

# Assessment of Systemwide Readiness for Implementation of Cooperative Extension's 2021 Framework for Health Equity and Well-being

Funded by the National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA)

Jan 1, 2022 – Aug 31, 2023

Project Close, Overview Presentation  
August 31, 2023



COOPERATIVE  
EXTENSION



## Project Background

NIFA and the Extension Foundation engaged in a letter of cooperative agreement to support the implementation of [Cooperative Extension's National Framework for Health Equity and Well-Being Framework](#) (Framework), including support to the Center for Community Health and Evaluation (CCHE) to conduct a readiness assessment. The Framework is intended to guide Cooperative Extension's health related work. Extension is well positioned to serve as a catalyst for community-based efforts to address inequities, requiring a shift in strategic direction, with greater ability to see and do work differently than in the past.



# Extension Framework for Health Equity & Well-being

## 5 high level recommendations

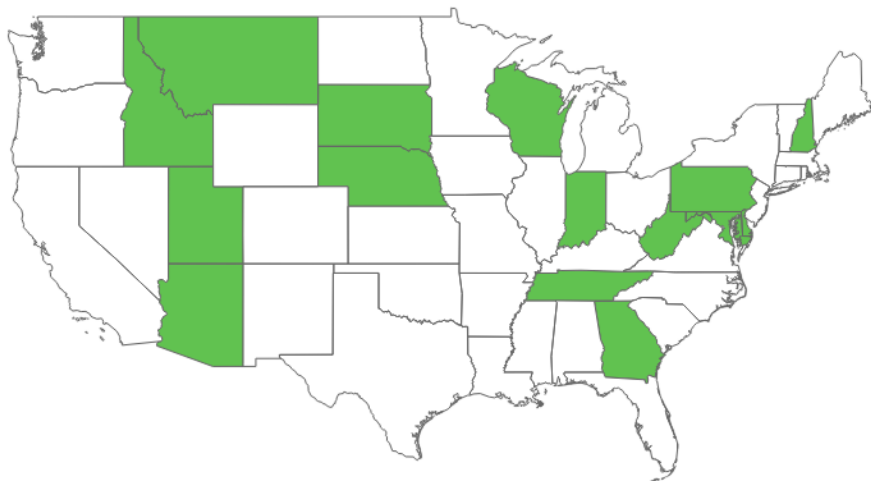
1. **Advance health equity as a core system value** to ensure that all people have a fair and just opportunity to be as healthy as they can be.
2. **Utilize community assessment processes** that integrate data science and resident voice to identify and address health inequities with greater precision.
3. **Invest in the success and visibility** of Extension's health-related professionals, programs, and initiatives.
4. **Establish partnerships** with academic units, universities, government agencies, corporations, nonprofit organizations, and foundations that share a commitment to reducing or eliminating health inequities.
5. **Utilize a community development approach** to advance the work of coalitions focused on influencing the social determinants of health.

<https://online.flippingbook.com/view/128151037/>



# Leveraging Well Connected Communities

Well Connected Communities (WCC) is a national well-being initiative of the Cooperative Extension System in partnership with National 4-H Council, with funding support from Robert Wood Johnson Foundation. WCC launched in December 2017 to test and scale Extension's work to advance health and health equity in its communities. WCC helped to establish a national infrastructure to support Extension's health related work and supported the development of the Framework. In addition to the national work, WCC supports community work across a sample of Land Grant Universities (see below). CCHE has been an Extension evaluation & learning partner since 2019 for the Well Connected Communities initiative. The work that is part of this Cooperative Agreement leveraged the ongoing work of WCC.



## Wave Two Land Grant Universities

- Montana State University
- Purdue University
- South Dakota State University
- Tennessee State University
- The Pennsylvania State University
- University of Arizona
- University of Delaware
- University of Georgia
- University of Idaho
- University of Maryland
- University of Maryland Eastern Shore
- University of Nebraska - Lincoln
- University of New Hampshire
- University of Tennessee
- University of Wisconsin - Madison
- Utah state University
- West Virginia University

■ Participating states



Robert Wood Johnson Foundation



# Work was overseen by the Extension Health Leadership Committee

In 2022, Extension established a series of program action teams to lead portfolios of work across the system. As part of that the Extension Health Leadership Committee was formed to consult and advise on the direction of Extension's health-related work. This Committee was used as advisors for moving the work associated with the Cooperative Agreement forward.

## Leading/Staffing the Committee

Roger Rennekamp	Extension Health Director
Kerry Gabbert	Health Associate – Extension Foundation
Nanya Chiejine	WCC Director – National 4-H Council
Sophia Rodriguez	Equity Fellow – National 4-H Council

## Committee Members: NIFA

Sheila Fleishacker	USDA-NIFA
Suzanne Stluka	USDA-NIFA
Edwin Lewis	USDA-NIFA

## Committee Members: External Organizations

Jessica Black	American Heart Association
Kelly Dalton	Board on Human Sciences
Maggie Jones	Center for Community Health and Evaluation
Julie Zajac	Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
Susan Zepeda	Independent Consultant

## Committee Members: Cooperative Extension

Dawn Burton	Prairie View A&M University
David Buys	Mississippi State University
Beverly Coberly	Extension Foundation
Courtney Dodd	Texas A&M University
Adam Hughes	Cornell University
Cris Meyer	Utah State University
Shelly Nichols-Richardson	University of Illinois
Trish Olsen	University of Minnesota
LaToya O'Neal	University of Florida
Barbara Petty	University of Idaho
Carolyn Williams	Prairie View A&M University



# 1. System Readiness Assessment: Methods and key findings

# Assessment Goals

To conduct a readiness assessment related to the implementation of the recommendations outlined in the framework in order to:

- Identify Extension's current assets and potential strategies to accelerate implementation of the recommendations
- Identify barriers to implementing the recommendations
- Provide information to Cooperative Extension Leadership to support prioritizing recommendations for immediate action
- Develop a measurement approach for assessing implementation and impact of the Framework going forward.

# Readiness and Resources Assessment: Overview



**Stakeholder Engagement**



**Literature Scan**



**National survey (12 LGUs, 272 responses)**

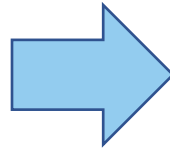


**6 Listening sessions (33 LGUs, 47 people)**

## Literature Scan: Overview

CCHE conducted a literature scan to inform the systemwide assessment of readiness. We reviewed 32 sources including key Extension sources such as the Framework. Materials included articles from both the grey and peer-reviewed literature that focused on the following key concepts: systems change inside Extension, health and well-being, measuring system readiness, health inequities change frameworks, equitable development, and racial equity systems change.

# Literature Scan: focus areas



**Health Equity**

**Equity**

**Systems change**

**Assessing readiness for equity change**

**Equitable development**

## Literature Scan: key findings



- **Tools for systems change are commonly built for more tightly associated systems** with a different locus of control than currently exists in the decentralized Extension System.
- **Focus on internally-facing reflective/ transformative work** at the individual & system level.
- **There is no ‘one size fits all.’** There are measures for ‘degree of change’ in equity work.
- **Workforce level tools/inputs are key**, from training to grievance processes, to support change.
- **Transforming implicit mental models** is necessary.
- **Attention to power dynamics and historical trauma is necessary.**

## Survey: Overview

In Summer 2022, CCHE conducted 6 regional listening sessions with 47 individuals across all regions of Extension (including the four geographic regions, 1890s, and 1994s/tribal Extension). The majority of participants worked at the county/reservation level and just under 50% identified as agents/educators. In sessions, we discussed barriers and facilitators for engaging in the work outlined in the Framework, as well as priorities and professional development areas of interest. We presented listening session findings to the same set of key stakeholders, and shared themes back with all of the participants in each session.

# Survey: focus areas



Focus on agent/educator voices

Framework familiarity

Extension Staff  
Health & Well-Being

Prof. Development

Five Framework  
Recommendations

Focus Equity  
Questions

Community  
Coalitions

Youth Involvement

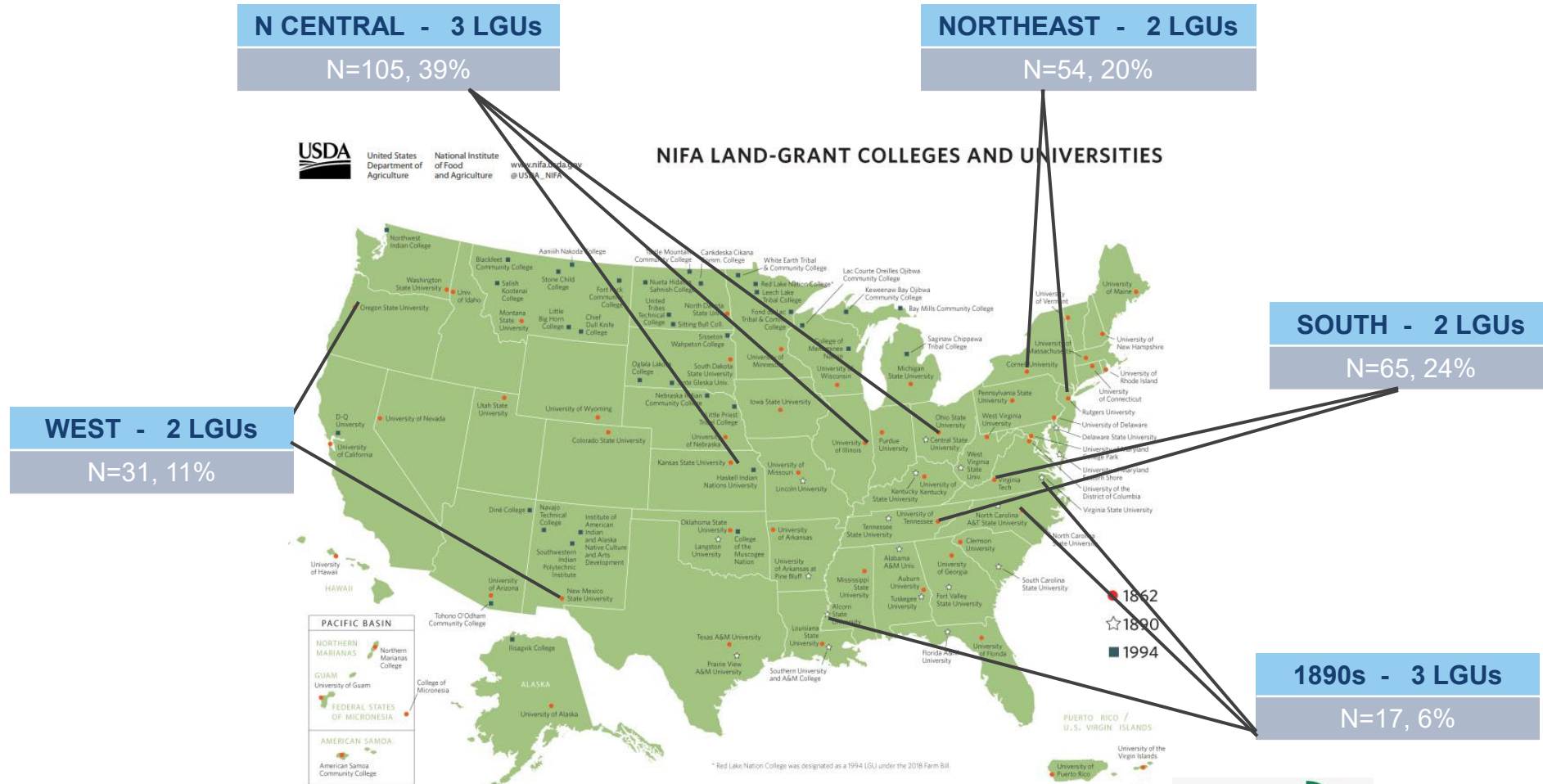
# Survey: sampling and recruitment

- Purposeful sample of 12 LGUs: A mix of 1890 and 1862 institutions (272 valid responses- removed 3)
  - Able to achieve representation across regions and size range.
  - The institution had to have 'health' related work in their portfolio, as identified by the Health Director.
  - CCHE and the Health Director met with multiple stakeholders from 1994s and tribal extension broadly prior to data collection to develop a way forward to maximize participation and to minimize burden. A decision was made to invite tribal extension to participate in listening sessions but not the survey.
- CCHE and the Health Director partnered with the 'Health & Well-being Point of Contact' (HPOC) at institutions to identify a sample and later administer the survey.
  - Asked HPOC to send the survey to 15-25 individuals from smaller programs and 50 from larger programs.
  - Warm hand-off email from Health Director, followed up w/ 15-30 min phone call with CCHE to clarify approach & sample.



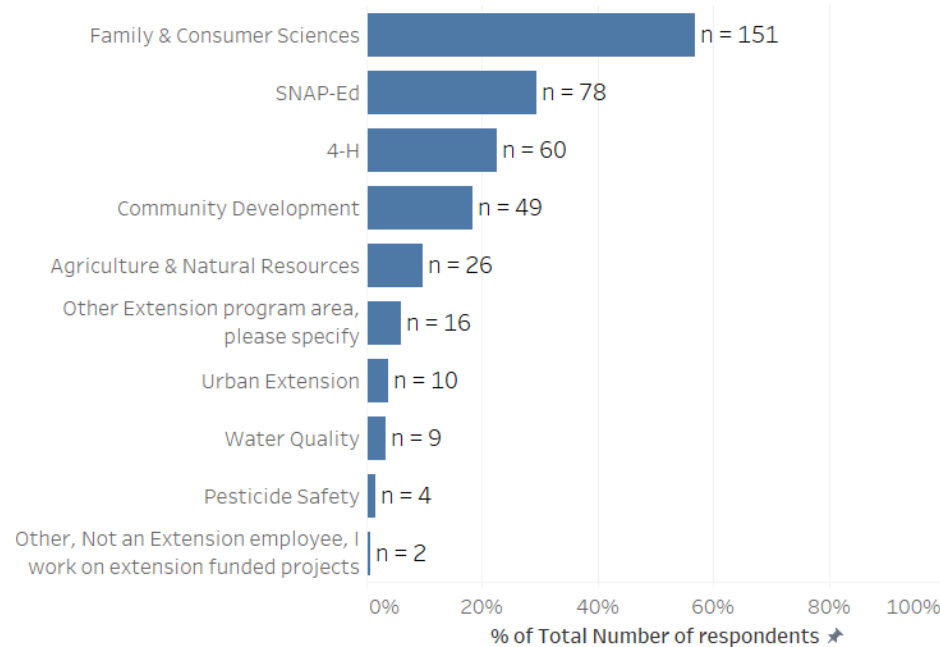
# Survey: respondents

- 272 responses
- 12 LGUs
- ~75% county level respondents

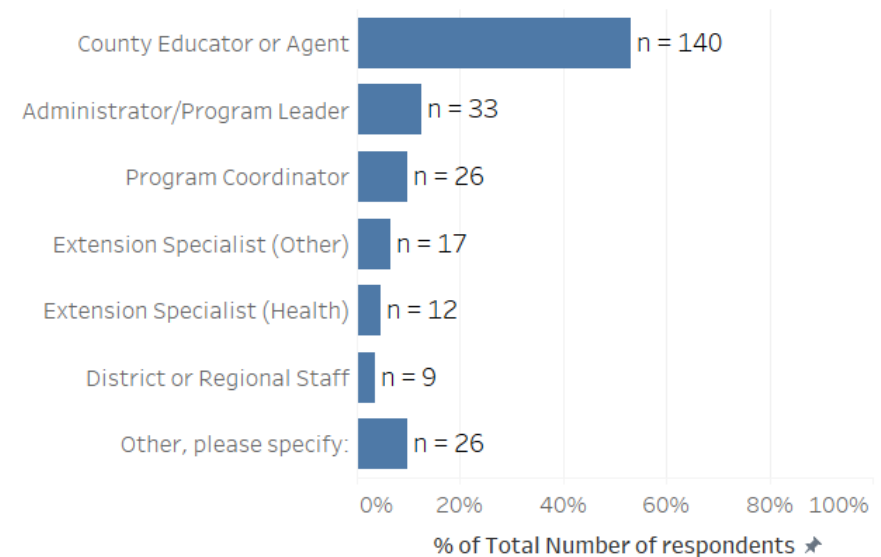


# Survey: additional respondent characteristics

Program area within Extension  
(check all that apply)



Current/primary position within Extension



**Position & Years in position: County educators or agents** made up the majority of respondents followed by administrator/program leader, and others. The length of time respondents have been in their current position varied – with **2-5 years** being the most common and **16-20 years** as least common.

# Survey: key findings



- Overall familiarity with the Framework, which sets the vision for this work, was low
- Average ratings for recommendations and sub-recommendations were all around 2.0, or adequate

## Average Ratings: Framework Recommendations

Rec 2: Community Assessment Processes	2.3
Rec 1: Health Equity as Core Value	2.2
Rec 4: Establish Partnerships	2.1
Rec 5: Community Dev Approach	2.1
Rec 3: Invest in Ext Staff & Programs	1.9

Scale:

1 Needs Improvement

2 Adequate

3 Good

4 Outstanding

# Survey: key findings

## Building on strengths

- ✓ Buy-in and commitment is high
- ✓ Strong interest in professional development
- ✓ Coalition work, partnerships & youth engagement already include shifts “expert to partner”
- ✓ Community assessment & data practice rated high
- ✓ 1890s bring strength and experience to the work, opportunity to partner with and fund/ support 1890s in identifying & elevating their exemplar work

## Opportunities to deepen focus & investment

- ✓ Need leadership support & incentive structures
- ✓ Consider compensating community members
- ✓ Equity items had 20% lower rating on average
- ✓ Interest in equity prof dev topics was rated lower than other items

## Regional Listening Sessions: Overview

In Summer 2022, CCHE conducted 6 regional listening sessions with 47 individuals across all regions of Extension (including the four geographic regions, 1890s, and 1994s/tribal Extension). The majority of participants worked at the county/reservation level and just under 50% identified as agents/educators. In sessions, we discussed barriers and facilitators for engaging in the work outlined in the Framework, as well as priorities and professional development areas of interest. We presented listening session findings to the same set of key stakeholders, and shared themes back with all of the participants in each session.



## Regional Listening Sessions: focus areas



**Barriers:** What are barriers to this work? Risks?



**Facilitators:** What do you see as levers for change?  
What is needed to catalyze transformation?



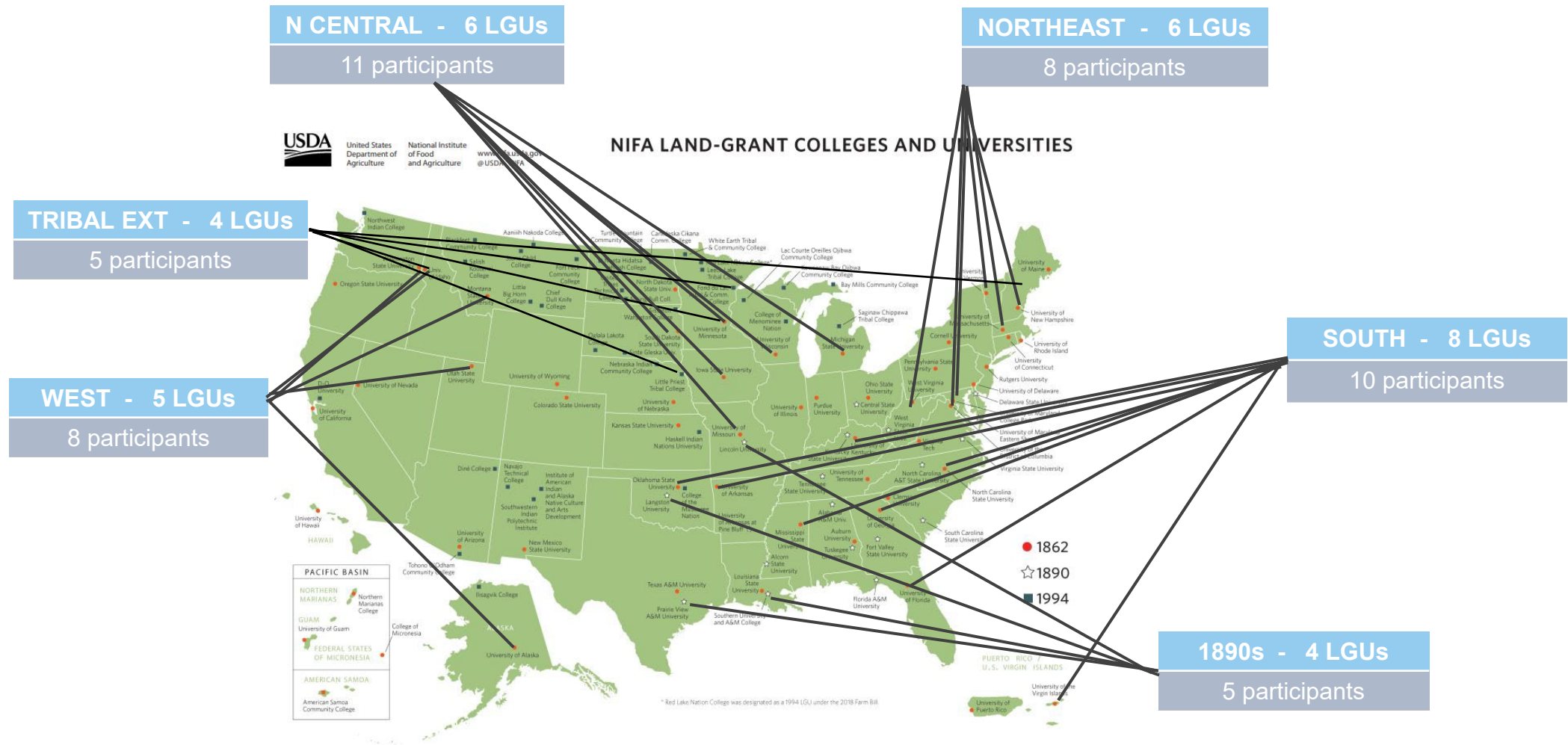
**Priorities:** Where to begin? What should Extension prioritize?



**Signals:** What would a signal of progress/change look like?  
How would you know your efforts are working?

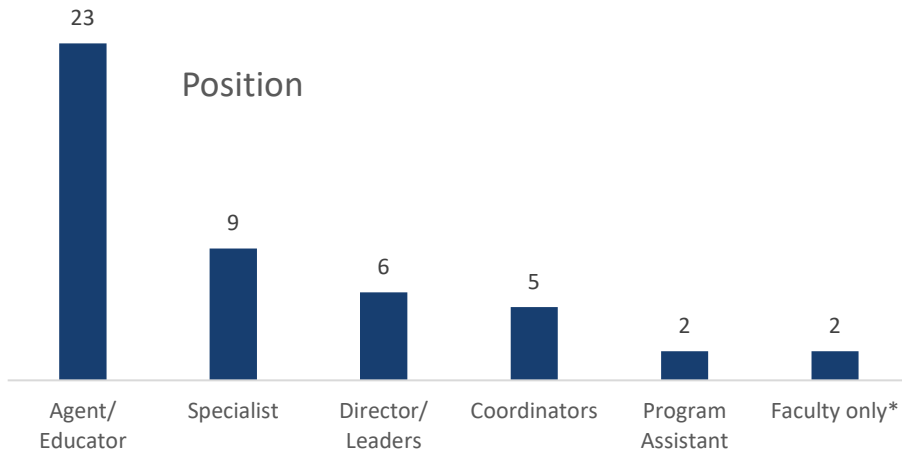
While participants were asked about all of these, they only shared data on barriers and priorities.

# Regional Listening Session: participants



# Listening Sessions: participants & list of LGU representation

**33 LGUS**  
 25 -- 1862s  
 4 -- 1890s  
 4 -- Tribal Ext



- 66% of listening session participants reported working at county/ reservation level; 22% at the state level, and 12% were mixed responses.

NORTHEAST: 8 people from 6 LGUs  
**University of Maryland**  
**University of Vermont**  
**West Virginia University**  
**University of the District of Columbia**  
**University of Massachusetts Amherst**  
**University of New Hampshire**  
 SOUTH: 10 people from 8 LGUs  
**University of Kentucky**  
**University of Florida**  
**Texas A&M AgriLife Ext Service**  
**Mississippi State University**  
**University of Georgia**  
**University of Arkansas**  
**Oklahoma State University**  
**University Virgin Islands**

1890: 5 people from 4 LGUs  
**Southern University**  
**Prairie View A&M University**  
**Lincoln University**  
**Langston University**  
 NORTH CENTRAL: 11 people from 6 LGUs  
**Iowa State University**  
**South Dakota State University**  
**Michigan State University**  
**University of Minnesota**  
**University of Missouri**  
**University of Wisconsin**  
 WEST: 8 people from 5 LGUs  
**Utah State University**  
**Montana State University**  
**Washington State University**  
**University of Idaho**  
**University of Alaska Fairbanks**

# Regional Listening Sessions: key findings



**Overall, low familiarity with the Framework**



**High enthusiasm & interest**



**Barriers = internal systems for supporting, funding, and staffing health equity and well-being work**



**Partnerships with community are valued, as are community needs/wants and expertise. Challenges around moving from expert-to-partner, and trust.**



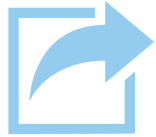
**Participants identified a need for more diverse leadership in Extension and called for a local/regional leadership vision that defines priorities, direction, and support**



**Participants identified professional development as a priority for both internal system changes and external facing efforts and identified a list of key areas to focus on**

## 2. System Readiness Assessment: Using the results

## What did we do with the assessment findings?



### Shared Information:

- Survey reports back to LGUs with >25 respondents
- Listening Session notes sent to participants from each session
- Monthly NIFA/Extension Foundation touchpoints



### Engaged with stakeholders and advisors:

- Health Equity & Well-being Program Action Team: Leadership Committee
- NHOC, NEAFCS, NCCOR, and PILD Presentations
- High-level briefings to the Extension Committee on Organization and Policy (ECOP)



Created implementation plan & associated products

# Readiness Assessment Products: Annotated Bibliography & Article



## **Annotated Bibliography: set of resources from Landscape Analysis**

**Description:** Compilation of the metrics shared with CCHE. It is not comprehensive (there will be ~20-25 Extension resources summarized). Goal is to support Extension metrics generally, to serve as a starter document for others doing this work in Extension going forward.



## **Assessment article: will submit to Journal Of Extension**

**Likely Title:** Findings from a national assessment to support implementation of Cooperative Extension's 2021 National Framework for Health Equity and Well-Being

### **Authors:**

Extension: Dawn Burton, Kerry Gabbert, LaToya O'Neal, Roger Rennekamp  
CCHE: Diana Charbonneau, Maggie Jones, Kate Katzman



# Framework Implementation Plan

RECOMMENDATION	STRATEGY	ACTIONS
<p><b>Advance health equity as a core system value to ensure all people have a fair and just opportunity to be as health as they can be.</b></p>	<p>Develop and test language for speaking about equity in ways that account for community dynamics.</p>	<p><b>Create a work group to identify or create resources for Extension faculty and staff for communicating more effectively about equity.</b></p>
<p><b>Utilize community assessment processes that integrate data science and resident voice to identify and address health inequities with greater precision.</b></p>	<p>Leverage existing community assessment expertise across Cooperative Extension to provide greater access to hyperlocal data.</p>	<p><b>Refine and publicize data science resources available online.</b></p> <p><b>Offer webinar on data access and utilization for Extension personnel.</b></p>
<p><b>Invest in the success and visibility of Extension’s health-related professionals, programs, and initiatives.</b></p>	<p>Develop metrics for recognizing and rewarding individual performance in the areas of health equity and well-being.</p> <p>Showcase work to implement the framework that is already occurring across the system.</p>	<p><b>Create a work group to collect examples of performance criteria that have been modified to include systems-level work.</b></p> <p><b>Continue to provide opportunities for LGUs to share their work through lightning presentations.</b></p> <p><b>2023 National Health Outreach Conference</b></p>
<p><b>Establish partnerships with academic units, universities, government agencies, corporations, nonprofit organizations, and foundations that share a commitment to reducing or eliminating health inequities.</b></p>	<p>Pursue funding opportunities to advance health equity and well-being work across Cooperative Extension.</p> <p>Market the work of Extension to external constituencies and potential partners.</p>	<p><b>Submit sustainability proposal to RWJF. Submit public health capacity-building proposal to CDC.</b></p> <p><b>Identify key areas of work and performance indicators around which Cooperative Extension can collect national data.</b></p>
<p><b>Utilize a community development approach to advance the work of coalitions focused on influencing the social determinants of health.</b></p>	<p>Develop learning resources for community-based faculty and staff regarding the creation, management, and evaluation of coalitions.</p>	<p><b>Publish and distribute a playbook containing resources for organizing collective action initiatives in communities.</b></p> <p><b>Funded LGUs and communities create case studies.</b></p> <p><b>Equitable Development Action Academy</b></p>

## Key activities: advancing health equity

**Goal: Help Extension faculty and staff develop apply an equity lens to their program development efforts**

**Developing a curated resources list for Extension professionals related to leading equity-centered community change**

- Individual resources featured on Connect Extension
- Library of all resources to be added to [health.extension.org](http://health.extension.org)

**Created list of web sites that feature hyperlocal health outcome data and health determinants**

- List is posted at [health.extension.org](http://health.extension.org)

**Collaborating with the DEI Program Action Team to create an Extension Community of Practice on Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, Access**

# Key activities: lightning sessions

**Goal: Host Lightning Sessions to highlight health-related work being done across the Extension system**

Lightning Session technical support provided by CCHE

## **November 15, 2022 - Building Capacity to Implement the Framework**

- Penn State Extension, Ohio State University, Kansas State University, University of Florida, University of Georgia, University of New Hampshire

## **December 15, 2022 - Building Capacity to Implement the Framework, part 2**

- University of Missouri, University of Wisconsin, University of Kentucky, Clemson University, Tennessee State University, Colorado State University

## **March 23, 2023 - Health in Later Life**

- University of Illinois, New Mexico State, University of Missouri, Michigan State, Virginia Tech, University of Georgia, University of Florida, and Kansas State University.

## **July 27, 2023 - Building, Managing, and Sustaining Health-Focused Coalitions**

- Utah State University Extension, University of Georgia, University of New Hampshire Extension, University of Delaware, Pennsylvania State University and University of Nebraska-Lincoln.

## **September 28, 2023 – Youth Voice and Action for Improving Community Health**

- Currently receiving nominations to present



# Key activities: NHOC (ROGER/KERRY)

**Goal: Support and promote the annual National Health Outreach Conference**

## **2023 Conference-**

- Development of conference theme- “Health Equity: Framing our Work”
- Planning Committee
  - Managed Call for Proposals
  - Plenary session recruitment
- Presentations
  - CCHE - Framework and progress to date
  - Evaluation super-session on Metrics Workgroup

## **2024 and 2025-**

- Solicited proposals to host
- Determined future NHOC hosts:
  - 2024- South Carolina
  - 2025- Nebraska
- Facilitated initial planning committee meeting

## Key activities: Metrics workgroup

**Goal: gather information and develop metrics at the individual, program, org/ or community level by which Cooperative Extension can assess and communicate the results of its health-related work**

**The Metrics Workgroup is working in three areas:**

- **Individual metrics:** Staff focused on health equity and well-being who skillfully: teach, facilitate, connect engage.
- **Program/community metrics:** Cross-program metrics, both reach and community impact
- **Organizational/systems metrics:** Supportive organizational structure and system, including incentives, recognition, leadership support, strategic vision/prioritization, funding, adequate/diverse staffing, equity/SDOH (at the org-level)

# Key activities: Metrics workgroup membership

## From the Extension Health Leadership Committee

Roger Rennekamp	Extension Health Director
Kerry Gabbert	Health Associate – Extension Foundation
Sophia Rodriguez	Equity Fellow – National 4-H Council
Cris Meier	Utah State University
Susan Zepeda	Independent Consultant
Jessica Black	American Heart Association

## Extension Foundation

Aaron Weibe	Communications & Engagement Mgr.
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## Western Region

Michele Walsh	University of Arizona
Violeta Dominguez	University of Arizona
Joey Peutz	University of Idaho

## Southern Region

Ken Jones	University of Kentucky
Jennifer Bridge	University of Kentucky
Courtney Brown	University of Georgia
Allisen Penn	University of Georgia
Ali Berg	University of Georgia
Cathy Sutphin	Virginia Tech
Kathy Hosig	Virginia Tech
Melody Scales	Virginia Tech
Sarah Kirby	North Carolina State University

## Northeast Region

Elise Gurgevich	Penn State University
Malinda Surprise	Penn State University
Matt Spindler	Penn State University
Peter Wulforth	Penn State University
Mike Hamel P	Penn State University
Lauren Prinzo	West Virginia University

# Key activities: Metrics workgroup products

	Health & Well-being Infrastructure Survey	Health & Well-being Capacity Assessment
Purpose	<b>Measurement:</b> To understand and be able to share the depth and breadth of Extension’s health and well-being efforts and to be able to monitor changes over time.	<b>Support Tool/ intervention:</b> To support Extension programs in understanding their current capacity to implement health and well-being work in key domains, and to provide guidance on what building capacity would entail. Provides insights for action planning.
Structure	Web-based survey Conducted annually by National CES	Team based self-assessment tool that can be downloaded and used by teams within Extension
Timing	Pilot August 2023 ~ 10 LGUs Broad administration Fall 2023	Development in Fall 2023
Content	Scope of work, funding, coalition work, staffing, structure, and community engagement.	Leadership/vision, workforce, collaboration/partnerships, coalition/community work, youth development, as well as health equity & social determinants of health focus.
Misc Details	-Likely to require gathering input from multiple staff, Health Point of contact = key respondent -Predominantly closed ended questions -Involves some look back, “in the past 5 years”	-Typically engages multiple team members; time for individual reflection and team discussion -Uses a grounded scale (i.e. examples of each ‘level’ choice, affirming what growth/path might look like)