



**2022-2023 Extension Committee on Organization and Policy (ECOP)  
Action Plan  
Beverly R. Durgan, Chair, University of Minnesota**

*As Chair, my goal is to advance [ECOP Strategic Directions](#), by focusing on priorities identified by member institutions, and building on successes and lessons learned during the recent past. The intended outcome is a cohesive Cooperative Extension System<sup>1</sup> and stronger member programs, inclusive of all.*

**ECOP's 2020-2023 Strategic Priorities are:**

- 1) Increase visibility and recognition of the Cooperative Extension System (CES) 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) Ensure the Cooperative Extension System addresses nationally relevant issues through a Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion lens.
- 3) Support the professional success of CES leadership through professional development opportunities including training, webinars, in person meetings, networking opportunities and more.
- 4) Expand federal and non-federal resources available to Extension, including the expansion and support of international opportunities.
- 5) Identify ongoing and emerging CES priorities and national issues and provide mechanisms for collective action.

During the 2022-2023 year, these Strategic Priorities will be prioritized and advanced through the following Action Plan.

**EMPHASIS AREAS and ACTION STEPS**

***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.***

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<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. 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

1. Provide existing Cooperative Extension supporters, such as NIFA, USDA, and other aligned national advocacy groups with strong impact messaging and research-based evidence.
  - Provide impact 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.
  - Engage with NIFA leadership, to increase their ability to advocate for capacity 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.
  - Develop 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.
  - Engage regularly and intentionally with national elected officials, appointees, and staffers.
3. Develop new partners to tell the impact of CES.
  - Encourage ECOP Program Action Teams to include non-Extension partners in planning conversations and program implementation, 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).
  - Engage ECOP and APLU partners; including ESCOP, ACOP and ICOP to implement the APLU advocacy schedule throughout the budget and regulatory cycle.
  - Enlist and support Extension professionals (PILD attendees) and supporters (ECOP Budget and Legislative Committee, CARET, ECOP 4-H Leadership Committee, the Extension Foundation, National 4-H Council, and the BLC’s 4-H Advocacy Sub-Committee) to message 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.
  - Continue current initiatives on private funding partnerships and those with non-NIFA federal agencies.
  - Intentionally seek collaborations and partnerships to increase programming with underserved communities, including urban programming.
  - Conduct regular outreach to key agencies around CES priorities and other prospective partners with intersecting missions including, but not limited to, other USDA agencies, NSF, NOAA, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the Department of Health & Human Services, and others.

- Through the Program Action Teams leadership, explore partnership potential with federal and non-federal organizations that have intersecting missions and values in the national-level work areas of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion; Climate Mitigation, Resiliency, and Adaptation; Economic and Workforce Development; Health Equity and Well-Being; Broadband Access and Digital Skills; and Nutrition Education and SNAP-Ed.
3. Maintain a strong working relationship with ESCOP, ACOP and ICOP committees to enhance opportunities for collaboration and elevate the importance of Extension in LGU research, teaching, and international enterprises.

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

1. 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.
2. Further advance the structure and support for deliberative, forward-looking, result-oriented actions from ECOP committees.
3. Review and deploy reserve funding as appropriate to support ECOP Committees in advancing CES success.

***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 discuss how to position the System for future success. This includes an annual conference (NEDA) and periodic Learning for Leaders events.
  - 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.
  - 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.