

CYFAR Grant Program – Summary of Stakeholder Listening Sessions (2012)

Program staff from the Division of Youth and 4-H in NIFA’s Institute of Youth, Family, and Community conducted three stakeholder listening sessions for the Children, Youth and Families at Risk (CYFAR) grant program. The sessions were conducted February 15 and 22, and March 9, 2012. As the grant cycle for the current technical support and professional development expires during FY 2012, the NIFA staff hosted listening sessions regarding possible changes to CYFAR liaisons, CYFERnet (Technology, Program, and Evaluation) in the 2013 Request for Application (RFA). During the sessions stakeholders presented questions regarding CYFAR and received responses.

Legislative Authority: Funding for CYFAR Sustainable Community Projects is authorized under section 3(d) of the Smith-Lever Act of May 8, 1914, as amended (7 U.S.C. 341, *et seq.*). Section 7403 of the Food, Conservation, and Energy Act (FCEA) of 2008 amends section 3(d) of the Smith-Lever Act of 1914 (7 U.S.C. 343(d)) in regards to eligibility.

Format: Three sessions, one current grantee session and two land-grant stakeholder sessions, were conducted virtually. The [Federal Register](#) notification is listed as 77 FR 9890 on February 21, 2012.

Listening Session Announcements: Announcements were sent to the following NIFA listservs: 4-H State Leaders, Family and Consumer Science State Leaders, FALCON-First Americans Land-grant Consortium, AEA-Association of Extension Administrators, 1862 Extension Directors, 1890 Extension Directors, and 1994 Extension Directors.

Session Participation: For the sessions, 86 registered and 44 participated in virtual listening session using Adobe Connect.

Land-Grant Type	No.	Percent	Extension Region	No.	Percent	Session Participants	No.	Percent
1862	41	93%	Western	14	33%	Grantees	28	64%
1890	0	0	North Central	12	27%	Stakeholder 1	7	16%
1994	2	5%	Northeast	10	23%	Stakeholder 2	9	20%
Territory	1	2%	Southern	7	16%			
			Territory	1	2%			

Stakeholder Response Key: Stakeholder response statement agreement are indicated by four levels of **support** to questions asked during the listening sessions.

Response or Statement Support Level	Number of Response in Agreement
Support	Two or Less
Strong Support	Three to Five
Significant Support	Six to Eight

Profound Support	Nine or More Responses
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Q1. What should change about CYFAR, if anything?

There was significant support to limit the scope of identifiable goals to reduce the programs offered. It was suggested to support more state grants. There was support for offering more state grants and for a longer term than 5 years.

Q2. What specific audiences should CYFAR target within at-risk populations?

Stakeholders indicated support to reduce the variety of audiences that the CYFAR program serves, also determining specific age groups to serve. There was some support for at-risk audience determination; this determination should be determined by the states; it was further stated that CYFAR is established from the grassroots.

Q3. What are the audiences for which CYFAR could have greater impact?

Stakeholders supported the specific need to systematically target the youth participants and the age range with the need to brainstorm and understand how CYFAR can create systematic changes. It was noted that consideration should be given to internal extension audiences. It was suggested CYFAR should look at new vulnerable at-risk audiences and target new programs areas related to the "new" vulnerable at-risk audiences. There was support for addressing new needs and placing future CYFAR efforts on those new audiences.

Q4. CYFERnet.org, are you using it. If so, please explain how.

CYFERnet.org is beneficial with the offering of hot topics; this feature parallels what is currently occurring in society. The number of years CYFERnet.org's use was supported; it was stated that the site's resources had been useful at multiple levels in their work. There was other indication that CYFERnet.org was rarely used; it was suggested that a reminder of site's resources would be useful to the Cooperative Extension System (CES).

Q5. CYFERnetSEARCH.org, are you using it? If so, please explain.

Significant support was highlighted for CYFERnetSEARCH.org. Respondents indicated that it was used repeatedly for survey development and logic model development. Common measures were suggested for after school programming and programming for young children. Supernaturalism was used to locate sources for trainers and to connect it to others who are not connected to the university.

Q6. How would the role of CYFAR liaisons be changed, if at all?

Strong support for liaisons was shared as they have played an incredible role providing invaluable input over the years. It was suggested that the liaison role can be integrated across the work. A tight connection is needed between the liaison and the evaluation team; as well, the need to find best ways to use everyone's resources would benefit CYFAR. There was strong support to look at the number of site visits that liaisons are able to provide as they can only visit sites once or twice over the 5- year period. Liaisons also help campus leadership understand the importance of CYFAR.

Q7. Have Capacity Building Workshops been effective, please explain.

There was support indicating those workshops were effective, according to evaluations.

Q8. Should we have a CYFAR liaison who is responsible specifically for capacity building?

It was stated that capacity building should be more clearly defined. There was indication that a number of liaisons do capacity building in their current role. It is important to figure out what could be done well. There was support to create an option for a liaison to serve as the capacity building liaison who could oversee CYFAR capacity building; the leadership and central coordination of

capacity building would be helpful. There was support for the CYFAR 101 sessions; overall CYFAR 101 went well for participants.

There was also a statement to indicate the lack of need for a single liaison for capacity building; it was further stated that all liaisons should be working with their states. Liaisons should continue the liaison role making states aware of what is going on in capacity building. It was pointed out that capacity building should not be done face-to-face. The information could be offered online and through webinars.

Q9. How effective has the CYFAR Conference been for your professional development in working with an at-risk population?

There was profound support for the CYFAR Conference as it has been a top notch professional development conference, especially with CYFAR professionals and the people working on grants and community partners. It was viewed as important beyond professional development. There was support for this conference as networking and relationship building are a powerful outcome of this professional development opportunity. There was support indicating that there was no guarantee that participants could get the same quality and depth of work through electronic means. It was further stated with support that the CYFAR Conference is successful in raising the awareness of the needs, and increasing the work with of at-risk audiences. It was also stated that the conference has been critical in building the skills and abilities within program staff and especially those new CYFAR site staff who do not have the minimal skills and abilities.

One question was offered, is it the role of the CYFAR program to provide such a conference for the system or is the money and the resources that go into the conference better spent in a different way? Is this how we want to spend the money to support the CYFAR grantee?

Q10. What percentage of the CYFAR funds should go to building the capacity of CES to serve at-risk audiences vs. building the capacity of grantees?

There are activities and strategies that strengthen the systems and institutions nationwide. It was indicated that as a system, CYFAR should not lose track that as a program, it is trying to strengthen the system which is composed of multi-institutional, multi-community-based organizations, and local institutions.

CYFAR over the years has focused on local communities. CYFAR should continue building the capacity of our grantees and our system. The CYFAR conference builds the capacity of the system. CYFAR should improve the system and the direct services. CYFAR funding brings together programs that develop at risk programs with various communities across the country.

Comments: Comments were mailed: by paper, disk, or CD-ROM to the 4-H/NIFA address; emailed: (cyfar@nifa.usda.gov), or faxed: 202-720-9366, by March 30, 2012.

Three comments were submitted, which included the following:

- A CYFERnet Technology Team comment.
- An inquiry questioning why the 1994 Tribal Land-grant Colleges are not eligible for funding?
- A comment in favor of multi-disciplinary team work.