



Cooperative Extension Program
Prairie View A&M University
Prairie View, Texas

Volunteer Administration in the 21st Century:

Leadership Advisory Boards

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The county Leadership Advisory Board (LAB) develops a long-term vision for the county Extension program, advocates for and interprets the program throughout the county, and helps develop resources for the county program. It is responsible for the “big picture” of county programming.

Extension’s “grass roots” programming effort relies on the connection the agency has with Leadership Advisory Boards. LABs are critical to Extension’s ability to provide locally relevant educational programs; a strong, diverse LAB is vital for each county.

The annual responsibilities of the Leadership Advisory Board include:

- **Reviewing the county Extension program’s mission and purpose and the local program’s goals, objectives and primary audiences served.**

Extension’s responsibility: Presenting program plans to the LAB so they can be reviewed before the program year begins.

- **Developing resources to ensure that high-quality programs can be implemented.**

Extension’s responsibility: Working with the LAB to develop resources (equipment, supplies, funding for programs) and identify potential partners.

- **Ensuring that legal and ethical integrity and accountability are maintained.**

Extension’s responsibility: Making sure the county Extension program reflects the results of your educational efforts and demonstrating to the board the difference the program is making in the county.

- **Monitoring and strengthening the educational program.**

Extension’s responsibility: Making sure the county program is consistent with Texas Extension’s mission.

- **Enhancing the county Extension program’s public standing.**

Extension’s responsibility: Making sure LAB members have the knowledge and training they need to clearly articulate the local program’s mission and accomplishments to the general public.

- **Serving as the Community and Economic Development Program Area Committee (optional)**

Extension's responsibility: Working with the LAB to develop programs in the area of community and economic development if the board will serve in this capacity. This is often a good option in rural counties. However, the LAB is not required to serve as the community and economic development program area committee.

See the “Leadership Advisory Board Responsibility Worksheet” on page 5 to help you work through the responsibilities of the Leadership Advisory Board.

Leadership Advisory Board membership

The Leadership Advisory Board should be a diverse group of community leaders who can support the Extension program effectively. These community leaders are sometimes referred to as power actors, key leaders, influentials and legitimizers. These individuals are known for their ability to exercise their social power in influencing the actions of others.

In every community there are individuals who play an important role in community decision making. They are found in local government, education, agriculture, families, the health field, or youth organizations. They are the ones people look to for leadership and who represent the opinions of the general population. These leaders, both adult and youth, are the ones who should be asked to serve on the Leadership Advisory Board.

Several studies have shown that opinion leaders who serve effectively on Leadership Advisory Boards are

- successful in business, job and home life;
- residents of the community or county;
- influential in more than one interest area;
- able to see the community from a broad, general perspective; and
- representative of the various audiences the boards serve.

Keep these characteristics in mind during the membership selection process.

Criteria for membership

The county Leadership Advisory Board should have at least 10 but no more than 20 members. Each member serves a 3-year term, with terms staggered so that one-third of the members are replaced each year.

Members should be carefully selected by the county Extension faculty and members of the LAB and should represent the following:

- Each major geographic area of the county
- Organizations affected by or affecting Extension programs (including potential educational collaborators)
- Each major social and economic group in the county
- Anyone with a major interest in Extension, including youth
- A variety of leaders representing agriculture, business, industry, education, civic life, families and religious organizations.

Note: Leadership Advisory Board members do NOT have to be members of other committees.

The “Leadership Advisory Board Candidate Worksheet” on page 6 lists characteristics to look for in potential members. The “Leadership Advisory Board Position Description” on page 7 is a useful document to give potential LAB members.

Officers

The LAB’s officers are elected at the annual fall meeting and serve 1-year terms. Each LAB should have a president, vice president and secretary, but may add other offices if needed. These three officers also serve as the county executive committee. Listed below are the functions of the LAB officers.

President

- Oversees board and executive committee meetings
- Acts as a spokesperson for the organization
- Works with the county Extension agents to recruit new LAB members
- Calls special LAB meetings when needed
- Appoints members to special committees as needed
- Helps the county Extension agents evaluate board members’ roles and performance

Vice President

- Attends all board meetings
- Serves on the executive committee
- Carries out special assignments as requested by the board president
- Understands and performs the duties of the board president when the president is absent

Secretary

- Attends all board meetings
- Serves on the executive committee
- Maintains all board records and ensures their accuracy
- Reviews board minutes
- Notifies members of board and committee meetings when such notice is required
- Assumes the responsibilities of the president and vice president in their absence

Board member responsibilities

- Attends all board meetings and functions
- Stays informed about the organization's mission, services, policies and programs
- Reviews agendas before meetings and is ready to discuss agenda items
- Serves on sub-committees and assists with special assignments as needed
- Informs others about Texas Extension
- Works with the county Extension agents to recruit new LAB members
- Keeps up-to-date on developments concerning the county Extension program
- Helps the board carry out its responsibilities, such as long-term visioning, reviewing financial statements, and advocacy of the county Extension program

Meeting requirements

The Leadership Advisory Board should meet at least twice a year and is encouraged to meet more often. Typical times for the meetings are late fall and late spring.

The late fall meeting should focus on the following:

- Hearing an in-depth report from Extension faculty about the county programs conducted that program year, including the results of outcome and output programs

- Developing strategies to demonstrate the impact of the county program
- Electing and installing officers for the coming year
- Reviewing program plans for the next year (These plans are developed by Extension faculty with guidance from Program Area Committees and Youth Boards.)
- Determining strategies for developing resources to support major programming efforts
- Electing officers for the next calendar year

The spring meeting should focus on:

- Reviewing the strategic plan for the county Extension program to ensure that outcomes are being met
- Discussing long-term county educational plans to ensure that programs will be relevant to the county
- Reviewing county Extension budgets from the previous year and potential spending for the current year
- Planning for the recruitment of new members
- Hearing updates on how programs are being implemented
- Discussing how to diversify and expand the program

Mock agendas for LAB meetings are found on pages 8 and 9.

Whatever items are on the agenda, there should be a specific plan for each meeting.

Additional reading

Carver, J. (1997). *Boards that make a difference*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass Inc.

Nix, H. L. and N. R. Seerley. (1973). "Comparative views and actions of community leaders and non-leaders." *Rural Sociology* 28:427-28.

Watson, J. E. and H. F. Lionberger. (1967). *Community Leadership in a Rural Trade-Centered Community and Comparison of Methods of Identifying Leaders*. Columbia, MO: University of Missouri Agricultural Experiment Station Bulletin No. 915.

Other publications in this series on volunteer administration:

D-1451, *Volunteer Administration in the 21st Century: Roles Volunteers Play in Texas* AgriLife Extension Service

D-1453, Program Area Committees and Youth
Boards

D-1454, Volunteer Associations and Groups

D-1455, Understanding and Managing Direct and
Episodic Volunteers

D-1456, Managing the Risk Associated with Volun-
teer Service

Leadership Advisory Board Responsibility Worksheet

Use this worksheet as a guide to ensure that the Leadership Advisory Board is meeting its responsibilities.

Dates of meetings for year: _____

Locations of meetings: _____

Total number of LAB members present at each meeting: _____

Responsibility	Was this met?	Explain your response.
Review the county Extension program's mission and purpose.	Yes No	
Identify fiscal, material and human resources that can be developed to support the implementation of high-quality programs.	Yes No	
Ensure legal and ethical integrity and maintain accountability	Yes No	
Monitor and strengthen the existing program.	Yes No	
Enhance the county Extension program's public standing (including interpretation)	Yes No	

The county coordinator will summarize yearly accomplishments on another sheet.



Leadership Advisory Board Candidate Worksheet

This worksheet will help county Extension agents evaluate potential Leadership Advisory Board members and could be used at office conferences.

Name of potential candidate: _____

Resident in county (geographical region): _____

Occupation: _____

Check the appropriate box to describe this candidate.

Questions	Yes	No
Does the potential candidate believe in the mission and vision of Texas Extension?		
Does the potential candidate see the community in a broad perspective?		
Is the potential candidate a long-time resident of the community (at least 5 years)?		
Is the potential candidate interested in multiple areas of education in Texas Extension?		
Is the potential candidate considered a leader in the community?		
Is the potential candidate a good fit for the Leadership Advisory Board? ¹		

¹In order to check the “yes” box for this question, all other questions should be checked “yes.”

What strengths do you think the potential candidate can bring to the Leadership Advisory Board?

Other comments about the potential candidate:

Leadership Advisory Board Position Description

Title: Texas Extension County Leadership Advisory Board Member

Leadership Advisory Board Advisor:
County Extension Agent (County Coordinator)

Purpose of the Leadership Advisory Board:
Extension's grassroots programming effort relies on the connection the agency has with Leadership Advisory Boards. LABs are critical to Extension's ability to provide locally relevant educational programs; a strong, diverse LAB is vital for each county.

Benefits of serving on the Leadership Advisory Board:

- Be a significant part of the educational process
- See the impact the county Extension program has in the county
- See the positive change in program participants
- Experience personal growth from participating in this vital community effort

Responsibilities of the Leadership Advisory Board: The Leadership Advisory Board develops a long-term vision for the county Extension program, advocates for and interprets the program throughout the county, and helps develop resources for the county program. It is responsible for the "big picture" of county programming.

- Reviewing the county Extension program's mission and purpose and the local program's goals, objectives and primary audiences served
- Developing resources to ensure that high-quality programs can be implemented

- Ensuring that legal and ethical integrity and accountability are maintained
- Monitoring and strengthening the educational program
- Enhancing the county Extension program's public standing

Qualifications and special skills:

- Resides in the community or county
- Is interested in more than one area of Extension programming
- Sees the community from a broad, general perspective
- Represents one of the county's targeted audiences
- Has good visioning and communication skills
- Is interested in the quality of life in the county

Time required: The Leadership Advisory Board meets two or three times for a total of 4 to 10 hours each year. An additional 10 hours or so may be needed to carry out a member's individual responsibilities. Serving as an officer may require more time, depending on the position.

Resources and support available: The county Extension staff will provide the training and support you need to be a successful board member. Additional information is available to you at <http://texasvolunteer.tamu.edu/>

If interested, respond to: Your county Extension office



Mock Agenda for Fall Leadership Advisory Board Meeting

Use this worksheet to make sure the objectives of the Fall meeting are met.

Date of meeting: _____

Location of meeting: _____

Total number of LAB members in attendance: _____

Leadership Advisory Board members present: _____

1. Call to order.....President
2. Read minutes from Spring meeting..... Secretary
3. Report the results of all outcome/output programs
for that programming year (if available. If not available, this should be on the spring agenda.)
..... All CEAs
4. Discuss and develop ways for LAB members
to help interpret these outcomes in the county.....President
5. Review program plans developed for the coming year All CEAs
6. Determine how the LAB can provide leadership in
developing resources to support major programming efforts.....President
7. Other business as needed..... All
8. Elect officers for the next calendar year All
9. Set date for Spring meeting All



Mock Agenda for Spring Leadership Advisory Board Meeting

Use this worksheet to make sure the objectives of the Spring meeting are met.

Date of meeting: _____

Location of meeting: _____

Total number of LAB members in attendance: _____

Leadership Advisory Board members present: _____

1. Call to order.....President
2. Read minutes from Fall meeting..... Secretary
3. Review county Extension program strategic plan
to ensure outcomes are being met.....President
..... *with assistance from the County Coordinator*
4. Review county Extension budgets from the previous year
and potential spending for the current year.....President
5. Discuss the recruitment of new membersPresident
6. Review the implementation of all programs and discuss program outcomes (if available)
..... All CEAs
7. Discuss how to diversify and expand the programPresident
8. Other business as needed..... All
9. Set date for Fall meeting..... All

This material was developed by the Texas AgriLife Extension Volunteer Steering Committee, chaired by Chris Boleman and Angela Burkham. Extension faculty who serve on the committee are Dirk Aaron, Michelle Allen, Joyce Cavanagh, Nelson Daniels, Darrell Dromgoole, Linda Lynch Evans, Alma Fonseca, Pam Foster, Elaine Fries, Richie Griffin, Rick Hirsch, Kit Horne, Shirley Long, Rick Machen, Linda Mock, Carolyn Nobles, Susan Richey, Bob Robinson, Renee Sanders, Robert Scott, Doug Welsh, Neal Wilkins and Ron Woolley. Administrative advisors are Kyle Smith, Associate Director for County Programs, and Martha Couch, Associate Director for 4-H and Youth Development.

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