

Getting to Know Your Cooperative Extension Team

A Guide for New EFNEP Educators



Objectives

- Networking, initiating relationships within the office
- Provide the opportunity to discuss your role and its needs and priorities with others
- Learn the roles and responsibilities of other staff members
- Learn from the experiences of colleagues
- Understand and appreciate how other roles support Cooperative Extension
- Understand and appreciate other needs and priorities outside of EFNEP

Although North Carolina Cooperative Extension offices may operate differently, there is an expectation for every educator to understand their county office's structure and how it operates. The purpose for this guide is to connect you with key players and to demonstrate ways you can work with them in order to leverage their support.

Examples of common partnerships EFNEP may have with Agents:

- Head Start or daycares
- Food Pantries
- Gardens
- Schools
- Farmworkers
- Faith Communities
- Affordable Housing Communities
- 4-H Families
- Juvenile Crime Prevention Programs
- County Government programs/departments

After meeting with the CED, you will learn more about your cooperative Extension office and the program areas in your county. Each county will have different types of agents and program assistants. Make sure to review your county website's 'Meet the Staff' page.

As you get to know the staff in your county, answer any questions they might have about EFNEP and share our What Is EFNEP document with them.



County Extension Director (CED)

The primary responsibility of the job is to exercise sound judgment and provide leadership for and coordinate the efforts of the county Extension staff (including EFNEP educators) in developing an effective total county Extension education program. In addition, this position may be responsible for programming as an agent along with community economic development.

Questions to ask CEDs:

1. Can you explain your role?

2. What are the office hours and expectations for scheduling and communicating time off, using sick time, etc?

3. How do you prefer that we communicate (phone, email, text, stop in the office anytime)?

4. When are staff meetings?

5. What programs are "all hands on deck" and when are those optional programs/events? (ex. Farm City Week, Report to the People, Harvest/Heritage Days, 4-H camps, retreats)

6. What are the needs in the county that are a priority for the commissioners?

7. How are accomplishments shared with the county? Can you share the most recent "Report to the People" document/handout/information?

8. What gaps exist in county programming that EFNEP can help fill related to nutrition education for limited-resource families and youth?

9. What contacts/partners do you suggest for EFNEP?

10. Do you have a program area? If so, what programs do you offer? In what ways can EFNEP be a partner?

11. One of EFNEP's priority areas is to connect participants to accessible food resources. Who is involved with local foods or food security within the county?

12. Review the office staff members. Is anyone missing or do you have any suggestions of who to add?

13. Do you have an ECA (Extension and Community Association) group? If so, who oversees/coordinates the group? I would like to introduce myself and EFNEP to ECA members in order to recruit volunteers.

14. Who else do I need to be introduced to in the county?

15. Does EFNEP have additional storage space outside of the office (food, perishable foods, paper goods, skill builders, teaching equipment)?

16. EFNEP is most effective when there's an opportunity to conduct a hands-on food demonstration. Does EFNEP have a county budget? If so, what do I need to do in order to purchase supplies and ingredients?

Administrative Assistant (AA)

The primary responsibility is to provide support to the County Extension Director and staff where assigned. The AA cooperates with colleagues in the NCCE and county leaders in performing assigned responsibilities. The performance of assigned responsibilities is governed by the philosophy, objectives, policies, and procedures of the NCCE.

Questions to ask AA:

1. Please describe your role/position.

2. Have you had EFNEP Educators in this county before? If so, what was your experience? What do I need to know in order for our relationship to be successful?

3. What are the office procedures for:

a. Mailing

b. Printing/scanning/copying

c. Technology

d. Using and obtaining office supplies

e. Answering phones

f. Travel

g. State/county car use

h. Time/clock in and out

i. Signing in/out of the office

j. Sharing Google calendar

k. Any other office procedures?

4. What is the procedure if I have issues with Wolftime?

Family and Consumer Sciences (FCS) Agent

NC State Extension's Family and Consumer Sciences (FCS) Program is a community-based educational program that strengthens and transforms families by providing education on the most important issues that affect them. The core of all NC State Extension county FCS programs is nutrition, health, food safety, food preservation, and local foods systems. FCS agents deliver evidence-based programming in nutrition, health, food safety, food preservation, and local foods. In addition to the core, the FCS programs at the state and local county level may also address important community issues related to wellness, local foods and cooking, chronic disease reduction, housing, parenting, family resource management, human development, and aging.

Questions to ask the FCS Agent:

1. Describe your role/position.

2. Describe your main program areas (including target audiences, the fee to participate, recruiting participants, etc.).

3. How do you see us working together? What programs can we collaborate on?

4. Who do you suggest I (EFNEP) partner with in order to recruit limited resource parents and youth?

5. Do you have requests to teach nutrition to any limited resource parent groups or youth that you would like to pass on to EFNEP?

6. Do you have established partnerships or contacts with agencies and/or organizations that serve limited-resource parents or youth? (ex. housing authority, WIC, DSS, Foster program, food banks/pantries, community gardens, school parents, etc.)

7. Schedule a time to shadow programming/role in action.

Agriculture and Natural Resources

Agriculture Agents. Responsibilities will include the development of educational programs in all agronomic commodities and related agricultural issues facing the producers and citizens of each county. The position will also be responsible for pesticide education and pesticide certification programs.

Local Foods Agents. Employees will coordinate with farmers to facilitate the aggregation and delivery of local foods along with food distributors and explore new retail sales of local foods. Job duties also include recruitment of growers for the Farmers Pantry and Farmers Market, and Community Supported Agriculture opportunities in the region plus maintaining a vendor attendance roster for each week and collecting market vendor applications, fees and license.

Horticulture Agents. Provide leadership for the horticulture programs for all consumers and some commercial horticulture programs. Provides training and support for the Extension Master Gardener program in the county. The agent will provide relevant educational programming and training, as well as proactively conduct needs assessments and program evaluations for the county. Has educational responsibilities in all phases of consumer and commercial horticulture (including but not limited to): insect and disease diagnosis, turf, ornamental, and nursery operation support, fruits, and vegetable production, sustainable agriculture, specialty crops, beekeeping, organics, community-supported agriculture, local farmer’s markets, and some pesticide education.

Livestock Agents. This position provides leadership for the development, implementation, and evaluation of an effective livestock educational program to meet the needs of the county population. Programs are designed to enhance and showcase the profitability and economic viability of the agricultural economy of the County.

Questions to ask Agriculture Agents:

1. Describe your role/position.

2. What crops are grown the most in our area?

3. What programs do you offer?

4. Can you tell me about these programs (audience, cost, how you advertise)?

5. Do you work with any gardeners or small farmers?

6. Do you know of anyone that offers gleaning?

7. Do you work with any community gardens? If yes, can you tell me more about them? Who is their target audience?

8. If you work with community gardens, is there an opportunity to provide nutrition education to any limited-resource parents and/or youth who benefit from the garden/produce?

9. Is there a farmer's market or roadside stands in the county? Do you help with any of them? If so, do they accept SNAP/ EBT or WIC vouchers? Is there someone else you suggest I connect with to discuss partnering with EFNEP?

10. Can you share any other contacts you may have with agencies/organizations that serve limited-resource parents with children in the home under the age of 18?

11. Is there an opportunity to shadow programming?

4. Do you have any clubs that include limited-resource families?

5. Are there any gaps in programming that EFNEP could fill in the schools? (EFNEP can teach K-12, but our focus is 3rd-12th grades.)

6. Schedule a time to shadow programming/role in action.

General Shadowing Guide

Date: _____ Time: _____ Location: _____

Employee name and title: _____

Program: _____

EFNEP Educator: _____

1. How did the agent create a welcoming environment for the participants?

2. How did they engage participants?

3. What teaching strategies did they use?

4. What type of technology and visuals did they use?

5. What went well with the class?

6. What could have made the program better?

7. What connections can you make with this program and EFNEP?

8. What opportunities are there to refer EFNEP participants to this program?

9. Are there any opportunities to offer EFNEP to the participants?



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