

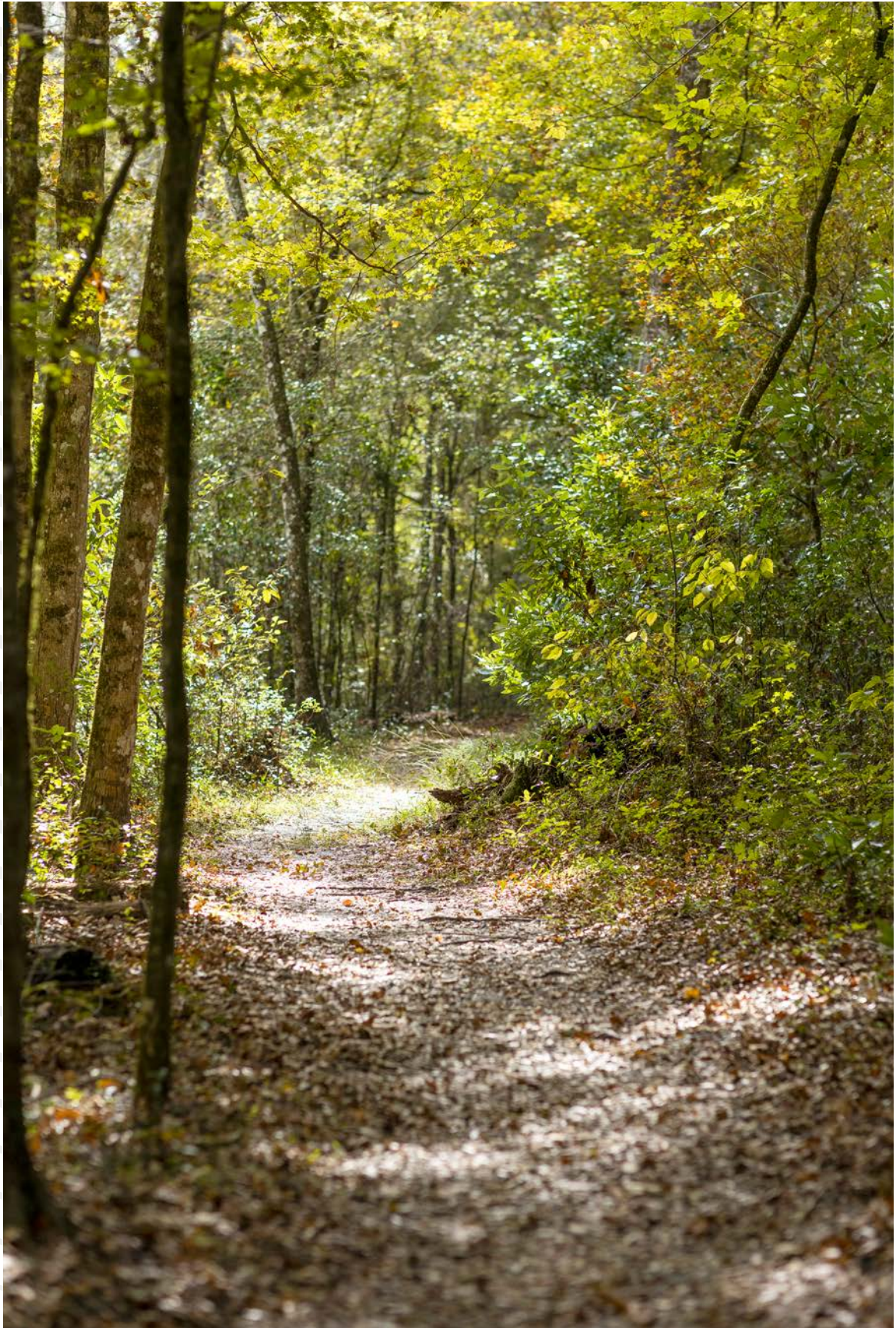


Florida Cooperative Extension: Pathway to Creating Engagement Through Innovation & Excellence



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Message from the Dean for Extension

This document is a new pathway to guide Florida Cooperative Extension efforts for the near future, from 2024-2029. We're calling this a pathway rather than a roadmap because it is intended as an evolving set of trail-markers through a rapidly changing landscape. With new leadership at the University level and the onset of new information technology including artificial intelligence, we need a strategic plan of work that is more agile at adapting to change. Extension is in the process of re-examining our methods of collecting, analyzing and reporting data about our impacts and our responsiveness to the needs of Florida's residents. Nevertheless, this strategic plan must be rooted in our core values and in the priorities identified by stakeholders in our previous roadmap.

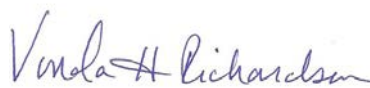
This pathway is the result of a process that began in 2020 with the formation of the Florida Cooperative Extension Strategic Plan Steering Committee. Over a period of months, the steering committee conducted engagement sessions that involved UF/IFAS and FAMU leadership, the Extension community, and key stakeholders throughout the state. In 2023, we brought on a team to fine-tune our initiatives and goals and conduct a program evaluation. The result is a pathway to excellence with priority initiatives that better align with the needs of Floridians today, and new organizational goals to address issues such as alleviating administrative burdens, improving our data infrastructure, increasing Extension's visibility, and strengthening the bonds between personnel across UF/IFAS and FAMU.

I wish to thank every person who participated in the process of putting this pathway document together. Your guidance, insight and feedback have been invaluable, and will continue to inform our progress. The work of Extension will continue to evolve, and our path will come into sharper focus as we move forward, but the core values, goals and initiatives outlined in this document will guide us for the foreseeable future.



Andra D. Johnson

*Dean for UF/IFAS Extension and
Director of the Florida Cooperative
Extension Service*



Vonda Richardson

*Director and Associate Administrator,
Florida A & M University Extension*







Introduction

Florida Cooperative Extension provides Floridians with educational programs that support lifelong learning through the University of Florida (UF) and Florida A & M University (FAMU), the state's two land-grant institutions. Since the U.S. Congress established them through the Land Grant (Morrill) Acts of 1862 and 1890, UF/IFAS and FAMU have continuously extended knowledge to all of Florida's residents. Today, our Extension specialists and agents continue to translate the latest scientific research, information, and technology into applied and practical solutions for Florida residents. With offices located in each of Florida's 67 counties and partnerships between federal, state, and local governments, Florida Cooperative Extension creates learning opportunities that help adults and youth enhance their lives and communities.

Florida Cooperative Extension is amongst the largest systems in the U.S. Over our long history, Florida Cooperative Extension has adapted to meet the needs of all Floridians. Extension programming is designed to respond to the priority initiatives identified in this document, grouping them to increase their impact across the state. However, since Florida Cooperative Extension is a dynamic, adaptive organization that responds to the emerging needs of Floridians, there are and will continue to be unique programs that cannot be constrained to the existing structure and must be organized and managed in different ways to ensure that the invaluable work of our agents and specialists is accounted for and its value reported.

As we move into the future, Florida Cooperative Extension will continue to shape Florida's urban and rural communities using cutting-edge tools such as artificial intelligence to improve the lives of our stakeholders. As Floridians seek innovative solutions to complex problems such as the impacts of climate change, invasive species, and challenges within food systems and public health, Florida Cooperative Extension must have a clear pathway to follow.

This document is the result of a continuous process of development, and refinement of our mission. With input from citizens, stakeholders, faculty, staff and leaders, *Florida Cooperative Extension: Pathway to Creating Engagement Through Innovation & Excellence* will guide our efforts for the next five years. This document provides a mission, a vision, and a direction that embraces our core values and addresses priority initiatives, while affording flexibility of action. With the help of this new pathway, Florida Cooperative Extension will continue to create social, economic, and environmental opportunities for all Floridians to enhance their health, wealth and quality of life.







Florida Cooperative Extension Service: Vision, Mission and Values

Vision:

To be a leading provider of research-based solutions that empower individuals, families, and communities to improve their quality of life while creating a better tomorrow for all Floridians.

Mission:

Florida Cooperative Extension engages with individuals, families and partners with communities to provide quality, relevant education and research-based expertise to foster healthy people, a resilient environment, and a strong economy.

Values:

- 1. Integrity:** We serve all with mutual respect and honesty.
- 2. Excellence:** We provide relevant, high quality, unbiased, research-based educational programs that empower the people of Florida to improve their lives.
- 3. Responsiveness:** We provide timely solutions that are research-based, practical and relevant.
- 4. Lifelong Learning:** We value the personal development of our faculty, volunteers and the people we serve.
- 5. Access:** We support Florida's diverse population, and we ensure that our programs are accessible to all.







Priority Initiatives

After analysis of the issues we heard from our stakeholders, the Florida Cooperative Extension Strategic Plan Steering Committee developed a set of priority initiatives to help focus educational programming and efforts. These initiatives have been largely preserved for this document, with significant changes to Initiative 4.

Initiative 1: Increasing the sustainability, profitability, and competitiveness of agricultural and horticultural enterprises

Florida's agriculture and horticulture producers face increasing challenges, including rapidly changing technologies, local-to-global markets, climate variations, varying consumer demands, and increasing regulations. Florida Cooperative Extension's educational programs must provide farmers, ranchers, and producers with the research-based knowledge they need to improve sustainability and profitability. Adoption of new technologies, new production practices, alternative crops, food safety, new marketing options, and a trained labor force will result in viable agricultural and horticultural production that continues to be sustainable and profitable and contributes to the state's economy.

Animal and Forage Systems

Florida's animal and forage production sector includes beef and dairy cattle, poultry, equine, small ruminants, and specialty livestock enterprises, with operations ranging from small, limited-resource farms to large, highly specialized businesses. Producers consistently identify improved nutrition, reproduction, animal health, and economic decision-making as key priorities for sustaining profitable operations. Emerging threats such as invasive pests, parasites, and pathogens, combined with inconsistent access to reliable information and market barriers, increase operational risk and affect product value statewide. Florida Cooperative Extension provides practical, science-based guidance to enhance producer competency, workforce development, and long-term industry resilience across Florida's animal and forage management systems.

Plant Systems

Florida plant production systems, consisting of agronomic crops like cotton and sugarcane, specialty crops including nuts, fruits and vegetables, turf, ornamental plants and forest products are diverse, regionally specialized, and often managed on soils and in climates that create high risks for nutrient movement, pest survival, drought and flooding stresses, and rapid crop losses



during extreme weather events. Florida Cooperative Extension helps producers and advisers make decisions that improve yields, reduce unnecessary inputs, protect water quality, and strengthen economic resilience.

Food Systems, Food Safety, and Food Security

Florida's economy and public health depend on a food system that spans farms, packinghouses, processors, distributors, retailers, and food service establishments. Florida producers, packers, shippers, retailers, and consumers depend on postharvest systems that maintain product quality from harvest through the final destination. Florida's food system depends not only on agricultural production, but also on the ability to transform diverse agricultural commodities into high-quality, consistent, market-ready products. The state's agriculture industries rely on strong food safety systems to maintain market access, protect brand reputation, and prevent costly outbreaks. Florida Cooperative Extension programs protect public health, sustain economic stability, maintain market competitiveness, and support long-term resilience across Florida's food system.

Integrated Systems

Many of the needs identified within Florida's animal and plant production systems are similar. To be competitive, producers need awareness about financial planning and management, pest management, farm safety, and precision agriculture. Alternative enterprises, including value-added products, can help Florida's farmers, particularly those classified as small farms, diversify their revenue stream. With Florida's population growth, it is particularly important for agricultural producers to protect the state's natural resources. Florida Cooperative Extension addresses these challenges by providing training and technical assistance to ensure the viability of the state's large and small farms.

Initiative 2: Enhancing and protecting water quality, quantity, and supply

Water plays a critical role in sustaining Florida's environment and economic vitality, which are keys to a high quality of life. Florida must enhance and protect its domestic water supply while also meeting the water requirements of agriculture, horticulture, tourism, and industry, as well as the state's 22.6 million inhabitants and its natural systems, all without placing undue pressure on a finite resource.

Water Quality

Water-quality problems have been associated with highly urbanized areas and with intense agricultural, horticultural, and industrial land uses. Florida's approach to water resource protection is centered on voluntary Best Management Practice (BMP) programs developed to meet water-quality



standards. Florida Cooperative Extension educates producers, urban landscape managers, homeowners, county and city government officials, and others about the science that supports BMPs, how they enhance and protect water quality, and how to implement and maintain them. To enhance and protect water quality, Extension programming will continue to focus on creating behavior changes, such as installing improved management systems, using new procedures, and implementing innovative techniques that reduce pollution and ultimately result in more water bodies meeting their designated uses.

Water Quantity and Supply

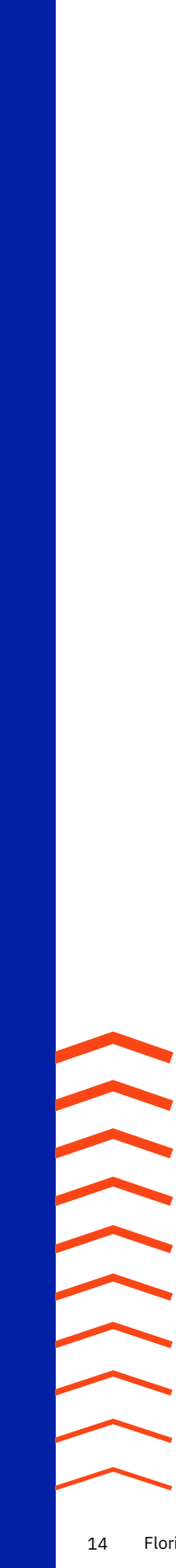
Water shortages are not uncommon in Florida. Compounding this problem is the state's projected population growth, which increase demand for water by as much as 150 gallons per day for each additional resident. In the long term, Florida will rely greatly on water use efficiency, conservation, desalination, and reclaimed water to assure a sufficient future water supply. Through current Extension efforts, major water users, including agricultural and horticultural irrigators, urban landscape managers, and homeowners learn how to use water efficiently through improved understanding of irrigation scheduling, low- volume irrigation systems, Florida-Friendly Landscaping™ (FFL) principles, and domestic water-saving techniques. To achieve the outcome of maintaining plentiful water for all, Extension programming must continue to provide educational programs that result in behavior change, including improved management and use of the latest technology to increase water conservation and decrease pressure on our resources.

Initiative 3: Enhancing and conserving Florida's natural resources and environmental quality

Florida's natural resources are vital to the state's economy, community resilience, and overall quality of life. The state's population growth, coastal development, environmental changes, and ecological degradation are placing increasing pressure on its natural resources. These can be alleviated by understanding and applying science-based conservation practices to strengthen ecosystem services and improve long-term environmental resilience.

Healthy and Resilient Ecosystems

Florida's natural areas are increasingly threatened by habitat loss, degraded coastal and aquatic systems, changing environmental conditions, and shifting land use, which reduce biodiversity, recreational value, and community resilience. Florida Cooperative Extension addresses these challenges by providing education that builds ecological knowledge, promotes stewardship, and equips residents, land managers, and professionals with conservation and best management skills.



Invasive Species Management

Florida's natural and working landscapes face escalating pressure from invasive species that threaten ecosystem health, diminish biodiversity, impair water quality, and undermine economic and community resilience. Florida Cooperative Extension plays a vital role in equipping residents, professionals, and decision-makers with the science-based tools needed to detect, prevent, and manage the impacts of invasive species.

Initiative 4: Creating sustainable urban and suburban communities

Currently, our clientele come from a continuum of communities ranging from rural to metropolitan areas. Rapid growth in population centers has resulted in loss of land available for agriculture and natural resources. In order to create a balance between population centers, agricultural land and natural areas, Extension must help to plan and maintain sustainable urban and suburban communities.

Green Buildings and Environmental Landscape

Promote the adoption of best design, construction, and management practices that measurably reduce energy and water consumption and environmental degradation in the built environment. These practices can help to create more sustainable communities that are better for the environment and for people.

Urbanization and Pests

Make Florida a world leader in training the structural pest control industry by delivering quality instruction using science-based information on current technologies, with concern for the environment and human health and well-being. This will help to ensure that structural pest control professionals are using the most effective and environmentally friendly pest control methods to overcome the negative effects that urbanization has on the natural control of some pests.

Energy Conservation Practices and Efficiency Improvement

Save energy by educating citizens and businesspeople about the social, economic and environmental effects of energy use in Florida and conservation practices they can adopt as an integral part of their everyday lives.

Citizen Engagement

Prepare and empower citizens to become trusted resources for promoting awareness, understanding, and respect of Florida's urbanizing landscape and natural world, the control of urban invasive species, and the adoption of Florida-Friendly Landscaping™ (FFL) practices in their communities. This will help enhance the sustainability of urban and suburban developments and ensure that Florida's water and wildlife are protected for future generations.



Community Policy Development

Improve community policy and management decision-making quality and capacity by educating professionals in the built environment, government, and industry about how to foster environmental, economic and social forces to shape sound foundations for sustainable change.

Initiative 5: Improving individual, family and community health

The health and well-being of individuals, families, and communities is essential for a thriving workforce and strong economy. Florida Cooperative Extension provides research- and evidence-based programs and promotes strategies that empower Floridians to achieve their full health potential. Adopting healthier lifestyle behaviors; enjoying better mental health and well-being; increasing income, wealth, and employment; securing safe and stable housing; effectively managing financial resources; and having supportive social environments all contribute to individuals becoming healthier and more productive members of society. Our greatest potential for improving population health includes tailoring approaches to the unique needs of communities that experience the poorest health outcomes, addressing conditions beyond the individual that influence overall health and well-being, and working collectively with communities to ensure optimal health for all Floridians.

Healthy Eating, Food Access, and Lifestyle Behaviors

Poor diet, limited availability of nutritious food, and physical inactivity are linked to the high prevalence of diet- and lifestyle-related chronic conditions, such as heart disease, cancer, and diabetes among Floridians. These chronic conditions affect length of life, influence quality of life, reduce worker productivity, and increase economic strain on individuals and families. Florida Cooperative Extension's programs increase awareness of health risks, promote nutrition literacy, and educate Floridians on how to manage and prevent chronic conditions through evidence-based lifestyle interventions. We also work in partnership with communities to create community-wide changes that increase access to healthier foods and health-related resources.

Food Safety and Food Entrepreneurship

Emphasizing food safety through proper handling, processing, cooking, and storage is crucial to preventing foodborne illnesses, which can severely impact health. Food entrepreneurship also has far-reaching benefits—promoting innovation that drives new product development, creates jobs, promotes income and wealth, and addresses food challenges. Florida Cooperative Extension's programs offer comprehensive food safety training for a variety of individuals and food businesses, including educators, food handlers, and food

processors. Food entrepreneurs who produce food in the home, in shared-use commercial kitchens and beyond, receive education and resources on food safety, labeling, food laws and regulations, business planning, and other topics.

Mental Health and Well-Being

The environments in which people are born, grow, live, work, and age have a profound effect on mental health and well-being. Creating spaces where individuals and families feel safe to seek help and are equipped with coping strategies fosters adaptability. Florida Cooperative Extension's programs aim to improve the conditions and systems that influence mental health and well-being. Through educational campaigns, workshops, and programs, we address mental health concerns by raising awareness and facilitating early intervention. By focusing on these aspects of mental health, we also recognize the importance of supporting individuals, families, and communities in times of crisis. We help people navigate and access resources when preparing for and recovering from natural disasters. These programs ensure that Floridians can cope with and recover from adversities, improving overall health outcomes.

Housing and Financial Well-Being

Affordable housing, proper home maintenance, and effective financial management are pressing challenges for Florida families, significantly influencing health outcomes. Many families lack access to the resources needed to secure healthy, stable housing, build wealth, and achieve long-term financial stability and resilience. Florida Cooperative Extension's educational programs equip Florida families with the tools, financial skills, and knowledge necessary to build financial capacity. We provide education on responsible renting, achieving homeownership, estate planning, maintaining healthy homes, and disaster preparedness and recovery. Additionally, we offer programs on budgeting, saving, credit management, and financial resource management to enhance overall financial well-being.

Healthy Relationships

Floridians are experiencing increasing stressors at home, work, and school that impact their physical, behavioral, and mental health and well-being. The development of healthy and supportive intrapersonal, interpersonal, and familial relationships significantly increases physical, behavioral, and mental health across the lifespan. Therefore, strengthening these relationships is critical to improving overall health and well-being. Florida Cooperative Extension's family and relationship education programs promote healthy relationships and supportive environments and increase overall health and well-being. Our programs for couples, parents, children, youth, schools, and the workplace teach effective interaction strategies to reduce conflict and promote positive communication knowledge, skills, and competencies.

Initiative 6: Strengthening Community Resources and Economic Development

Florida's communities face complex challenges that impact economic well-being, community vitality, and civic engagement. Florida Cooperative Extension invests in people, partnerships, and place-based strategies that enhance community resources and drive economic development. Through disaster management education, leadership development, civic engagement programs, and workforce and business support, Florida Cooperative Extension empowers communities to prepare for and recover from crises, cultivate skilled leaders and engaged citizens, and expand economic opportunity. This approach empowers communities to thrive both socially and economically, promotes independence, enhances quality of life, and strengthens community resilience.

Disaster Management

Hazard events such as hurricanes, floods, droughts, economic downturns, and public health emergencies have long threatened Florida's communities, causing billions of dollars in damage annually. Rural counties, in particular, often struggle with disaster preparedness, response, mitigation, and recovery. These challenges highlight the need for coordinated community-based support to navigate the complexities of disaster management.

Florida Cooperative Extension, with its presence in all 67 counties and a strong network of faculty, staff, and volunteers, is uniquely positioned to help. By partnering with federal, state, and local governments and organizations, Extension can strengthen disaster readiness through education, expert guidance, assessments, and collaboration. This includes offering year-long programs and workshops on preparedness and recovery, utilizing research to guide efforts to reduce impacts, and building relationships that foster community resilience during crises.

Leadership Development and Civic Engagement

To help Florida's communities and industries, it is essential that community members demonstrate effective leadership and active civic engagement. Engaged people enhance community and industry resilience and quality of life while gaining knowledge, skills, and a sense of purpose.

Florida Cooperative Extension's leadership development programs strengthen the capacity of community and industry members to collaboratively address challenging issues. We offer a variety of educational programs for current and emerging leaders focused on core personal, organizational, and industry leadership competencies. Extension faculty also serve as facilitators for and consultants to local governments, campus partners, and nonprofit and for-profit organizations.







Florida Cooperative Extension provides space for engagement and educates community members about local government processes, advocacy skills, and teaches civic engagement by building local capacity through education and facilitation. Our programs educate community members about local government processes, build advocacy skills, and teach them how to address community issues. Extension faculty facilitate groups to help them achieve their goals and community engagement activities such as listening sessions and deliberative dialogue. Our efforts help ensure that Florida's communities and industries are guided by capable leaders and supported by active, informed community members—working in tandem to drive meaningful and lasting change.

Economic Development

As Florida's economy keeps growing, many residents face barriers to stable employment and financial advancement. Rapid advancements in technology, automation, and the gig economy are reshaping the labor market. Employers report a widening skills gap along with significant challenges with employee recruitment, hiring, and retention. At the same time, emerging enterprises, innovation-based entrepreneurship, and other small business pathways present powerful opportunities for community-driven economic development.

Florida Cooperative Extension is uniquely positioned to bridge these gaps by equipping Floridians with the skills, networks, and resources needed to succeed in today's economy. Through workforce development and business support programs, Extension contributes to increased workforce participation and job readiness, expanded access to entrepreneurship, stronger small business development through training, incubation, and innovation, and local economies built on resilience, shared opportunity, and place-based enterprise.

Initiative 7: Preparing Youth to Thrive as Responsible Citizens and Productive Members of the Workforce

Today's youth are tomorrow's citizens, consumers, parents, and leaders. Yet many youth lack access to the opportunities and support systems they need to thrive. The world is changing rapidly due to advances in technology, demographic shifts such as longer work lives and evolving job markets, and increased mental health priorities. At the same time, the rising cost of education, paired with workforce demands for training outside the traditional classroom, is reshaping how young people prepare for the future.

While K–12 education plays a vital role in preparation, many of the jobs young people will hold are still emerging or haven't been created yet. With that future now rapidly approaching, it is more important than ever to work alongside

educators to ensure young people gain the adaptable skills they need to thrive in an evolving workforce. Through hands-on experiences, 4-H helps youth develop and strengthen leadership, communication, and critical thinking skills, preparing them for success in an ever-changing world.

The Florida 4-H Positive Youth Development (PYD) Program utilizes the 4-H Thrive Model as a theoretical framework to design, implement, and evaluate high-quality programs that prepare youth to become healthy, productive, and engaged citizens. The program is built upon three fundamental components:

1. Fostering developmental relationships with caring adults and peers.
2. Offering programs that follow quality positive youth development principles with a focus on creating positive and consistent youth experiences.
3. Providing a space for youth to explore personal interests and passions that motivate them.

These core components guide this work across four priority areas: youth development, volunteer and educator development, workforce readiness, and strategic growth.

Positive Youth Development

Florida 4-H's positive youth development efforts help young people discover their strengths, develop life skills, and build positive relationships. Florida 4-H creates supportive environments that encourage youth to get involved, develop new skills, pursue their interests, engage in hands-on learning, and take an active role in their growth. Supported by caring adults and peers, these experiences build confidence, character, and a strong foundation for lifelong success.

Volunteer and K-12 Educator Development

Volunteers advance the mission of Florida 4-H through the delivery of 4-H programs that offer experiences that support positive youth development. Florida 4-H invests in training and engaging volunteers to provide a high-quality developmental context. Through structured education and support systems, volunteers are equipped to guide youth and facilitate meaningful learning experiences.

Workforce Readiness

Florida 4-H prepares youth to navigate an evolving workforce by exposing them to a variety of future career and educational pathways. Programs support skill development in areas such as entering college and careers, earning certifications and credentials, developing entrepreneurial thinking,

and adapting to emerging technologies. Through hands-on learning, youth gain experiences that help them identify opportunities, explore interests, and build the practical tools needed to meet the changing demands of the workforce.

Strategic Growth

Florida 4-H aims to engage 300,000 youth annually through growth strategies focused on retention of youth and deepening youth engagement, expanding partnerships, and increasing participation through flexible program delivery. These efforts are guided by long-term organizational strategies that align people and resources, promote operational effectiveness, and ensure coordinated, measurable growth based on reach, participation, and sustained engagement. These efforts expand 4-H's ability to positively impact more youth across Florida and prepare the next generation for success.

Organizational Goals

Goal 1: Quality of Educational Delivery

Meet the relevant, identified needs of patrons and associates through evidence-based programs that utilize the best science available and a broad array of proven, effective learner-centered teaching strategies to advance agriculture, natural resources, youth and community-related sciences, and address Florida's economic, social, and environmental issues.

Objectives

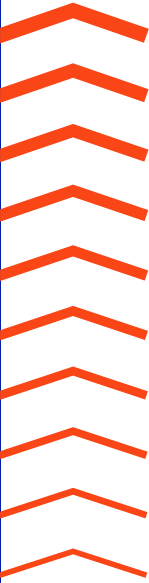
1. Identify current and emerging needs of Floridians that are relevant to Extension's work.

Action Items:

- i. Conduct systematic needs assessments across all programmatic areas in all counties.
 - ii. Ensure that representative samples participate in the needs assessments.
2. Ensure that existing and new programs are responsive to identified, relevant current and emerging needs and challenges of Florida's communities, industries, and natural resources.

Action Items:

- i. Establish county-level procedures to assess the responsiveness of existing and new programs to the identified needs, generate recommendations for required changes in existing and new programs to enhance their responsiveness to the identified needs, and certify program's relevancy.
- ii. Provide training and development opportunities for Extension faculty and staff in program development.

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3. Enhance the quality, consistency, and accessibility of Extension programs by ensuring they align with current research, utilize sound educational methods, and effectively leverage online resources.

Action Items:

- i. Involve state specialists in regularly assessing and certifying the technical accuracy and instructional value of both existing and new programs. This should include generating recommendations for necessary updates to enhance the technical and instructional quality of the programs.
- ii. Offer ongoing training and development for Extension faculty and staff, focusing on subject matter content, instructional design, teaching methods, written communication, and virtual instructional design and delivery. This aims to continually improve the quality of program delivery and content relevance.
- iii. Foster enhanced collaboration between agents and specialists to ensure a cohesive approach in program development and delivery. Utilize various educational delivery methods to improve accessibility and engagement for diverse audiences.
- iv. Coordinate statewide content development for EDIS publications and Extension Online Learning courses. Create district-level virtual programming teams, provide them with technical support and resources, and establish an award mechanism to recognize high-quality online educational contributions.

Goal 2: Visibility and Engagement

Ensure Extension's programming and products are broadly available to our clientele and actively engage new and existing audiences and partners.

Objectives

1. Enhance the awareness and appreciation of Extension among Floridians.

Action Items:

- i. Proactively promote Extension's work and impacts through select success stories that are strategically disseminated.
- ii. Provide tools and trainings to simplify and enhance the process of writing and disseminating success stories.
- iii. Develop and implement comprehensive marketing strategies focused on expanding the reach and engagement of Extension's online resources. This includes investing in paid advertising and forming media partnerships to target new audiences, enhance follower base, drive increased traffic to our online platforms, and boost visibility among county and state officials.
- iv. Leverage the communication networks of collaborators and partners.



2. Ensure the participation of key audiences in Extension’s programming.

Action Items:

- i. Increase diversity and ensure parity of Extension clientele participants.
- ii. Disseminate available programs and products to relevant audiences as identified through the needs assessment exercises.
- iii. Establish a systematic mechanism to monitor and evaluate participation.

3. Expand and strengthen Florida Cooperative Extension’s collaborations and partnerships.

Action Items:

- i. Provide training to Extension faculty and staff on the establishment, management, and participation in productive collaborations and partnerships.
- ii. Develop resources to help Extension faculty and staff establish and manage productive collaborations and partnerships.
- iii. Create and foster new and existing collaborations and partnerships within and outside UF.
- iv. Establish a systematic mechanism to evaluate existing and new collaborations and partnerships.

4. Consolidate UF/IFAS Engagement as a strategic partner to connect non-IFAS units within UF with the extended communities served by Extension.

Action Items:

- i. Raise awareness across FAMU units, non-IFAS UF units, and all 67 county government offices about the existence and role of UF/IFAS Engagement and the mechanisms to collaborate with it.
- ii. Establish communication channels to identify, across county governments, relevant needs not currently targeted through existing Extension Initiatives.
- iii. Establish communication channels to identify, across FAMU units and non-IFAS UF units, opportunities to extend evidence-based information and practice to address identified or emerging needs not currently targeted by Existing Extension Initiatives.
- iv. Communicate to county governments, FAMU units, and non-IFAS UF units the array of needs and opportunities that exist, as well as past experiences of successful collaborations.
- v. Provide support to establish the required outreach programs connecting county governments with FAMU units and/or non-IFAS units.

Goal 3: Accountability and Impact

Produce positive, measurable changes in agriculture, natural resources, youth and community-related sciences, and on Florida's economic, social, and environmental issues through impactful programs that are systematically monitored and evaluated.

Objectives

1. Enhance reporting systems and data quality.

Action Items:

- i. Establish a web-based secure platform for real-time reporting and visualization of monitoring and evaluation data.
- ii. Implement standardized procedures to assess and maintain the quality of the data.
- iii. Seamlessly integrate data across reporting databases (e.g., Workload) by user, county, district, program, priority work groups (PWGs), Initiative, and key performance indicators (KPIs).
- iv. Develop and deliver training and resources to enhance the ability of Extension agents, specialists, and staff to collect and report high quality data.

2. Simplify and standardize the collection of monitoring and evaluation data across Extension programs.

Action Items:

- i. Create/update simple standardized instruments that can be used by Extension agents, specialists, and staff to collect monitoring and evaluation data for their programs.
- ii. Focus data collection on the relevant key performance indicators (KPIs) for each program.
- iii. Make available ready-to-use tools and how-to guides that Extension agents, specialists, and staff can utilize to analyze evaluation data.
- iv. Provide Initiative-level evaluation expertise to support the development and implementation of standardized tools and procedures for monitoring and evaluation.
- v. Communicate clear expectations and requirements for monitoring and evaluation across all levels of the organization.

3. Improve utilization of monitoring and evaluation data.

Action Items:

- i. Engage Extension agents, specialists, and researchers from relevant disciplines in the translation of medium-term outcomes (i.e., changes in behavior) into credible broader economic, environmental, and social impacts using sound and rigorous methodologies.
- ii. Utilize the documented outcomes and impacts to inform key action items and strategic planning processes across all goals of the organization.

Goal 4: Employee's Professional Growth, Satisfaction, and Retention

Make Florida Cooperative Extension an organization recognized for having a highly trained, professional, committed, and satisfied workforce.

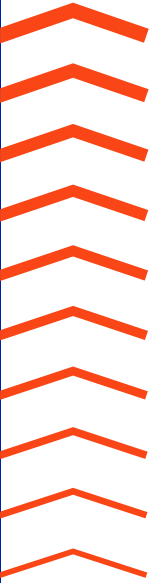
Objectives

- 1.** Improve recruitment and onboarding of Extension agents and specialists in order to attract top talent who are diverse, qualified, and motivated.

Action Items:

- i. Ensure that job descriptions align with programming priorities, strategically address emerging needs, and include the necessary soft skills.
- ii. Implement recruitment strategies committed to diversity and provide a qualified applicant pool.
- iii. Promote Extension as a career to young people enrolled in 4-H and at Land Grant Universities, including at the University of Florida and Florida A&M University (both within and outside of CALS).
- iv. Provide internship programs within both UF and FAMU to place students in county offices.
- v. Develop opportunities for shadowing experiences that allow new agents and specialists to shadow experienced agents, and specialists. This shadowing should involve agents shadowing specialists and vice versa.



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2. Build Extension professionals' competence to develop and deliver high-quality educational programs and products by providing ongoing professional development opportunities relevant to all career stages.

Action items:

- i. Identify core competencies by programmatic area and within the overall Extension framework.
 - ii. Develop in-service trainings (ISTs) to engage faculty over their career lifespan focused on improving core competencies and addressing skill gaps.
 - iii. Restructure new agent training utilizing feedback from early career agents and their experience.
 - iv. Establish a systematic and strategic mentoring program for county agents and state specialists.
3. Maintain high levels of satisfaction and retention among Extension staff, county agents, and state specialists.

Action items:

- i. Conduct annual employee climate surveys and utilize the findings to improve processes and policies with the goal of increasing the employees' sense of belonging, engagement, and recognition.
- ii. Facilitate discussions with county governments, department chairs, center directors, district Extension directors, and county Extension directors regarding Extension programming priorities and the implementation of consistent policies to supervise and evaluate county agents and state specialists.

Goal 5: Operational Effectiveness

Implement our processes with the utmost efficiency with a continuous focus on organizational improvement.

Objectives

1. Streamline procedures to enhance efficiency and reduce administrative burdens.

Action Items:

- i. Analyze organizational processes regularly and utilize the findings to streamline procedures and create or update policies as needed.
- ii. Establish and/or revise standard operating procedures (SOPs) with a focus on simplifying processes and eliminating redundancies.
- iii. Create a repository of resources and how-to guides to support operational knowledge base.
- iv. Establish mechanisms to allow all employees to provide feedback aimed at enhancing administrative processes.
- v. Reward/recognize employee's initiatives that improve the efficiency of the organization.

2. Create models for revenue enhancement.

Action Items:

- i. Develop a mechanism for business plan for large revenue generating programs.
- ii. Establish a policy for how revenue enhancement should be implemented statewide based on program to establish parity across all revenue generating programs.
- iii. Update trainings and resources (e.g., event budgeting tool) and communicate about them regularly.
- iv. Facilitate inclusion of county agents as Co-Principal Investigators or key personnel on grants with state specialists, along with appropriate resource allocation.
- v. Strengthen existing stakeholder partnerships and explore new opportunities for revenue enhancement.

3. Support decision-making processes with the best available data on organizational effectiveness.

Action Items:

- i. Integrate monitoring and evaluation data across all Florida Cooperative Extension's goals and objectives.



UF/IFAS Extension Administration
P.O. Box 110210, Gainesville, FL 32611
(352) 392-1761
extadmin.ifas.ufl.edu



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