



County Impact Writing Guide

Writing an impact report is just like telling a story. Stakeholders want to know what return they are receiving from their investments in our programs. They want to see beyond the number of sessions we conducted or materials we handed out and get to the “So what?” How are we improving the situation of everyday Arkansans? An impact report can answer this and more.

Outstanding impact reports share common elements. They tell a human story related to critical needs. They provide a basic understanding of “what was done.” They provide evaluation data and other evidence of value as a result of the program. They demonstrate that the writer has a commitment to this program and a connection to the community they serve based on the content of the story.

The following are writing tips for creating a strong impact statement, whether it is for end of the year reporting, grant reports, or securing additional funding for a program.

Relevance/Issue/Problem Statement:

Provide a brief description of the compelling need for this program. This establishes both relevance and “believability” for the reader. If you have statistics on the issue, include them, along with the source. For example, for a food and nutrition program, what is the obesity rate for your county and cite the information comes from the Arkansas Department of Health or the Center for Disease Control.

This section should answer some of the following questions:

- Who cares and why?
- What is the issue your program addresses and what proof do you have it’s an issue?
- If possible, what is the situation in YOUR county?

EXAMPLES:

In rural areas of Desha County, many families and individuals are facing difficult economic times. Layoffs and business restructuring continue within the county. When, and if, citizens find new jobs, they are often for lower wages and benefits. Many forced off welfare rolls are

struggling to make ends meet with minimum wage jobs with no benefits. Citizens are increasingly responsible for financing their own retirements, but few have basic knowledge or skills.

A county struggling to overcome 20 years of limited economic development, change, or improvements for itself. Faced with vacant store fronts, declining population, and a stagnant economy, community leaders are searching for ways to re-invent Cleveland County and make it the talk of south-central Arkansas.

Response/Program Information:

Provide key information about how the program was carried out to address the issue we just identified:

- Methods used, i.e. field days, in-school sessions, one-on-one consultations
- Who did we reach- type of participants and, if needed, number
- Any products we created/used to deliver the information, i.e. curriculum
- Volunteers trained to deliver the program

Concentrate this section on our Extension outputs

EXAMPLES:

Madison County Extension planned and implemented a year-long multi-faceted educational program to address the issues local producers face. There was a multi session pasture management field day, forage testing and feeding seminar, Beef IQ short-course, two herbicide application field days, a nutrient management course and other educational events where area producers and other respective clientele were able to gain knowledge making their operations more sustainable in the ever changing agriculture environment. The goal of these educational efforts were to help clientele increase efficiency.

Hands-on learning is the essence of 4-H. With that in mind, six monthly engineering activities featuring the Junk Drawer Robotics Curriculum, six monthly science technology activities and six monthly computer coding activities featuring the Hour of Code and other hands-on curriculum were conducted with 107 students in the 5th and 6th grade at Gurdon and 144 students in the 6th grade at Arkadelphia. Students worked in teams during the engineering and science technology activities and individually during coding exercises.

Results/Outcomes/Impact:

This is the most important section of your impact. It answers the “So What?” that all stakeholders want to know about your program. Do not include participant numbers in this section, those belong in the “Response” section.

This section should answer some of the following questions:

- What changes occurred because of the program?
- How are you improving the situation related to that issue you outlined in the “Relevance” section?
- Is there a dollar value to the change you made? For example, decrease in health care costs, increase in profit, etc. Contact state specialists to see if there are formulas related to your program that you can use.
- What did your clients do with that knowledge they gained? (Concentrate on those behaviors rather than just knowledge gained)
- If your program has been running multiple years, what kind of long term impact is it having?

This is the section to use any evaluation data you may have collected throughout the course of the program. Utilize the strongest outcome/impact data you have. Situational changes (environmental, health, social) are always stronger than behavior change and behavior changes are stronger than knowledge or attitude changes.

EXAMPLES:

Participants in the Weight Loss Boot Camp lost 114.5 pounds, walked 2,543 miles with 50% decreasing blood pressure, 25% decreasing blood glucose and cholesterol. The 284 participants in Walk Across Arkansas exercised 485,363 minutes which potentially saved \$41,000 in health care costs; 35 participants lost 187 pounds. Results from the Extension Get Fit program indicated a cost savings of \$629,711. Yoga for Kids with 749 participants reported they were stronger, more flexible, and felt less stressed. The participants in the nutrition education programs reported an increase in knowledge and skills with 70% intending to make positive dietary changes.

The first demonstration 45 head received two Corothon ear tags at a cost of approximately \$4.00 a head. Pre-tag horn fly counts were near 150, face flies were at 5, and 13 treated for pinkeye. At 11 weeks the counts have dropped to 20 horn flies, 1-2 face flies, and zero pinkeye treatments. In the second demonstration, 35 head were treated with Co-ral 1% dust bags. (Horn fly counts started at 300-350, face flies 9, with 10 cases of pinkeye.) As of week 11, counts average 45 for horn flies, 3 face flies, and no new cases of pinkeye. The second method cost about \$3.75 a head. Producers recorded near \$24.00 per head pay increase on treated calves vs. non-treated calves.