

Program Area or Issue Committee Chair

Thousands of Arkansans use their talents, knowledge, resources and influence to help others improve themselves. Volunteer leaders have always been an essential part of the Extension system of education. As a participant in your County Extension Council, you are helping others to bring improvements into their daily lives.

Because effective leadership is vital to the program development process, this position description was prepared to help you understand and be able to carry out your duties on the County Extension Council.

As chairman, your role is to manage and guide the work of the program area or issue committee in a way that members actively participate in carrying out your committee's assignment.

- Keep in touch with Extension agents throughout the year to discuss committee meetings and educational programs.
- Arrange committee meeting details – date, time, location, agenda, etc. – in consultation with the Extension agent.
- Prepare a written agenda in advance of each meeting, including what is to be done and who is responsible. Consider suggestions from members.
- Notify members about meetings and see that each member receives an agenda.
- Involve members before and during meetings by assigning tasks for them to do.
- Identify resource people who are needed and invite them to present information.
- Preside at committee meetings. Call meetings to order and adjourn on time.
- Use the agenda to guide discussion and decision making.
- Have a member to record the proceedings.
- Keep discussions centered on meeting purposes so that the agenda can be completed.
- Encourage participation by calling on each member for discussion as items are considered.
- Initiate a group decision after members have expressed opinions on each business item.
- Review plans made before the meeting ends, make necessary assignments for member follow-up and determine when the committee should meet again.
- Keep in touch with members between meetings, especially ones who accepted assignments, and offer assistance when needed.
- Contact members who did not attend meetings and explain what was done.

- Identify and assist in recruiting replacement members for the committee.
- Inform other groups whose support is needed about the committee's activities.
- Lead the committee in making detailed plans for conducting educational activities and events sponsored by your committee.
- Evaluate committee meetings and educational activities. Look for ways to improve both.
- Attend meetings of the County Extension Council. Report your committee's activities and participate in discussions as the council provides overall leadership to the organization.

Your county Extension agents can advise you on other resource material available to help you understand and use the program development process. They will be glad to provide you with other helpful materials and publications.

Information in this publication has been adapted for Arkansas. Original materials were prepared by Burl Richardson and Mary Marshall, Extension Program Development Specialists, Texas Agricultural Extension Service.

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