Arkansas Extension Core Competencies Model and Definitions

Core Competency Model:

A major goal for Extension to provide opportunities for employees to enhance their knowledge and skills in areas that can help them be successful in their jobs.

To do this, it is important to help employees understand the competencies that are needed by a successful Extension professional.

The Arkansas Extension Service Competency is Model (Figure 1) has six competency categories, each with a set of related competency sub-categories.

More details about the Extension Core Competency Model can be found at http://develop.uaex.edu.

Figure 1. Arkansas Extension Core Competency Model
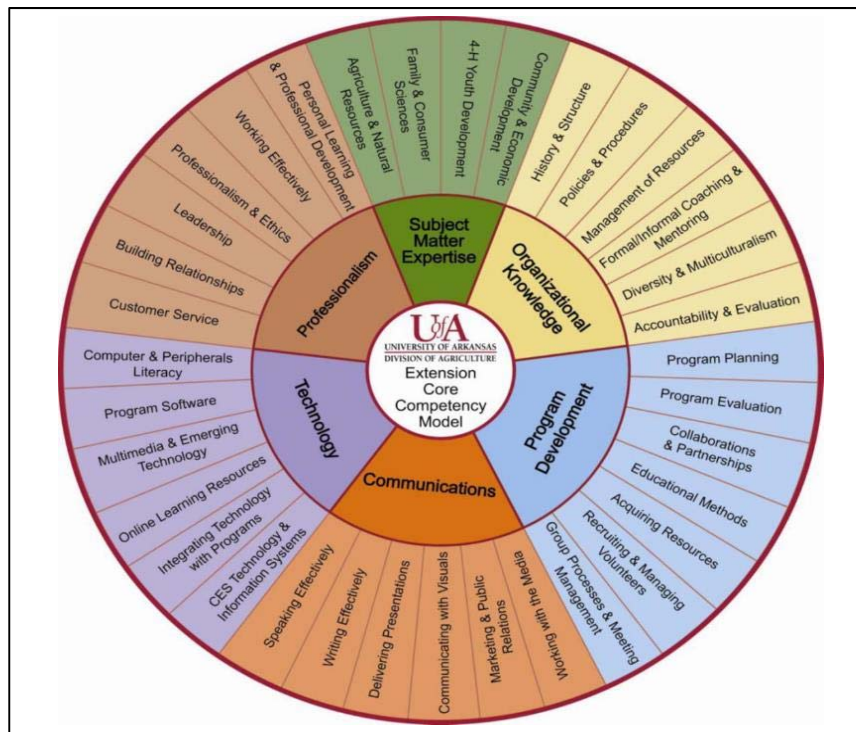
Competency Category: ORGANIZATIONAL KNOWLEDGE - Accomplishes the mission of Extension through development and management of resources, providing information to stakeholders about the value of investments in Extension programs, as well as the ability to build relationships. Values diversity and an inclusive program and workplace.

Organizational Knowledge Sub-Categories:

History and Structure - Demonstrates a broad understanding of the history, mission, vision and values of the Land-Grant and Extension organizations as well as the formal and informal Extension culture. Describes the wide variety of Extension programs, outcomes and clientele that Extension serves. Understands basic knowledge about Arkansas, including its agricultural profile, major industries, demographics, etc. and how Extension programs respond to key needs. Is adept at describing the reciprocal relationship between communities, Extension and the Land Grant University.

Policies and Procedures - Understands organization policies, rules, and system protocols and uses that information to leverage the system to meet client needs.

Management of Resources - Manages resources wisely. Practices sound fiscal management responsibilities, prepares realistic goals and a budget to support educational programs and activities.

Formal and Informal Coaching and Mentoring – Uses subject matter expertise and experience to teach and guide individuals one on one so they can complete tasks. Acts as an experienced, trusted, and helpful advisor in understanding and working effectively within the organization. Identifies helpful resources and contacts for others.

Diversity and Multiculturalism - Values diversity and differences in both the workplace and in program and builds on these differences. Engages the community so that they are reflected in the program. Initiates and manages cultural change within the organization to enhance program impact and effectiveness.

Accountability and Evaluation - Assesses program outcomes and processes and is accountable in relation to resources invested. Understands what program results to communicate and how to communicate those results to others who are engaged and invested in the program.

Competency Category: PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT – Demonstrates ability to recognize, understand, and facilitate educational opportunities and coordinate resources that best respond to the needs of individuals and communities.

Program Development Sub-Categories:

Program Planning – Designs, implements, evaluates and accounts for significant Extension education programs that improve the quality of life for clientele. Uses the Extension Program Logic Model or other planning tools in program planning to clearly identify intended program outcomes and impacts, targeted audiences, and specific educational activities planned to achieve outcomes.
Actively and systematically seeks and includes input and feedback from stakeholders, advisory groups, program participants, and other sources in conducting situation analyses to identify and prioritize community and target audience issues and needs. Bases programs on identified local, state and national priority issues.
Designs educational programs to achieve intended knowledge, attitudinal, skill, and behavior changes among participants that lead to longer-term economic, environmental and/or social impacts.

Program Evaluation - Incorporates evaluation processes into programming that adequately documents impact and determines the value of programming. Uses evaluation information to improve the operation of a project or program or to determine the effectiveness of a program. Utilizes systematic evaluation data collection, analysis and reporting of evidence collected and compares it to appropriate criteria. Reports evaluation results and program impacts in a timely manner to appropriate stakeholders.

Collaborations and Partnerships - Builds slid relationships with others both in the organization and externally in order to develop effective programs and achieve the goals of the organization. Acts with integrity and is trustworthy. Develops networks and builds alliances, collaborates across boundaries and finds common ground with a widening range of stakeholders.

Educational Methods –Uses educational methods appropriate for target audiences, learning styles and the learning environment in which programs are conducted. Selects teaching methods, delivery channels (e.g., classroom, field, online) and educational activities best suited to achieve educational objectives.

Acquiring Resources - Acquires resources necessary for the conduct of effective educational programs. Approaches grantsmanship and fund development cautiously and responsibly to achieve the educational and financial goals of the program.

Recruiting and Managing Volunteers - Develops and manages a successful volunteer program that supports goals of the Extension program. Recognizes the contributions and expertise of unpaid staff. Understands scope of volunteer recruitment, development and management and acts consistently with the trends and specific interests of volunteers.

Group Processes and Meeting Management - Has the ability to guide the group process, and is sensitive to group dynamics, conflict situations, and controversial ideas. Can conduct a meeting using appropriate levels of procedure and unbiased leadership. Balances the need for goal achievement and group development and involvement.

Competency Category: COMMUNICATIONS - The ability to communicate effectively in interpersonal and group situations, whether through written, electronic or oral means.

Communications Sub-Categories:

<u>Speaking Effectively</u> - Makes clear and convincing oral presentations to individuals or groups. Uses appropriate language, grammar, voice tones and inflections when speaking. Listens effectively and clarifies information as needed. Facilitates an open exchange of ideas and fosters an atmosphere of open communication.

<u>Writing Effectively</u> - Expresses facts and ideas in writing in a clear, convincing, and organized manner. Clearly expresses their ideas and point of view in memos, documents, reports, newsletters, etc. and uses appropriate style, level of detail, grammar and organization of thought. Uses appropriate style and protocol for delivery methods.

<u>Delivering Presentations</u> - Prepares and delivers presentations that are well organized, dynamic, and mindful of the accuracy of the content. Anticipates the audience's needs, uses visual aids effectively and delivers presentations confidently and professionally.

<u>Communicating with Visuals</u> – Uses appropriate media such as video, graphics, photos, diagrams, etc. to effectively communicate, support, or teach concepts and ideas.

<u>Marketing & Public Relations</u> - Builds and maintains relationships in which there is an exchange of value. Knows his or her clientele and stakeholders and then markets Extension programs clearly, effectively, and accurately to the target audiences.

<u>Working with the Media</u> – Uses available media outlets to communicate information about programs, resources and the Extension organization. Develops good working relationships with media personnel. Provides information to media outlets in a timely fashion and in a usable format.

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Competency Category: TECHNOLOGY - Demonstrates a sound understanding of and comfort with information technology tools, systems, and operations; has current technology skills for communicating, conducting business, creating, and delivering educational programming; actively seeks new ways of using technology to enhance Extension work. Effectively uses information technology tools needed for Extension work. Selects and applies appropriate technology to one's work activity and audience. Learns new ways of using technology to improve quality or efficiency of work. Models technology adoption. Identifies and solves routine problems involving the use of technology. Mentors or teaches others ways to use technology to improve processes or programs.

Technology Sub-Categories:

Computer and Peripherals Literacy – Demonstrates basic knowledge of how computers work and communicate with each other through LAN, intranet and internets. Can assemble or disassemble basic computer components, such as plugging in laptops and projectors, headsets, connecting cables, external drives, printers, and monitors. Can turn on/off devices. Demonstrates basic maintenance, care, and security of computer equipment. Can load software and burn CDs and DVDs.

Understands and practices basic computer operation tasks and functions. Updates computer software programs on a regular basis, either through the use of automatic updates or by regular manual updates. Utilizes and updates recommended computer security software programs. Operates assigned computer(s) in a way that prevents access to organizational information or systems by unauthorized users. Regularly backs-up important data and maintains backed-up data in a secure location.

Program Software – Effectively uses the organization's software programs to create products necessary for the individual's job duties (e.g., word processing documents, presentations, spreadsheets, databases).

Multimedia and Emerging Technologies - Accesses and uses video for information or educational activities. Can develop short, simple video clips for educational activities. Can create audio-based podcasts or add narration to self-paced tutorials. Can locate, edit, or develop effective graphics (e.g., clipart, art, digital photos) for use in Extension work.

Online Learning Resources – Can easily locate available elearning resources available to Extension personnel and clientele. Can access and utilize elearning and online resources for personal professional development. Can access and utilize appropriate elearning and online resources for use in programs for clientele. Can technically build basic online courses through supplied online course platforms. Uses online meeting tools (e.g., Centra, Adobe Connect, WebEx, Elluminate) to participate in or facilitate virtual meetings, webinars or other educational activities. Knows how to schedule, develop and moderate an online session. Checks and troubleshoots software plugs-in and equipment (such as headsets or microphones) in preparation for meeting participation. Is aware of and utilizes social media and emerging technologies as learning resources.

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Competency Category: TECHNOLOGY (Continued)

Integrating Technology with Programs - Remains abreast of technological developments, assesses program delivery application, uses technology appropriately, and actively pursues professional development opportunities to gain technology competencies. Disseminates information and delivers educational programs using online and distance education technologies as appropriate.

CES Technology and Information Systems (e.g., Web portal, Email, AIMS, Banner, office equipment) – Effectively uses the organization's e-mail system to communicate with internal and external audiences. Knows and follows State of Arkansas and Extension policies and guidelines for e-mail use. Can effectively use e-mail as a way to share documents and resources with others. Accesses and utilizes the CES Web portal. Understands how to navigate among the various categories and components found within the CES Web portal. Understands and uses the organizational reporting and management components accessed through the Web portal (e.g., AIMS, Banner, policy manuals). Can use the portal's collaboration tools for groups, including accessing and sharing files, contributing information, links, and other documents. Can utilize current office equipment systems, including telephone system, faxing equipment and duplication equipment.

Competency Category: PROFESSIONALISM - A commitment to the profession as well as the flexibility to balance all aspects of personal and professional life in order to work effectively.

Professionalism Sub-Categories:

<u>Personal Learning and Professional Development</u> - Grasps the essence of new information; masters new technical and business knowledge; recognizes own strengths and weaknesses; pursues self-development, seeks feedback from others and opportunities to master new knowledge. Demonstrates a willingness to look for opportunities to learn, to develop himself or herself, to apply lessons learned, and is willing to change and grow according to legitimate feedback.

<u>Working Effectively</u> - Demonstrates sound planning, coordinating, organizing and scheduling. Defines work tasks, arranges people and other resources to best accomplish the tasks. Effectively juggles priorities and efficiently completes large volumes of work without compromising quality. Develops and supports work practices that show a commitment to the profession as well as to the health and well-being of the individual from the personal life perspective. Is highly organized and demonstrates good decision-making skills.

<u>Professionalism and Ethics</u> – Displays enthusiasm, dedication, and interest regarding position responsibilities and duties. Expresses willingness to undertake projects, supports organizational goals and endeavors, and demonstrates flexibility in response to changing circumstances. Maintains a professional image of self, peers, and the organization through appropriate attitude, communications, actions, and appearance. Displays the highest levels of ethical conduct in carrying out the responsibilities and duties of his or her position and in interactions with others.

<u>Leadership</u> - Influences a wide range of diverse individuals and groups positively through formal and/or non-formal leadership roles.

<u>Building Relationships</u> - Acts reflectively in conflict situations with sensitivity to other's feelings. Has a high emotional IQ and their emotional reactions to different situations are appropriate and admirable. Considers and responds appropriately to the needs, feelings and capabilities of different people in different situations. Is tactful, compassionate and sensitive, and treats others with respect. Listens to people in such a way to demonstrate a true understanding of another's point of view. Responds appropriately to what is being said to them and is aware of how people are reacting and adjusts accordingly.

<u>Customer Service</u> - Examines everything against whether or not it contributes to meeting the needs of the customer or client. Focus on the customer includes individuals that are external to the organization as well as internal groups. Listens to customers and considers their needs in relation to the goals of the program. Identifies, meets and exceeds the needs of their customers, and anticipates future needs.

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Competency Category: SUBJECT MATTER EXPERTISE - Knowledge and skills in the performance of a given task or subject matter area.

Subject Matter Expertise Sub-Categories:

<u>4-H Youth Development</u> - An employee with competencies in the Subject Matter Expertise – 4-H Youth Development category has knowledge and skills to be viewed as an expert in the performance of a given task or subject matter area related to 4-H Youth Development. As needed, the employee has the ability to identify, acquire and utilize research-based information or other experts in the development and delivery of educational programs and activities that address the needs of clientele and stakeholders.

4-H Youth Development competency areas are:

•   How Youth Develop and Learn
•   Engaging 4-H Volunteers
•   Planning and Delivering Effective 4-H Programs
•   Building an Effective 4-H Organization
•   4-H Program Partners and Collaborations
•   Building a Diverse and Inclusive 4-H Program

<u>Agriculture and Natural Resources</u> - An employee with competencies in the Agriculture and Natural Resources (ANR) Subject Matter Expertise category has knowledge and skills to be viewed as an expert in the performance of a given task or subject matter area related to ANR. The employee has the ability to identify, acquire and utilize research-based information or other experts in the development and delivery of educational programs and activities that address needs of clientele and stakeholders.

Agriculture and Natural Resources competency areas are:

•   Agricultural Economics & Agribusiness
•   Animals & Animal Products
•   Pest Management
•   Natural Resources & Environment
•   Biological & Agricultural Engineering
•   Row Crop Plants & Plant Products
•   Forestry
•   Horticultural Plants & Plant Products

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Community and Economic Development - An employee with competencies in the Community and Economic Development (CED) Subject Matter Expertise category has knowledge and skills to be viewed as an expert in the performance of a given task or subject matter area related to CED. The employee has the ability to identify, acquire and utilize research-based information or other experts in the development and delivery of educational programs and activities that address the needs of clientele and stakeholders.

Community and Economic Development competency areas are:

• Business
• Leadership
• Communities
• Public Policy

Family and Consumer Sciences - An employee with competencies in the Family and Consumer Sciences (FCS) Subject Matter Expertise category has knowledge and skills to be viewed as an expert in the performance of a given task or subject matter area related to FCS. As needed, the employee has the ability to identify, acquire and utilize research-based information or other experts in the development and delivery of educational programs and activities that address the needs of clientele and stakeholders.

Family and Consumer Sciences competency areas are:

• Health and Aging
• Marriage, Parenting, and Family Life
• Nutrition and Food Safety
• Family and Consumer Economics
• Leadership