

Assessing System Gaps in Extension Education Evaluation Resources and the Need for National Extension Education Evaluation Portal

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NON-TECHNICAL SUMMARY: The purpose of this project is to support NIFA in its effort to serve as a catalyst for, and leader in, a national dialogue about program and project evaluation needs of Land Grant University staff, and to develop a roadmap for connecting Extension educators and administrators across the Land Grant system to NIFA's and each other's evaluation resources. The project will examine the current state of the field, and identify key assets and gaps with regard to program development and evaluation resources. A roadmap, as the main deliverable and outcome of both assessment and dialogue, will include recommendations for evaluation support and capacity building via a portal and other wraparound elements. The roadmap will include a plan for development, implementation, evaluation and sustainability of the effort. The project aims to build on NIFA's existing focused efforts to build evaluation capacity within the LGU system to leverage and promote best resources and practices, to improve access to these resources, with an emphasis on Minority Serving Institutions, toward the end of better systems capacity to measure and describe the impact of our work.

OBJECTIVES: This project will bring together the perspectives and experience of evaluation resource users with those making decisions about how to best support those users. The key decisionmakers include: Land Grant and Cooperative Extension partners including JCEP and ECOP, eXtension Evaluation COP, NIFA leaders, and other institutional decision makers. Input and participation will also be solicited from RRDCs CRED Indicators Team, the Extension Evaluation Topical Interest Group (TIG) of the American Evaluation Association, and other groups and individuals as identified by representative from different NIFA units. The project seeks to address four critical needs identified by NIFA (resources, capacity, access, and best practices), as well as enhance system capacity through shared languages and resources. Specifically, this project will result in a roadmap for a NIFA Extension education evaluation portal, plus wrap around elements, that are grounded in a deep understanding of existing needs and emergent future directions.

APPROACH: The project will be comprised of seven core steps. Each is described below 1. Framing: The project team, in collaboration with the NIFA team, will frame the questions guiding the analysis of the state of the field. A key component of this step will be the identification of stakeholders and participants. 2. Review the field of practice: The project team will identify important trends within the field of evaluation and within the broader public agency accountability and organizational development arenas. These trends will be used to develop criteria for an analysis of existing resources and approaches. 3. Assess current resources: Evaluate assets, needs, opportunities. The project team will investigate and analyze the existing resources and gaps, best practices and emergent directions that Extension educators and administrators are faced with regarding program evaluation. Methods may include: survey, focus group, interview, and document/web analysis. 4. Create a roadmap: A draft roadmap will be created based on steps 2 and 3. The roadmap will need to address NIFA's critical needs related to evaluation resources, capacity building in program evaluation, access to the aforementioned, and ways to identify and share best practices. 5. Share findings with key stakeholders and draft roadmap: The project team, in collaboration with the NIFA team, will identify key stakeholders with whom to initially share the findings. This sharing will occur at a face-to-face meeting at NIFA, as well as using distance technologies to include relevant contributors and reactors. 6. Finalize roadmap: Based on dialogue and feedback at the face-to-face meeting, the roadmap will be revised and finalized. 7. Disseminate results: Results will be shared with key stakeholders at NIFA and beyond.

KEYWORDS: Not applicable

SUPPLEMENTARY DATA: Institution Type: EXT Coop States: WI Region:
3 Process Date: 2016/07/25 Program Code: FF-L