MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY | Extension

Framework for Programming in Michigan's Cities & Metropolitan Regions

REPORT SUMMARY

To challenge the MSU Extension system to be innovative and transformative, along with beginning to build programmatic and geographic congruency and identify adjustments necessary to ensure effective urban programmatic deliverables in the fall of 2016 MSU Extension Director Dr. Jeff Dwyer requested that Dr. Dave Ivan, MSU Extension Greening of Michigan Institute Director, organize an Urban Agenda Task Force. Dr. Dwyer charged the task force with:

- Examining MSU Extension's current urban programming efforts;
- Identifying current best practices concerning space configurations and staffing in MSU Extension's current urban programming efforts;
- Identifying emerging urban issues and the intersection with our programming efforts;
- Determining future urban programming priorities, and staffing and space needs; and
- Considering pilot locations for demonstration projects.

Recommendations

The MSU Extension Urban Agenda Task Force puts forth the following set of recommendations. More background and detailed explanations concerning these recommendations can be found in the full report.

- When MSU Extension utilizes the term "urban" or "urban Extension" it should refer to Extension's work in "Cities that currently have a population of at least 50,000 people or cities that had a population of at least 50,000 at their peak population in the twentieth century, but have at least a 20% loss in population from their peak."
- MSU Extension should consider the five Foundational Elements (Positioning, Programming, Personnel, Partnerships and Internal Support/Resources) presented and outlined in the *Framework for Programming in Michigan's Cities and Metropolitan Regions* to build urban Extension programming and operations, and to access and evaluate MSU Extension's progress toward effectively serving Michigan's urban residents and communities in all cities in Michigan.
- MSU Extension should pilot sites in some of the "Legacy Cities" identified in the *Framework for Programming in Michigan's Cities and Metropolitan Regions.* These were identified as Detroit, Grand Rapids, Warren, Lansing, Flint, Kalamazoo, Pontiac and Saginaw. The pilot sites should represent:
  - Places that utilize the five Foundational Elements to build effective programs and operations that effectively address the needs and issues of urban residents;
  - Places where MSU Extension can pilot new and adapted curricula, program delivery and evaluation techniques, staffing models, and office space configurations;
  - Locations that serve to attract and develop new faculty connections in MSU colleges and departments for applied urban research; and
  - Sites that develop best practices for MSU Extension's work across all of Michigan's urbanized areas.
  - Locations where strong community interest/partners exist that want to work with us.

- o Should be used to develop and test the evaluation metrics established by MSU Extension to assess the progress toward adoption and integration of the Five Foundational Elements into MSU Extension's overall programming models and organizational operations.
- MSU Extension should encourage the utilization of the urban Extension best practices presented in the *Framework for Programming in Michigan's Cities and Metropolitan Regions* and continue to modify and expand the list as Extension implements the recommendations and builds on the Foundational Elements presented in this report.
- MSU Extension should establish a systematic monitoring process to periodically assess progress towards achieving the set of recommendations it adopts from the *Framework for Programming in Michigan's Cities and Metropolitan Regions*.

Positioning Extension
- MSU Extension should define and delineate its unique niche in Michigan's cities:
    - o Focusing on Extension's value and programmatic expertise;
    - o Differentiating Extension's role in responding to community needs, through strategic partnerships that address community gaps, and that build upon Extension's current programmatic presence and the urban expertise available at MSU;
    - o Recognizing and respecting localized urban culture, customs and knowledge; and
    - o Utilizing models of community engagement that work effectively in urban settings.
- MSU Extension should consider the development of a comprehensive external marketing strategy specifically targeted at Michigan's urban centers to increase awareness of Extension programs and expertise.

Programming for Urban Residents
- MSU Extension should continue to concentrate its programming efforts on coordinated and comprehensive community development strategies targeted to address key urban community needs and issues, and not on single subject matter expertise.
- MSU Extension should work to embed staff in urban communities by assigning them geographically defined urban areas, and by not assigning them statewide programmatic assignments.
- MSU Extension should work to develop curricula, delivery methods, and programming developed or specifically adapted for urban audiences or for delivery in urban environments that is grounded in research-based resources and based upon best practices.
- MSU Extension should continue to focus its urban programming efforts where it has long-standing university expertise and it can build upon its current programming expertise, while determining knowledge gaps in assessed urban needs that require new or additional faculty expertise or research.
- MSU Extension should build connections and collaborations with different MSU colleges and departments to access relevant faculty expertise and urban focused research to fill knowledge gaps in assessed urban needs and issues.
- To increase the size of its urban audience, MSU Extension should consider expanding its web-based educational program and resource system with content specifically intended to meet the needs and interests of urban residents.
- MSU Extension should capitalize on the input received through the 2015-16 statewide needs assessment/issues identification process, coupled with the additional local urban resident focus groups, as a starting point in identifying programmatic focuses and staffing gaps in urban centers.

Personnel/Staffing Urban Areas
- MSU Extension should utilize recruiting and hiring practices that attract potential employees who have the desired skills, expertise and passion to work in urban areas, and who represent the diversity of Michigan's urban centers.

- MSU Extension should embrace a flexible staffing model that incorporates a wide-ranging set of position classifications, job descriptions, and educational requirements along with a competitive compensation structure that can be utilized to employ a core set of urban Extension outreach educators/specialists as well as short-term experts to work on specific projects.
- MSU Extension should develop a robust menu of professional development offerings to meet the needs of staff working in urban environments. Connections to national urban Extension professional development efforts would be beneficial to MSU Extension.
- MSU Extension to seek to engage volunteers, university students, intern and others in new and non-traditional programmatic areas to expand Extension's human resources and its ability to deliver an expanded menu of educational programming and resources to large numbers of urban residents.

Building Partnerships
- MSU Extension should build strategic partnerships with organizations that contain all or some of the following attributes:
  - Share or support Extension's mission and goals;
  - That are embedded and have community credibility in urban communities and with audiences that Extension has chosen to work with;
  - Offer complimentary programming and/or other resources; and
  - Are willing to partner for collective impact.
- MSU Extension should continue to focus on building effective District Councils in urban/metropolitan areas, whose members are reflective of the urban community to help build partnerships, provide advice and serve as advocates.

Internal Support and Resources
- MSU Extension should strive to build an urban Extension platform that is not a separate function, but a seamless addition to the rest of its' programming and operations.
- MSU Extension should examine the policies, procedures and practices it has in place to ensure that they are applied in ways that are appropriate and supportive of Extension's urban efforts.
- MSU Extension should be willing to adopt policies and funding models that allow for creative programming and staffing models in urban settings.
- MSU Extension should specifically look at and address the needs of Extension staff and clientele in urban setting around educational technology, communications, informational technology and development.
- MSU Extension should place emphasis on building a relationship between grants and research administration, Institute Directors, District Coordinators and Extension Educators to explore special revenue enhancement efforts to fund Extension's urban programming, staffing and operations.
- MSU Extension leadership should recognize its long history of commitment to substantive programming and operational support to rural and agricultural interests and implement strategies to provide equal consideration to staff and resources providing services to urban residents.

Pilot Sites

It is the recommendation of the MSU Extension Urban Agenda Task Force that three urban Extension pilot sites be created in Michigan. The task force suggests the following specific locations:
- The Brightmoor & Riverdale communities in the city of Detroit,
- Zip Code 49507 in the city of Grand Rapids, and
- A yet to be determined geographically bound location within the city of Flint.

These urban Extension pilot sites will be places where MSU Extension can develop and field test new and adapted curricula, program delivery and evaluation techniques, staffing models, and office space

configurations. They should be used by MSU Extension to develop and test evaluation metrics to assess the progress toward adoption and integration of the Five Foundational Elements into MSU Extension's overall programming models and organizational operations. They can also serve as locations to attract and develop new faculty connections in MSU colleges and departments for applied urban research. Lastly, the practices developed at these sites will contribute to the development of best practices for MSU Extension's work across all of Michigan's urbanized areas.

The task force suggests these three sites because MSU Extension is presently providing some level of programming and resources to residents of each of these communities, but all of them are communities with inordinate economic and social issues. They have lost population, have high unemployment and poverty rates, low median income levels and are experiencing challenges with housing, business development and retention, and having adequate employment opportunities. The communities also contain one or more established, highly creditable partner organizations that MSU Extension is currently working with that is interested in having MSU Extension expand its presence in them. Furthermore, MSU Extension has already been able to garner additional resource to expand its work in two of these communities – Brightmoor/Riverdale and Flint.

Building upon current programming and community partnership, MSU Extension staff will need to engage a broad spectrum of community residents to assess local needs. Input gathered from the 2015-2016 MSU Extension statewide needs assessment and issue identification process can be used in combination with this information to determine program focuses and staffing expertise for each location. They may also be places to focus on the priorities outlined in the Cooperative Extension's *National Framework for Health and Wellness* (Braun et al., 2014). These are:

- Integrated Nutrition, Health, Environment, and Agriculture Systems
- Health literacy
- Chronic disease prevention & management
- Positive youth development for health
- Health insurance literacy, and
- Health policy issues education.

More detail about each of the suggested pilot sites and potential programming, partner and funding opportunities is provide in the full report.

Urban Agenda Task Force Members

Co-chairs: Dave Ivan and Marie A. Ruemenapp

Members: Ronald Bates, Betty Blasé, Julie Chapin, Julia Darnton, Jacob DeDecker, Deanna East, Susan Fenton, Stephanie Marino, Terry McLean, Saneya Moore, Kea Norrell-Aitch, Abiya Saeed, Phillip Tocco, Arnold Weinfeld, Crystal Wilson, Richard Wooten and Mark Wyckoff.