

UNIVERSITY OF NEW HAMPSHIRE (CES)

II. Process for Stakeholder Input

UNH Cooperative Extension actively involves stakeholders in the POW development process. Included are County and State Extension Advisory Councils, program committees, commodity groups, state agencies and organizations, external relations volunteers and clientele input and feedback.

The primary method used to obtain stakeholder input for the FY2000-2004 Plan of Work was a statewide needs assessment. Extension staff in each of NH's ten counties worked in partnership with their Extension Advisory Councils to conduct a county needs assessment during this past fall and winter. A variety of methods were employed including written surveys, focus groups, reviews of existing data, and key informant interviews. Included were results from Community Profiles and the Teen Assessment Program (Extension facilitated processes conducted throughout the state which involves citizens/youth in identifying and addressing local priority needs and issues). Needs data from all counties was compiled and summarized, and distributed to all staff and county advisory council members for discussion, analysis and ranking.

UNH Cooperative Extension is also committed to increasing support for under-served and under-represented audiences. This audience is reached through many program efforts with the majority reached through the Expanded Foods & Nutrition Education Program (EFNEP) and the Family Lifeskills Program, part of the state's welfare reform effort. Staff working in these areas are instrumental in building trust and rapport with under-represented audiences, and are key in helping Extension advisory councils understand this audience's circumstances. The needs of under-served and under-represented groups were incorporated and addressed during the statewide needs assessment and are reflected in this Plan of Work.

A day-long meeting of the State Extension Advisory Council on April 15, 1999, was devoted solely to the final ranking of statewide needs for the Plan of Work. Involved were citizen representatives from each County Extension Advisory Council. Needs assessment data from all counties was reviewed and discussed, and a subsequent ranking made of statewide needs. Top priorities identified were:

Natural Resources Needs (includes agriculture, forestry, wildlife, water & marine resources)

1. Land use, land & water conservation, and open space preservation.
2. Sustaining the economic value/impact of natural resources and natural resource industries.
3. Increasing the visibility and marketing of Extension's expertise and assistance to support natural resources and natural resources-related industries.

Family and Youth Needs

1. Strengthening families – balancing work, family & community roles; parent education/pre-parenting education; resiliency and family functioning.

2. Lifeskill development with youth – workforce preparation; character education; social responsibility.
3. Families need to better manage their resources – time, money, other
4. Wellness – healthy lifestyles including nutrition, physical activity, food safety

Broad State Needs (exceeding scope of Extension's two program areas)

1. Community Involvement/Sustainability – community decision-making; educating elected officials; leadership development; community dialogues; balanced growth; user - friendly town government.
2. Jobs/Economic Development – workforce preparation, school-to-work.

Based on the statewide needs assessment, and final analysis and ranking by the State Extension Advisory Council, the following goals were established as the basis for the FY2000-2004 Plan of Work:

1. Foster Development of Competent Individuals and Strong Families
2. Strengthening New Hampshire Communities
3. Conserve and Protect Land, Water & Open Space
4. Strengthen the Economic Impact of Agricultural, Forest and Marine Industries