



# Effective Impact Statements



Joseph L. Donaldson, Ph.D.  
Assistant Professor

January 2015

# Table of Contents



|  |           |
|--|-----------|
| <b>1.0 INTRODUCTION</b>                          | <b>3</b>  |
| 1.1 WHAT IS IT?                                  | 3         |
| 1.2 HOW MANY DO YOU WRITE?                       | 4         |
| 1.3 WHAT IS THE DUE DATE?                        | 4         |
| <b>2.0 CONTENT</b>                               | <b>5</b>  |
| 2.1 WHAT DO YOU WRITE?                           | 5         |
| 2.2 HOW DO YOU WRITE A GREAT IMPACT STATEMENT?   | 5         |
| 2.3 WHAT IS THE IMPACT STATEMENT FORMAT?         | 6         |
| 2.4 WHAT ARE THE MOST COMMON PITFALLS?           | 6         |
| <b>3.0 WRITING STYLE</b>                         | <b>7</b>  |
| 3.1 WHAT IS THE PREFERRED WRITING STYLE?         | 7         |
| 3.2 HOW CAN YOUR WRITING BE IMPROVED?            | 7         |
| <b>4.0 USING SUPER</b>                           | <b>9</b>  |
| 4.1 HOW DO I ENTER MY IMPACT STATEMENT IN SUPER? | 9         |
| 4.2 HOW DO I AGGREGATE DATA FROM AGENTS?         | 9         |
| <b>5.0 STAKEHOLDERS</b>                          | <b>10</b> |
| 5.1 WHAT ABOUT THE FEDERAL PRIORITIES?           | 10        |
| 5.2 WHAT ABOUT STAKEHOLDER INPUT?                | 11        |

|  |           |
|--|-----------|
| <b>6.0 EXAMPLES</b>                        | <b>12</b> |
| 6.1 BRANDON                                | 13        |
| 6.2 BURNEY                                 | 14        |
| 6.3 BUSCHERMOHLE                           | 15        |
| 6.4 FULCHER                                | 16        |
| 6.5 HINSEY                                 | 17        |
| 6.6 LADD                                   | 18        |
| 6.7 SARVER                                 | 19        |
| 6.8 WISE                                   | 20        |
| <b>7.0 USING IMPACTS</b>                   | <b>21</b> |
| 7.1 VIDEO IMPACT REPORTS                   | 21        |
| 7.2 4-H OVERVIEW                           | 21        |
| 7.3 4-H BARRIERS                           | 22        |
| 7.4 INTEGRATED RESEARCH & EXTENSION REPORT | 23        |
| 7.5 STATEWIDE ECONOMIC ASSESSMENT          | 24        |
| 7.6 OTHER USES                             | 24        |
| <b>8.0 EVALUATION</b>                      | <b>25</b> |
| 8.1 RESEARCH                               | 25        |
| 8.2 EXPERT ESTIMATIONS AND OBSERVATIONS    | 25        |
| 8.3 PARTICIPANTS' COMMENTS                 | 26        |
| 8.4 METRICS                                | 26        |
| 8.5 PARTICIPANT QUESTIONNAIRE              | 26        |
| <b>9.0 ASSISTANCE</b>                      | <b>27</b> |
| <b>10.0 REFERENCES</b>                     | <b>28</b> |

# 1.0 | Introduction



This instructional packet is intended for Extension faculty, specialists, department heads, assistants, State Action Agenda team leaders, and others who provide leadership for some component of the Tennessee Extension Plan of Work. This packet should answer most of your questions about impact statements. I have also included example impact statements.

Please note that links to commercial sites are provided for information and convenience only. Inclusion of sites does not imply University of Tennessee approval of their product or service to the exclusion of others that may be similar, nor does it guarantee or warrant the standards of services.

I appreciate and admire everything you do to improve the quality of life for Tennesseans. I look forward to showcasing your efforts in our Annual State Accomplishment Report to USDA-NIFA. Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have questions or concerns.

Sincerely,

Joseph L. Donaldson  
Assistant Professor, Program Development and Evaluation

## 1.1 WHAT IS IT?

The Annual Impact Statement is the document that describes the impacts to Tennesseans that resulted from our Extension programs. Our impact statements are used to compile the Tennessee Extension and Research Annual Accomplishment Report, reviewed by the United States Department of Agriculture's National Institute of Food and Agriculture (USDA-NIFA). The report satisfies the reporting requirements in the Smith-Lever Act of 1914, as amended, Hatch Act of 1887, National Agricultural Research, Extension and Teaching Policy Act of 1977, Government Performance and Results Act of 1993, and the Agricultural Research, Extension, and Education Reform Act of 1998.

Because this report justifies Tennessee Extension funding on the federal level, USDA-NIFA analysts especially examine how our programs enhance the economy, environment and quality of life. Besides Federal reporting, the impact statement has other uses such as informing state and local stakeholders and improving our programs.

*Basically, impact statements describe how Extension programs enhance the economy, environment, and quality of life.*

Impact statements are critical to communicating with various stakeholders. UT Extension impact statements contribute to state reports under the Tennessee Governmental Accountability Act of 2002.

## 1.2 HOW MANY DO YOU WRITE?

Please write one impact statement report for each of your planned programs or topics. If you made an effort this year to gain stakeholder input, please write a separate, brief impact statement to describe the stakeholders and their input.

## 1.3 WHAT IS THE DUE DATE?

Impact statement(s) are due in the System for University Planning, Evaluation and Reporting (SUPER) appraisal module on or about February 1 annually. Impacts statements from county and area Extension staff are due on or about December 1 annually, and you may view these by using the SUPER reports module.

# 2.0 | Content



## 2.1 WHAT DO YOU WRITE?

An impact statement is a brief summary of the outcome of your Extension program. Outcomes should be:

- Improvements in knowledge, attitudes, skills, and/or aspirations (KASA).
- Positive changes in practices or behavior.
- Improvements in social, economic, and/or environmental conditions (SEEC).

The impact statement answers three important questions:

- “Who cares about this issue?”
- “What was the Extension and/or Research response to this issue?”
- “So what was the result of this response?”

Impact statements should show improvements to the quality of life in these ways:

- Economic value or efficiency.
- Environmental quality.
- Social well-being.
- Health and well-being.

## 2.2 HOW DO YOU WRITE A GREAT IMPACT STATEMENT?

Tips for great impact statements:

- Be brief!
- Include numbers of participants and numbers that show a change in their quality of life.
- The longest part should be the impact.
- Focus on the outcomes (impact), not the activities (what has been done).
- Check spelling and grammar.

## 2.3 WHAT IS THE IMPACT STATEMENT FORMAT?

The reports should follow the format below, using the bold section headers on the left:

|                            |  |
|----------------------------|--|
| <b>Title:</b>              | The title of your program should be short and descriptive. If using the state activity report data, it is appropriate to use “Tennessee” in the title. |
| <b>Issue:</b>              | Describe the issue in a few sentences: Who cares and why?  |
| <b>What has been done:</b> | Describe in a few sentences what has been done: What was the Extension response to the issue?  |
| <b>Impact:</b>             | Describe the impact: So what?  |
| <b>Funding Sources:</b>    | Identify the funding sources: Smith-Lever Funds, TNCEP Grant, Other Grants, Contracts, etc.  |
| <b>Contact:</b>            | Type your name, title, address, phone, fax, and e-mail.  |

## 2.4 WHAT ARE THE MOST COMMON PITFALLS?

The single most common pitfall to an effective impact statement is poor timing or writing about a program when no end-results have been achieved. This is discussed in section 3.2. Other common pitfalls include:

- Too long and too many details.
- Listing activities only with no attention to results.
- Including too much program planning information, such as lists of curricula used and lists of objectives.

*The single most common pitfall to an effective impact statement is writing about a program when no end-results have been achieved.*

# 3.0 | Writing Style



## 3.1 WHAT IS THE PREFERRED WRITING STYLE?

The preferred writing style for an impact statement is conversational. This writing style has been described as direct, lively and easy to understand (Carey, 1998). Simply, write the way you talk to the general public or your friends. Here are some considerations for conversational writing:

- Use short, easy words. The word “use” is preferable to “utilize”.
- Vary sentence length to hold interest.
- Use short paragraphs that contain, on average, one to five sentences.
- Minimize affixes. Prefixes are syllables at the beginning of a root word and suffixes are syllables at the end of a root word. Together, prefixes and suffixes are called affixes. The word “valuable” is preferable to “invaluable”.
- Use active instead of passive voice. Instead of “The grant application was approved by the Livestock Association” use “The Livestock Association approved the grant application.”

*Conversational writing is direct, lively and easy to understand.*

## 3.2 HOW CAN YOUR WRITING BE IMPROVED?

An Extension program in its early stages will typically not show impact. The following phrases were found in Tennessee impact statements prior to 2003. USDA program analysts identified these phrases as demonstrating that impact had not yet been achieved.

### *Do Not Use These Phrases*

- “could impact”
- “potentially”
- “provides a new opportunity”
- “is currently being considered”

***Do Not Use These Phrases – continued***

- “can help”
- “could result”
- “can have an enormous impact”
- “opens the door to”
- “will save”
- “will ultimately help”
- “will demonstrate”
- “can eliminate”
- “may be able to”
- “may be useful”
- “can directly improve”
- “may help develop”

***Use These Words and Phrases Instead***

- “impacted by...”
- “helped by...”
- “resulted in...”
- “eliminated...”
- “improved...”
- “demonstrated...”
- “enabled...”
- “saved...”

In other words, we do not report everything we do in impact statements. We report programs that have measurable impact. Often, it takes multiple years before program impact is achieved.

# 4.0 | Using SUPER



Extension impact statements should be submitted via SUPER. Prepare your impact statement in Microsoft Word and attach the file in the SUPER appraisal module. Following are brief instructions, and step-by-step instructions are posted in extOL Workforce Learning.

## 4.1 HOW DO I ENTER MY IMPACT STATEMENT IN SUPER?

Login to SUPER with your netID and password. Click Profile. Click Appraisal. Click Create Appraisal. Select “Faculty or Specialist Appraisal”. Notice you browse and attach your impacts statement here. You may also browse and attach your performance appraisal forms. Campus-based faculty should call John Toman if assistance is needed. Faculty based off-campus should call the regional IT specialist.

## 4.2 HOW DO I AGGREGATE DATA FROM AGENTS?

Statewide Activity Reports are easily generated in the SUPER Reports module. Login to SUPER, and click Reports. To obtain an activity report for all statewide work during 2014 for “Community Leadership,” search as follows:

- Year – 2014
- Report Type – Activity Report by Unit
- Unit – Any
- Base Program – Any
- Knowledge Area – Any
- Topic – Community Leadership

Click Generate. When prompted, click Open and the report will open in Microsoft Word. Notice the report includes hours, direct methods, indirect methods, contacts, outcomes, and personnel reporting.

# 5.0 | Stakeholders



## 5.1 WHAT ABOUT THE FEDERAL PRIORITIES?

Impact statements representing all base programs and departments are useful. For the Annual Accomplishment Report, impact statements are especially useful in the USDA-NIFA priorities. USDA-NIFA has identified five priorities to “help focus NIFA and other USDA science funds on solving specific problems demonstrating results.” The following descriptions are re-printed from NIFA.

***Childhood Obesity*** – NIFA supports research to identify effective measures that guide individuals and families to make informed, science-based decisions that will reduce child obesity and improve health.

***Climate Change*** – NIFA supports projects that generate knowledge to develop an agriculture system that contains high productivity in the face of climate changes and reduce greenhouse gas emissions. This will help producers to plan and make decisions in adapting to changing environments, sustaining economic vitality, and taking advantage of emerging economic opportunities offered by climate change mitigation technologies.

***Food Safety*** – NIFA supports research that results to reduce the incidence of food-borne illnesses and provides a safer food supply by: eliminating causes of microbial contamination and antimicrobial resistance; educating consumer and food safety professionals; and developing food processing technologies to improve food safety.

***Global Food Security and Hunger*** – NIFA supports research, education and extension that will boost U.S. agricultural production and improve global capacity to meet the growing food demand. NIFA also fosters innovation in fighting hunger by addressing food security for vulnerable populations.

***Sustainable Energy*** – NIFA contributes to the President’s goal of energy independence by supporting science to develop biomass used for biofuels, design optimum forest products and crops for bio-energy production, and produce value-added bio-based industrial products.

## 5.2 WHAT ABOUT STAKEHOLDER INPUT?

Our State Annual Accomplishment Report includes a required section for describing how stakeholder input was sought and used during the past year. If you made any effort during the past year to obtain input from stakeholders to improve Extension initiatives, this information is needed to complete our State Annual Accomplishment Report. Reportable examples include: a listening session, survey, or focus group with stakeholders.

Be brief! Describe this input in three to five sentences in a separate Impact Statement.

- What was the design of the stakeholder input? Was it an organized group? One-time focus group? Survey? Other?
- How many people were involved?
- How did you identify the stakeholders? Were they farmers, homeowners, industry leaders, professionals or others? Did any stakeholders represent under-served audiences?
- How were the results of the stakeholder input used in planning, implementing, or evaluating Extension programs?

### *Example of Tennessee Extension Stakeholder Input*

TITLE: Stakeholder Input for Extension Programs

WHAT HAS BEEN DONE: The Department of Example conducted a survey with eight Tennessee Public School Food Service Managers to determine their needs for food safety education. One-half of the managers are in high-poverty counties and 25% of the participants represented a minority group. The surveys showed that managers benefit greatly from Extension food safety programs and that they need high-quality posters to display in their facility to instruct newly-hired food service workers. The survey also showed that the managers were most concerned about the sodium content of processed foods. The Department of Example is now planning to create the posters during the next year. The Department will focus additional research on ways to reduce the sodium content of processed foods.

# 6.0 | Examples



Example impact statements from Tennessee personnel are included in this packet. These example impact statements are being shared so that you will:

- Investigate some “excellent measured” impacts.
- Format your impact statements correctly.
- Improve your skills in program evaluation.

Please use these examples as they are intended. These statements are NOT meant to show model program planning, model needs assessment, model research, model educational programs, or model program implementation.

The examples are from:

- Denise J. Brandon, 2009
- Janie Burney, 2010
- Michael J. Buschermohle, 2010
- Amy Fulcher, 2010
- Jonell Hinsey, 2010
- Amy Ladd, 2010
- Daniel Sarver, 2010
- Dena Wise, 2009

## 6.1 BRANDON

**TITLE:** Parenting Apart: Effective Co-Parenting in Tennessee

**ISSUE:** Based on the latest data available, Tennessee ranks 7<sup>th</sup> in divorce rate among 45 reporting states (Division of Vital Statistics, National Center for Health Statistics, 2008). Tennessee's rate of 4.9 is higher than the U.S. rate of 3.6 divorces per 1000 population. On average, children whose parents divorce have higher rates of emotional problems, academic problems, and engage in higher risk behaviors than do children who remain in two-parent biological families.

**WHAT HAS BEEN DONE:** Agents in 53 counties reported 3157 contacts through group meetings, 1226 contacts through client visits or on-site-visits, and 2180 contacts through direct mail or telephone. In addition, agents have produced 24 exhibits and 58 newspaper articles.

**IMPACT:** Of the 2257 participants –

- 2089 (93%) of respondents improved knowledge of how divorce impacts children by age/stage of development.
- 2086 (92%) of respondents learned effective communication techniques.
- 1950 (86%) of respondents plan to decrease exposure of their children to parental conflict.
- 2052 (91%) of respondents report understanding the importance of working together for the sakes of their children.

An independent evaluation of Parenting Apart: Effective Co-Parenting was conducted by a graduate student at the University of Tennessee utilizing data from 19 counties. Using a retrospective post-then-pre design, 139 participants reported their *knowledge gain* in two areas: (a) the impacts of divorce and of putting children in the middle of conflict, and (b) strategies to reduce conflict with one's former spouse.

**FUNDING:** Smith-Lever Funds; User fees

**CONTACT:** Denise J. Brandon, Associate Professor, 119 Morgan Hall, 2621 Morgan Circle, Knoxville, TN 37996-4501, phone: 865-974-8179, fax: 865-974-3234, email: dbrandon@utk.edu

## 6.2 BURNEY

**TITLE:** Healthy Steps

**ISSUE:** Too many young children are gaining unhealthy amounts of weight leading to chronic disease at increasingly younger ages.

**WHAT HAS BEEN DONE:** Healthy Steps, a nutrition and physical activity curriculum was implemented in 22 Tennessee counties in 2010. 7,135 direct contacts were made in Voluntary Pre-K, Head Start and center-based classrooms; 43,742 indirect contacts were made through exhibits, newspaper articles, publications and television. Approximately 958 contact hours were recorded by teachers and volunteers working with Healthy Steps.

**IMPACT:** 459 teachers completed surveys at the end of the program to document outcomes.

- 434 of 459 (94%) of teachers surveyed reported preschool children in their classes were more actively engaged in physical activity.
- 478 of 492 (97%) of teachers reported preschool children in their classes were more willing to taste fruit.
- 461 of 492 (94%) of teachers reported preschool children in their classes were more willing to taste vegetables.
- 431 of 442 (98%) of teachers reported preschool children in their classes were more willing to taste whole-grain foods.
- 307 of 373 (82%) of teachers reported using physical activities from Healthy Steps at least three times per week.

**FUNDING:** Smith-Lever, State funds

**CONTACT:** Janie Burney, Professor, Family and Consumer Sciences, 119 Morgan Hall, Knoxville, TN 37996, 865-974-7402, FAX: 865-974-3234, email: jburney@utk.edu.

### 6.3 BUSCHERMOHLE

**TITLE:** Adopting Precision Agricultural Technologies in Tennessee

**ISSUE:** Precision agriculture technologies offer Tennessee producers various data management opportunities to analyze current production systems. Due the rising cost of fertilizers, chemicals, seed, fuel and labor, Tennessee producers are adopting precision agriculture technologies to increase production, reduce input costs, and manage farmland more efficiently.

**WHAT HAS BEEN DONE:** An integrated, multi-disciplinary research, education, and outreach program has been established to develop and disseminate information about precision agriculture management strategies that are profitable and practical for Tennessee producers. Field days, county and multi-county meetings, on-farm demonstrations, news articles, publications, personal contacts and information gained from applied research projects were used to promote the adoption of precision agriculture technologies.

**IMPACT:** UT Extension's educational effort to promote the adoption of precision agriculture technologies resulted in 575,479 acres planted and managed using precision agriculture technologies such as variable rate applications of fertilizer and lime, plant growth regulators, defoliant, and/or pesticides.

**FUNDING:** Smith-Lever, Cotton Inc.

**CONTACT:** Michael J. Buschermohle, Professor, University of Tennessee, Biosystems Engineering and Soil Science, 301 Agricultural Engineering Building, Knoxville, TN 37996-4531; phone: (865) 974-7266; fax: (865) 974-4514; email: mbuscher@utk.edu

## 6.4 FULCHER

**TITLE:** Tennessee's Commercial Ornamental Horticulture Program

**ISSUE:** Challenges facing the commercial horticulture industry include marketing, integrated pest management, sustainable cultural practices, environmental and human health risks, invasive species, regulations, and profitability.

**WHAT HAS BEEN DONE:** Extension agents and area Extension specialists conducted commercial nursery and landscape educational programs reaching over 104,500 direct contacts during 2010. Best production and landscape management practices were taught at approximately 175 group meetings and over 400 on-site visits. Over 50 newspaper articles supported the direct contacts.

**IMPACT:** The total economic impact of Extension's commercial ornamental and landscape horticulture programming was estimated at \$240,000 in increased savings, increased income, and one-time capital purchases (Donaldson 2009).

- 903 professionals increased their knowledge of green industry services and marketing practices, and 516 added additional services and/or marketing practices.
- 1405 professionals increased their knowledge of plant culture (e.g. fertilization, soil mixing and/or sampling, propagation, irrigation, transplanting and installation).
- 1689 professionals increased their knowledge of plant pests and pest control measures.
- 716 professionals practiced proper plant selection and installation practices.
- 774 professionals implemented recommended management practices for pest control.

**FUNDING:** Smith-Lever

**CONTACT:** Amy Fulcher, UT Department of Plant Sciences, 252 Ellington Plant Sciences Building, 2431 Johnson Dr., Knoxville, TN 37996; phone: 865-974-7152; fax: 865-974-1947; email: afulcher@utk.edu

## 6.5 HINSEY

**TITLE:** Economic Infrastructure & Commerce

**ISSUE:** With the rapid pace of technological change and the potential to transform the way programs and services are delivered, information technology training is a vital component within any set organization. Online learning has shown an exponential growth during the last decade, allowing colleges and universities to serve a broader and sometimes underserved population.

**WHAT HAS BEEN DONE:** Technology programs reached 5,905 participants in 11 Tennessee counties in schools, after-school care programs, and Extension Offices. Instruction covered the use of emerging technologies and mobile devices for entrepreneurship endeavors; Internet browsing; and electronic bookkeeping. In addition, 3,800 indirect contacts were reached through exhibits and online media.

**IMPACT:** Of the 5,905 participants, 84% reported gaining new skills to implement technology into programs, business and curriculum.

**FUNDING:** NARETPA, State funds

**CONTACT:** Jonell Hinsey, Assistant Professor, Tennessee State University, Farrell-Westbrook Agricultural Complex, 3500 John A. Merritt Blvd., Nashville, TN 37209; phone: 615-963-2598; email: [jhinsey@tnstate.edu](mailto:jhinsey@tnstate.edu)

## 6.6 LADD

**TITLE:** Tennessee GROW-10

**ISSUE:** GROW-10 targets a 10-county area in southwestern middle Tennessee with high unemployment and poverty rates, low median household incomes which have suffered economic effects from severe weather and loss of jobs due to manufacturing plant closures and relocation.

**WHAT HAS BEEN DONE:** The GROW-10 program utilized a variety of methods to fulfill the program's goal of delivering educational resources and assistance to farmers and agri-entrepreneurs in 2010. These approaches included development and delivery of 19 educational programs, in addition to a three-day educational bus tour. Thirteen new educational resources and materials were developed and utilized in training, including five educational presentations, three peer-reviewed publications and five instructional fact sheets. One-on-one technical assistance was provided through individual 45 consultations and farm visits.

**IMPACT:** The GROW-10 program has served 1128 farmers, agri-entrepreneurs, community leaders and Extension agents through technical assistance and educational outreach initiatives. Comments from GROW-10 participants illustrate the program impacts for 2010:

- “I’ve a much more realistic picture of what I can do and this saved me from doing something I need to research first.” (Small Farmer)
- “This was an awesome adventure and so helpful in making this successful [running and opening an operation]” (Entrepreneur)
- “The best educational trip I have ever taken! (Entrepreneur)
- “Thank you very much. Marketing for us is the biggest challenge. This workshop really helps!” (Entrepreneur)

**FUNDING:** Smith-Lever; USDA Rural Development; Tennessee Department of Agriculture; and Tennessee Farm Bureau Federation

**CONTACT:** Amy Ladd, Extension Assistant, Center for Profitable Agriculture, P.O. Box 1819, Spring Hill, TN 37174, Phone: 931-486-2777, Fax: 931-486-0141, E-mail: ladd4@tennessee.edu

## 6.7 SARVER

**TITLE:** Energizing Tennessee 4-H

**ISSUE:** The National Science Foundation's Science and Engineering Indicators concluded that most Tennessee 4<sup>th</sup>, 8<sup>th</sup>, and 12<sup>th</sup> graders did not demonstrate proficiency in the knowledge and skills taught at their grade level in science.

**WHAT HAS BEEN DONE:** The purpose of Energizing Tennessee 4-H was to stimulate youth interest in science and build skills in the science process. The program used fun, hands-on activities as a method of delivery; and is a partnership between UT Extension and the Tennessee Department of Economic and Community Development, Office of Energy Policy. In 2010, 40 counties and one 4-H Center conducted the Energizing Tennessee 4-H program with 43,223 contacts during the first six months of 2010.

**IMPACT:** 13,922 youth were involved in evaluated programs that focused on science, engineering and technology. Intact groups of 4-H youth were randomly selected for post-test only questionnaires. The questionnaires were valid and reliable instruments from the University of Tennessee Program Evaluation Network, an online tool used to measure and evaluate statewide outcomes. This study demonstrated that 10,719 (77%) of youth gained science process skills including collecting data and analyzing results.

**FUNDING:** Smith-Lever, State funds

**CONTACT:** Daniel Sarver, Extension Specialist, 4-H Youth Development, 205 Morgan Hall, Knoxville, TN 37996, 865-974-7436, FAX: 865-974-1628, email: dsarver@tennessee.edu

## 6.8 WISE

**TITLE:** Tennessee Saves

**ISSUE:** Because they spend too much and save too little, many Tennesseans will not have enough money to live securely throughout life. Over the next 20 years, the percentage of retirement-age Tennesseans is expected to almost double; however, currently 52% of the U.S. workforce has no private pension coverage and 31% has no savings set aside specifically for retirement. The economic downturn caused additional hardship via rising unemployment as 1 of 10 working Tennesseans lost their jobs; and through shrinking investment value as many workers saw their 401(k) values drop by 30 to 40%.

**WHAT HAS BEEN DONE:** Tennessee Saves financial education activities are conducted through bankruptcy education, homebuyer education, High School Financial Planning and teacher training, saving education for adults and youth, credit education, employee education and financial education simulations for youth. Counties across Tennessee reported 123,245 direct educational contacts, including 74,149 contacts via group meetings and financial education programs. Of the total educational contacts, approximately 50% were made through youth programs. An additional 4.6 million Tennesseans were reached with the message of the importance of savings and financial responsibility through media and exhibits. UT and state partners conducted Tennessee Saves Days at Legislative Plaza and the Governor proclaimed Tennessee Saves Week.

**IMPACT:** Follow-up surveys with participants showed that they increased savings or investment by \$4.1 million. The participants' debt reduction totaled \$1.1 million. The total economic impact of this program in 2009 was \$5.5 million in increased savings, increased investment and reduced debt.

**FUNDING:** Smith-Lever, private funds

**CONTACT:** Dena Wise, Extension Specialist, 218 Morgan Hall, Knoxville, TN, 37996-4512, phone 865 974-8198, fax 865 974-5307, email: [dkwise@utk.edu](mailto:dkwise@utk.edu)

# 7.0 | Using Impacts



The following are examples of how impact statements were used in communicating with different Extension stakeholders.

## 7.1 VIDEO IMPACT REPORTS

Video impact reports may be created with online software, such as Animoto ®. Impact statements may be sent to a stakeholder via email; posted to social networking sites like Twitter and Facebook; copied onto a CD or hard drive for viewing without an Internet connection; and/or displayed on a website. UT Extension examples are posted at: <http://eesd.tennessee.edu> and click on the “Reports and Plans of Work” tab on the left.

## 7.2 4-H OVERVIEW

UT System Administration requested a statement regarding the major 2008 accomplishments of 4-H youth development programs. The following statement demonstrates cost-effectiveness.

### *Investing in Youth*

What can you buy for \$6.60? How about a brighter future for Tennessee youth? In 2008, Extension 4-H Agents and the volunteers they recruit and manage made 2.1 million direct contacts. Over 400,000 (20%) were made by volunteers. This means that for the \$13 million investment of public funds in Extension 4-H youth development programs in 2008, only \$6.60 was spent per contact.

*.....for the \$13 million investment of public funds in Extension 4-H youth development programs in 2008, only \$6.60 was spent per contact.....*

This makes 4-H a great investment for Tennessee, but UT Extension has much more than an eye for efficiency. 4-H programs positively impact life skills development as shown by our statewide program evaluation. Results indicate: Over 13,000 have improved their writing skills. Over 12,000

have improved their use of technology. Over 20,000 can deal with their nervousness when giving a speech.

### ***Investing in People***

In 2008, volunteer hours contributed to 4-H youth development programs by teens and adults totaled over 61,000 hours. Considering the Independent Sector's value of volunteer time at \$17.88 for Tennessee wages makes this a \$1.1 million contribution to local communities.

## **7.3 4-H BARRIERS**

The State 4-H Leader and Assistant Director, UT Extension, requested the major barriers for 4-H youth development programs.

### ***Closing the Generation Gap with Technology***

A 2005 study by the Polling Company of 1,002 adults nationwide showed a "lack of awareness and engagement with 4-H among members of Generations X and Y. Young adults (18-34) are typically not involved as 4-H leaders or donors. Research has demonstrated that these generations rely on the Internet as their main source of information. Teaching and learning on-line remains a challenge for 4-H personnel who are highly personable and high-touch educators. Despite this barrier, progress is being made. In Tennessee, the 4-H Alumni website collects alumni data and shares alumni stories.

### ***School-Based Accountability Competes with School-Based 4-H Programs***

Many Tennessee 4-H programs are delivered in public schools as roughly 20% of the state's population is found there on a typical school day. School-based programs are the best way to reach the most youth, especially those who are under-served. In-school 4-H programs have been a priority for Tennessee educational leaders at the local level, but changing accountability demands through standardized testing may reduce those programs. In some counties, Extension 4-H Agents have reported this trend, especially when low-performing schools introduce new programs that focus exclusively on testing success at the cost of social, personal, emotional, and vocational development.

## 7.4 INTEGRATED RESEARCH & EXTENSION REPORT

This annual report describes multistate and integrated programs conducted with Smith-Lever funds under Sections 105 and 204 of the Agricultural Research, Education and Extension Reform Act (AREERA) of 1998. The following statement from the FY 2010 report was provided by Matthew Devereaux:

### *CYFAR Strengthening Communities Project*

Children raised in environments that do not support their social/emotional and literacy development during their first five years of life are less likely to be “ready for school” and are less likely to graduate high school. UT Extension specialists theorized that involving parents in weekly home visits and weekly parent support groups while also educating the child’s teacher through regular workshops would increase the likelihood that children would succeed in school. Of the 102 children enrolled in the program, UT Extension screened 45 enrollees for literacy proficiency in August, 2009. The enrollees were two and three year olds. Results showed that 60% of these children are below the proficient level. Similarly, self-reports by parents and teachers show that 28% of enrollees are below the proficient level in their social/emotional development. In May of 2010 we collected data on the 45 enrollees to assess their social/emotional and literacy development over the past “school year”. The percentage of children showing literacy skills below the proficient level decreased from 60% to 50%; similarly social/emotional skills at the “below proficient level” decreased from 72% to 65%. This work was funded by Smith-Lever funds and the U.S. Department of Education.

*UT Extension specialists theorized that involving parents in weekly home visits and weekly parent support groups would increase the likelihood that children would succeed in school.*

## 7.5 STATEWIDE ECONOMIC ASSESSMENT

The UT Extension statewide economic assessment is annually used for multiple purposes, most notably compliance with the Tennessee Governmental Accountability Act of 2002. The following description is one of the highlighted programs in the economic assessment, and the economic values were calculated by Clyde Lane, Jr.

### *Better Beef Marketing*

Feeder cattle buyers prefer to purchase truckload lots of cattle that are similar in age, size, weight, and color, and they are willing to pay premiums to producers who participate in cooperative marketing ventures to assemble cattle to meet their needs. Extension agents and specialists helped beef cattle producers to market feeder cattle through cooperative marketing arrangements, including alliances, graded feeder calf sales, and age and source verification programs. Experts estimate farmers earned an average of \$8 per head more by managing cattle according to Extension's beef quality assurance program and \$25 per head by selecting bulls based on genetic potential. As a result of these programs, farmers realized \$10.8 million in additional sales revenue.

## 7.6 OTHER USES

Other ideas for using your impact statements:

- Share with your departmental advisory council or alumni group.
- Share with donors and potential donors.
- Share past success with current program participants as appropriate.
- Post to social media.
- Send to your colleagues in marketing and communications for story ideas.
- Share with Extension personnel to create interest in an upcoming inservice.
- Performance appraisal and award applications.
- Share with graduate students who have an interest in researching the program.
- Grant proposals.

# 8.0 | Evaluation



What data is needed for an effective impact statement? When is the appropriate time to collect the data? From whom will the data be collected? Effective impact statements start with an effective plan for performance measurement. The following examples provide a starting point for practical performance measurement.

## 8.1 RESEARCH

Apply research to your Extension program. Consider this example: Numerous studies, including one by Lewis (1998) found that for every \$1 in public funds invested in the EFNEP program, \$10.64 in benefits from reduced health care costs can be expected. The following is an excerpt from the 2010 UT Extension Economic Assessment.

UT Extension Nutrition Education Programs reach approximately two million contacts annually through group meetings, worksite sessions, direct mail, television, and radio programs. Nutrition education studies have found cost/benefit ratio of \$1.00/\$10.64. This translates to a return of over \$176.5 million for the investment in UT Extension's nutrition education programs for the state of Tennessee.

*...for every \$1 in public funds invested in the EFNEP program, \$10.64 in benefits from reduced health care costs can be expected.*

## 8.2 EXPERT ESTIMATIONS AND OBSERVATIONS

For many Extension programs, the best evaluation strategy is to make an expert estimation. Economic impact calculators for both consumer and commercial horticulture represent expert estimations and observations. You may access the calculators at the following URL: <http://eesd.tennessee.edu> and click on the “Program Planning and Evaluation” tab.

### 8.3 PARTICIPANTS' COMMENTS

Ask participants for their comments on the value of a program. This could be as simple as providing a notecard and asking participants to write anything that would help us to evaluate this program. For an example of using participant comments in impact statements, see Amy Ladd's work in section 6.6.

### 8.4 METRICS

The following eXtension page provides details for using scholarship metrics: <<http://create.extension.org/node/86591>>.

### 8.5 PARTICIPANT QUESTIONNAIRE

The value of the Soil, Plant and Pest Center to commercial clients was established at \$800 per sample through a participant questionnaire. <<http://www.joe.org/joe/2006august/rb7.php>>

A questionnaire template that fits all Extension programs has been prepared for you. Visit the program planning and evaluation tab of the Extension Evaluation and Staff Development website: <<https://ag.tennessee.edu/eesd/Pages/PlanningEvaluation.aspx>>.

# 9.0 | Assistance



If you have questions about program planning and evaluation, contact me (865-974-7245 or [jldonaldson@utk.edu](mailto:jldonaldson@utk.edu)).

If you have questions about using SUPER, contact John Toman (865-974-7245 or [jtoman@utk.edu](mailto:jtoman@utk.edu)).

If you have problems with your netID and password, contact the UT Help Desk (974-9900).

If you are not based on-campus, call the appropriate regional IT specialist.

# 10.0 | References



Carey, H.A. (1998). Communications in Extension. Unpublished course materials. Pennsylvania State University, University Park.

Donaldson, J.L., Bower, L.K., Yates, D.A. (2011). Video impact report instructions. Retrieved from:  
<https://ag.tennessee.edu/eesd/Pages/ReportsPlans.aspx>

Donaldson, J.L. (2009). Economic impact calculators. Retrieved from:  
<https://ag.tennessee.edu/eesd/Pages/PlanningEvaluation.aspx>

Donaldson, J.L., Hale, F.A., Bost, S.C., Windham, A.S., Stebbins, T.C., Cook, D.L. (2006). Assessing an Extension plant pest diagnostic center for commercial clients: Satisfaction, savings, and success. *Journal of Extension*, 44 (4). Retrieved from:  
<http://www.joe.org/joe/2006august/rb7.php>

eXtension. (2012). Scholarship metrics. Retrieved from:  
<http://create.extension.org/node/86591>

Lewis, E.C. (1998). *Cost benefit analysis of Virginia EFNEP: Calculating indirect benefits and sensitivity analysis* (Master's Thesis).  
Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University. Blacksburg.

University of Tennessee Extension. (2009). FY 2009 report of accomplishment and results. Retrieved from  
<https://ag.tennessee.edu/eesd/Pages/ReportsPlans.aspx>

University of Tennessee Extension. (2010). FY 2010 report of accomplishment and results. Retrieved from  
<https://ag.tennessee.edu/eesd/Pages/ReportsPlans.aspx>

USDA-NIFA (2010). Extension. Retrieved from  
<http://www.csrees.usda.gov/qlinks/extension.html>

Willems, Gwen. (2010). Optimizing conditions for success: An Extension case study in cross-program surveys. San Antonio: 24th Annual Conference of the American Evaluation Association.



Programs in agriculture and natural resources, 4-H youth development, family and consumer sciences, and resource development.  
University of Tennessee Institute of Agriculture, U.S. Department of Agriculture and county governments cooperating.  
UT Extension provides equal opportunities in programs and employment.