



University of Wisconsin-Extension Cooperative Extension

nEXT Generation project

Current Assessment Summary Report

January 27, 2017

Current Assessment Context & Process

The current assessment phase of *nEXT Generation* began with the first [9 work groups](#)—each with a defined project scope—assessing current staffing, organizational structures, roles, responsibilities, and financial metrics. However, these groups encountered several barriers while working through the process including availability and fidelity of data, coordinating and organizing the collection of data across work groups, and data collection timelines. As a result of these challenges, the project process was modified to accelerate the timeline and redirect the focus of work groups to the next project phase.

Cooperative Extension engaged Huron Consulting Group to perform the current assessment from October through December while the work groups completed a gap analysis. Huron used a five-step process to complete the current assessment: gathering and validating data, conducting surveys and interviews, synthesizing and analyzing data, organizing and finalizing datasets, and vetting and presenting the findings. As part of the current assessment, Huron completed the following:

- Identified and catalogued current state positions and roles funded by Cooperative Extension, including employees and affiliates from other institutions;
- Catalogued the tasks and activities that individuals in select positions complete on a regular basis; and
- Determined and analyzed how Cooperative Extension plans to spend and actually spends its funding allocations.

As part of this process, Cooperative Extension employees may have directly assisted *nEXT Generation* by completing one or both of the following surveys:

- **County Support Staff Survey** - Distributed to all County Department Heads and County Directors to identify what county staff support Cooperative Extension
 - 5-page survey
 - 72 of 75 counties and Tribal Nations responded
- **All Cooperative Extension Staff Survey** - Distributed to all Cooperative Extension staff primarily targeting Educators, Integrated Specialists, and Non-Integrated Specialists to identify roles and tasks
 - 112 pages survey, 204 questions using a complex decision tree (individuals would have seen roughly 5-10 pages based on their responses)
 - 572 responses from 750 surveyed (~75%)

The following is a summary of several of the major findings from that current assessment.

Major Findings

- 1) **Summary Statistics: Breakdown of Staff by Groupings** - High-level numbers for FTE, and percent of total FTE broken down into different groupings by position title. Below we include only positions related to programming.
 - a) **All of Cooperative Extension:** There are 919 active positions comprising 818.7 FTE within Cooperative Extension, including county-based staff, integrated specialists on UW campuses, administrators, and specialists within Cooperative Extension.
 - b) **Vacancies:** Of these 919 positions, 813 are currently filled (constituting 741.2 FTE) and 106 are vacant (constituting 77.5 FTE).
 - c) **Educators:** 303 of those positions and 261.8 FTE are county-based Educators (not including FoodWise), constituting 33% of total positions and 32% of FTE. Almost 50 of these positions, or 16%, are currently vacant.
 - d) **FoodWise:** 155 of these positions and 143.4 FTE are in the FoodWise program, representing 16.9% of total positions and 17.5% of total FTE.
 - e) **Integrated Specialists:** 141 of those positions and 95.9 FTE are integrated specialists based on UW campuses, constituting 15.3% of total positions and 11.7% of FTE. 12 of these positions, or 8.5%, are currently vacant.
 - f) **Non-Integrated Specialists:** 41 of these positions and 34.9 FTE are specialists within Cooperative Extension, constituting 4.5% of total positions and 4.3% of FTE. 2 of these positions, or 4.9%, are currently vacant.

- 2) **Staff Catalogue** - Huron completed a comprehensive staff catalogue of active personnel for Cooperative Extension.
 - a) They began with employee records from 3 different data sources (FY16 budget, August HRS, UWEX directory) and validated a total of 921 active personnel (including active vacancies), then mapped them to funding sources.

- 3) **133 Contract Inconsistencies** - Huron found there are several common inconsistencies in contracts between UW-Extension and County Governments for educator positions.
 - a) Programs and disciplinary areas of focus are not consistently listed.
 - b) Staff are not listed by position title, name, or salary.
 - c) FTE and percentage of time staff devote to the counties are not listed.

- 4) **Record Keeping Process Analysis** - Huron analyzed record keeping processes and determined that the following inconsistencies across the organization:
 - a) Several of the tracking systems are outdated, use inconsistent tracking formats, and are not stored electronically in central, accessible locations.
 - b) Current position descriptions do not adequately define the differences in responsibilities between roles.

- 5) **Time spent on programming activities** - The results of the staff survey demonstrate that educators (employees that deliver programs in counties and tribal nations) spend an average of 57.86% of their time on programming (across all program areas). They spend the

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remaining 42.14% of their time on non-programming activities including other roles, external relations, travel, reporting, personnel management, grants administration, and fiscal management.

- 6) **The importance of local administrative staff and volunteers** - This was one of the major takeaways from the members of the Integration Work Group in their conversations surrounding programming roles that will comprise the future-state of Cooperative Extension. Cooperative Extension needs:
- a) **Administrative and Volunteer Backbone**
 - i) The need and importance of administrative staff and volunteers across all locales was readily apparent.
- 7) **Time spent on administrative tasks** - One of the goals of the assessment was to determine the FTE devoted to each administrative function in each administrative office, and FTE distributed across other departments that perform similar functions.

What follows are findings for budget & finance, human resources, and marketing and communications.

- “Distributed positions” perform similar functions, but are not located within a central Cooperative Extension administrative unit.
 - Estimated FTE represents the sum all of that administrative activity performed by programming and other non-administrative roles across Cooperative Extension (i.e., financial work completed by an educator).
- a) **Budget & Finance** - Managing budgets, assisting with grants, contracts, and business services for Cooperative Extension.
- There are 5 active positions comprised of 4.0 FTE in the Budget and Finance Office.
 - There are 19 active distributed positions comprised of 11.9 FTE that perform similar functions, but are not within the Budget and Finance Office.
 - There is an estimated 16.13 FTE expended on fiscal activity by non-financial roles across Cooperative Extension (Fiscal activity is defined as creating and managing center office and department budgets and preparing and submitting expense reports).
 - There is an estimated 30.7 FTE expended on grants activity by non-financial roles across Cooperative Extension (Grants activity is defined as applying for grants or contracts and managing and reporting on grants).
- b) **Human Resource Development** - Managing hiring, professional development, and other human resource activities for Cooperative Extension.
- There are 8 active positions comprised of 6.75 FTE in the Human Resource Development Office.

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- There is an estimated 31.66 FTE expended on HR activity by non-administrative roles across Cooperative Extension (HR activity is defined as developing and implementing of performance improvement plans, evaluating employee performance, participating in the hiring process, coordinating rank change and promotion, and post tenure review).
- c) **Communications & Marketing** - Supporting communications and marketing efforts across most departments within Cooperative Extension.
- There are 5 active positions comprised of 3.5 FTE in the Communications & Marketing Office.
 - There are 8 active distributed positions comprised of 7.0 FTE that perform similar functions that are not within the Communications & Marketing Office.