension Director, New Mexico State University
 - Marshall Stewart, Vice Chancellor for Extension and Engagement, University of Missouri
 - Albert Essel, Executive Administrator, 1890 Region

- Nia Imani Fields, State 4-H Program Leader, University of Maryland Cooperative Extension
- Tay Moore, Student, Louisiana State University, Louisiana 4-H Alumnus
- The Task Force will make its recommendations based on three guiding principles:
 - Transformational
 - Inclusive
 - Sustainable
- In addition to engaging with Extension and 4-H leaders throughout the summer, the Task Force leaned heavily on the Extension pulse survey completed in June that demonstrated a top priority should be increasing access to 4-H programming as an overarching objective (88% felt “strongly”).
- There is resounding alignment that the first phase of investments support Extension’s goal to increase access and opportunity for all youth through initiatives that will build the capacity and enhance the relevance of Extension’s 4-H program.
- With support from the W.K. Kellogg and Robert Wood Johnson (RWJF) Foundations, the 4-H Equity Design Team continues to advance the seven strategic directions outlined in the 4-H Equity Strategic Plan. Four implementation teams (4-H Youth Development Professional, Organizational Assessment, Data Governance and Measurement) have been meeting throughout 2022 to:
 - leverage and connect efforts across the states
 - share best practices and resources from state 4-H programs
 - maximize our limited resources for greatest impact
- Final reports are expected from the National 4-H Equity Plan Steering Committee and all four implementation teams in October.
- Council and Extension’s co-investment in the inaugural Director of Health Equity and Well-Being is resulting in greater visibility, capability, scalability, and sustainability of Extension’s health equity initiative as evidenced by:
 - Well Connected Communities, an RWJF funded project, involving 22 land grant universities and 51 communities.
 - 46 Extension personnel advancing their professional standing as noted by Fundamentals of Public Health graduate certificate offered by Cornell University qualifying them to take the exam and become Certified in Public Health (CPH).
 - 1500 Extension personnel working as a network to implement the Framework for Health Equity and Well-being to ensure that all people can be as healthy as they can be.

- A newly created Extension Health Leadership Committee representing all levels of Cooperative Extension and external partners to ensure all people have a fair and just opportunity to experience optimal health and well-being.
- A new Health Fellow will also expand the capacity of Extension’s Health Equity and Well Being project team. Georgia 4-H alumna and former Youth in Action Healthy Living Pillar Winner Sophia Rodriguez will serve as the first fellow through September 2023. She will focus her work on equitable development, well-being economies and youth voice.
- Council matched Cooperative Extension’s investment in the newly created Executive Director position to support the work of the ECOP 4-H Leadership Committee. A key part of the role will be to develop a sustainability plan to pursue revenue-generating opportunities to support Committee initiatives beyond the position’s initial 18-month term. After a nationwide search, Edwin Jones, Ph.D. was selected as the Committee’s first Executive Director in April.
- Council also partnered with ECOP 4-H to maximize Extension’s success in securing funds to support 4-H priorities through the unprecedented \$68M available in USDA’s AFRI grant program.
 - In his new role as Executive Director for ECOP 4-H, Dr. Jones served as a point of contact to facilitate conversation and planning for several proposal submissions across land-grant universities.
 - Council also provided capacity to 1890 land-grant institutions’ application efforts.
- The 4-H Pathways Initiative, a joint effort of Council, USDA/NIFA and Cooperative Extension, continues to develop innovative ways to meet and serve new communities as well as equip Extension leaders with tools for change management. Two outcomes were consistent in this year’s Pathways attendee evaluations:
 - Communication and cooperation channels further opened between University higher administration and Extension leadership. New partnerships were created.
 - A structured process with dedicated time for a triad (University administrator, Extension Dean/Administrator, and a 4-H Program Leader) to align goals of Extension youth programming, especially 4-H, with strategic LGU outcomes was important.
- Seven institutions participated in Pathways 1 convenings since October, 2021. Three institutions participated in a Pathways 2 convening this past winter to further refine alignment of 4-H and university strategic goals.
- 4-H PYD Academies continue to increase the capacity of local staff to implement high quality educational programs while offering cost effective, professional development at

scale for the Extension system. This spring's *Creating a Path to Youth Emotional Wellness: A 4-H PYD Academy on Youth Mental Health* attracted 350 participants. Academy evaluations showed strong support for additional, nationally-sponsored professional development opportunities focused on PYD.

ECOP/EXTENSION FOUNDATION WORKPLAN ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- **System-wide Communication:** Developed ECOP Program Action Team websites at pats.extension.org to connect Cooperative Extension System with these national efforts. In addition, created subgroups for several PATs to engage with interested CES professionals system-wide, leveraged National Registry of Cooperative Extension Programs and Assets to create a clearinghouse of existing efforts across the system.
 - Workforce Development Network: 175 members
 - Collective for Health Equity & Well-Being: 1492 members
 - Through the *ECOP Monday Minute*, information about the opportunities and use of the Extension Foundation [National Program Registry](#) and emerging National Evidence-Informed Program and Practice Library was widely disseminated. The registry provides ready-access to a living database of efforts across the system to rapidly respond to system-wide funding opportunities.
- **Funding proposed:** ECOP PAT leaders of the Program Committee worked closely with the Extension Foundation this year to submit \$185M in funding proposals
- **Funding received**
 - ECOP PAT leaders received \$1.1M in funding through the Extension Foundation including:
 - \$175K directly for PAT coordination or special projects;
 - \$370K in NIFA Letters of Commitment for the Workforce and Health PATs
 - \$645K in funded projects aligned with PAT topics through the USDA-NIFA New Technologies for Ag Extension (NTAE) cooperative agreement;
 - Also received 57 applications for NTAE Year 4 (2022-2023) from 36 Land-grant universities for competitive NTAE awards for Year Four. 39 applications supported for Year 4 aligned with both ECOP and USDA priorities, Significant increase over Year 3 by 216%.
 - \$10M for the EXCITE program.
 - EXCITE Program in coordination with ECOP Health Innovation Task Force, a partnership with USDA-NIFA and the CDC engaged 72 Land-grant universities across all 6 regions of Cooperative Extension to deliver critical adult immunization education through communication campaigns and pilot projects.
- In collaboration with ECOP and National 4-H Council, the three partners established a Memorandum of Understanding, the purpose of which is to clarify the relationship, responsibilities, and opportunities for collaboration between ECOP, the Extension Foundation, and National 4-H Council in support of the Cooperative Extension System.
- The Extension Foundation serves and supports ECOP Program Action Teams for system-wide initiatives and has developed a website for PAT interactions at [ECOP Program](#)

[Action Teams \(extension.org\)](https://extension.org). The Extension Foundation has also garnered a number of financial resources for the PATs, as well as coordinated federal grant applications in support of these ECOP/CES national level priorities.

THE COLLECTIVE FOR HEALTH EQUITY AND WELL-BEING

Cooperative Extension's Collective for Health Equity and Well-Being is a **community of Extension personnel and their partners** united by their shared commitment to advancing health equity and well-being. Members work together to support the implementation of Cooperative Extension's National Framework for Health Equity and Well-Being (2021) to ensure that all people can be as healthy as they can be. The Collective for Health Equity and Well-Being (a Connect Extension subgroup) has grown to **1,495 members** since its creation in the summer of 2020. To date more than 120 blog posts were made to the community on topics such as diabetes, immunization, zoonotic disease, rural health, obesity, and life expectancy. <https://connect.extension.org/g/health-and-well-being>

Website for the Collective – While the Connect Extension subgroup will continue to serve as the platform for member interaction and dissemination of current news, a new website for the Collective was launched in September to serve as the repository for all things related to systemwide transformation. This new web site located at <https://health.extension.org> will be linked to both Connect Extension and the existing Well Connected Communities web site.

ECOP Health Leadership Committee – Twenty-six individuals accepted invitations to become members of the Leadership Committee of the Health Equity and Well-Being Program Action Team. Members of this committee include both administrative and program staff of Cooperative Extension as well as representatives of USDA-NIFA, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, partner organizations, and foundations. Orientation sessions for the members were held in the month of July and the first regular meeting of the group was held on August 23. At that meeting, members heard the results of a survey conducted by the Center for Community Health and Evaluation (CCHE) to assess the readiness of the Cooperative Extension System to implement recommendations contained in its new Framework for Health Equity and Well-Being. At their next meeting on September 27, the group will hear the results of the listening session conducted by CCHE to gain a deeper understanding of current progress and remaining barriers to framework implementation. The Committee will use the information obtained to establish milestones and strategies for their future work.

National Health Outreach Conference – More than 200 Extension professionals from across the country gathered in Kansas City, MO recently to participate in Cooperative Extension's National Health Outreach Conference hosted this year by the University of Missouri. Keynote speakers include Salma Abdalla of the Boston University School of Public Health, Andrea Everett, Community Development Extension Agent of Prairie View A&M University, Sara Bleich of the USDA Food and Nutrition Service, and Dan Meers, mascot for the Kansas City Chiefs. Attendees engaged in their choice of 45 concurrent sessions and 30 poster presentations on such topics as coalition building, systems change, workforce development, immunization education, diabetes

prevention, and food insecurity. The 2023 conference will be held May 22-24, 2023, in Ithaca, NY.

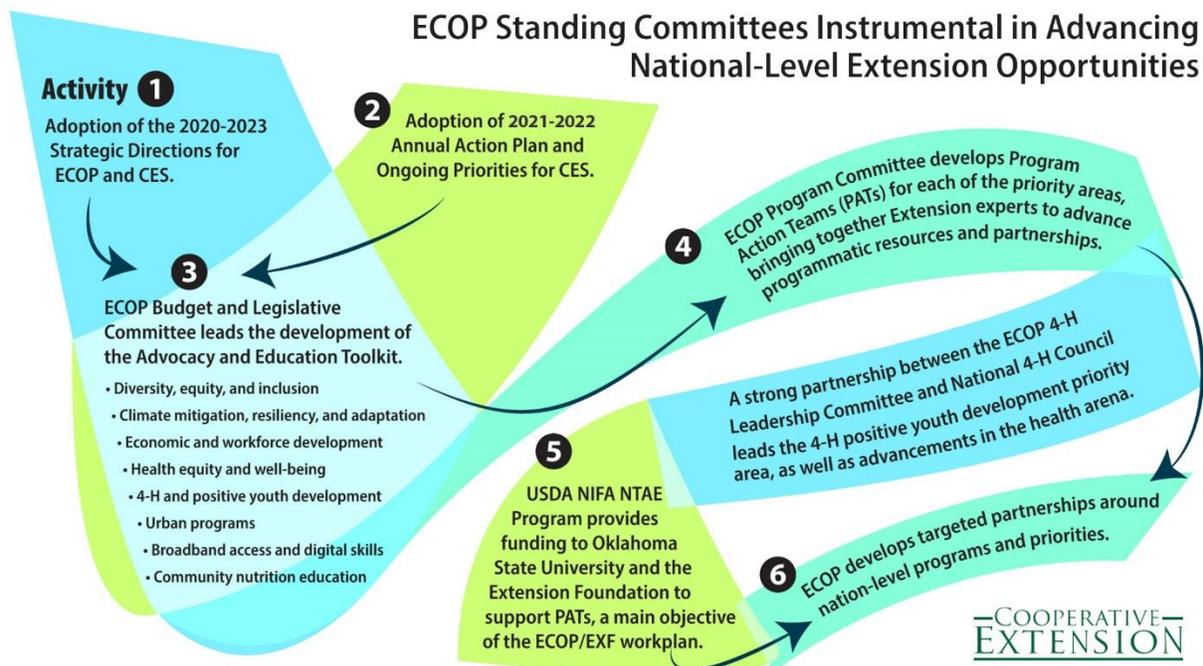
Surfacing Health Disparities through Data Driven Discovery – The Extension Foundation and National 4-H Council are collaboratively funding a project to advance the utilization of data science to better identify health disparities and inequities. Through an agreement with Colorado State University, the Extension Foundation has purchased a portion of the professional time of Sue Schneider and Dan Goldhamer to conduct the project. The Colorado State University team recently completed a project to identify a set of online training opportunities related using data to surface health disparities at the sub-county level. They have also identified data science hubs deemed to be useful to Extension faculty and staff in supporting data driven discovery with community groups.

Implementation Playbook – One of the tools for implementation of the framework will be a **common language playbook** for how community-based Extension personnel can transition a portion of their work to supporting collective action which ultimately advances population health. The playbook is being developed by **Community Initiatives**, informed by an advisory group of health-focused **community development professionals**, and published by the **Extension Foundation**.

Well Connected Communities – Supported by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation and implemented by National 4-H Council, the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation is supporting **22 land-grant universities in their efforts to help 51 communities across the country** create more sustainable places to live, learn, work and play. Extension staff in these communities are pioneering a new way of working by establishing, managing, or facilitating the work of multi-sector coalitions focusing on one or more social determinants of health. Each participating land-grant university will prepare a written or video case-study of their work in these communities.

Extension Collaboration on Immunization Teaching and Engagement (EXCITE) – Seventy-two land-grant institutions from all six Cooperative Extension regions participated in the **Vaccinate with Confidence Campaign** to reduce vaccine hesitancy among medically underserved audiences. By partnering with more than 100 city and county health departments and other community organizations, EXCITE program teams collectively reached more than 12 million people with science-based information about vaccinations. In addition, 24 land grant institutions were chosen to conduct in-depth pilot projects to test various methodologies for delivering immunization education programs to target audiences. Funded by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention through an interagency agreement with the National Institute of Food and Agriculture, the overall effort was ultimately administered through the Extension Foundation. In addition to city and county health departments, delivery partners included FQHCs, CTSAAs, tribal health departments, local physicians, and schools of nursing, medicine, and public. Learning resources were available in English, Spanish, Haitian, and Somali and distributed through various media channels including print, radio, Pandora, billboards, TikTok, Facebook, YouTube, and in-person events. With new funding from the recently passed Inflation Reduction Act, Cooperative Extension will be able to sustain its immunization work well into the future.

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



ADDITIONAL ADVOCACY ACTIVITIES

2023 Farm Bill Activities—ECOP worked with the Board on Agriculture Assembly Committee on Legislation and Policy, Lewis-Burke Associates, and APLU Government Affairs to develop legislative language for the upcoming Farm Bill. Additionally, the team is exploring recommendations around Climate, Workforce Development, Health, SNAP-Ed, and [Data Science for the Public Good](#).

RETURN ON INVESTMENT

During the 2021-20221 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
- ECOP/Extension Foundation/National 4-H Council partnership MOU

- 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 **\$163M+** in additional funding for the Cooperative Extension System. A number of new grant proposals are also in process.

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
 - 1 Part-Time contractor funded by ECOP and National 4-H Council
 - 5 Regional Executives devoting 0.25 effort to National System Matters funded by Regional Associations
- *ECOP Monday Minute* (47 issues)
- ECOP-Related Meetings Coordinated by National Office Staff (113)
- Learning for Leaders Events (5)
- NEDA Planning Committee Meetings (12)
- BAA Meetings (16)

CONTACT US

- [Extension Committee on Organization and Policy \(aplu.org\)](https://advocacy.extension.org)
- <https://advocacy.extension.org>
- www.extension.org
- www.4-H.org
- www.aplu.org