



# Florida Cooperative Extension: Pathway to Creating Engagement Through Innovation & Excellence





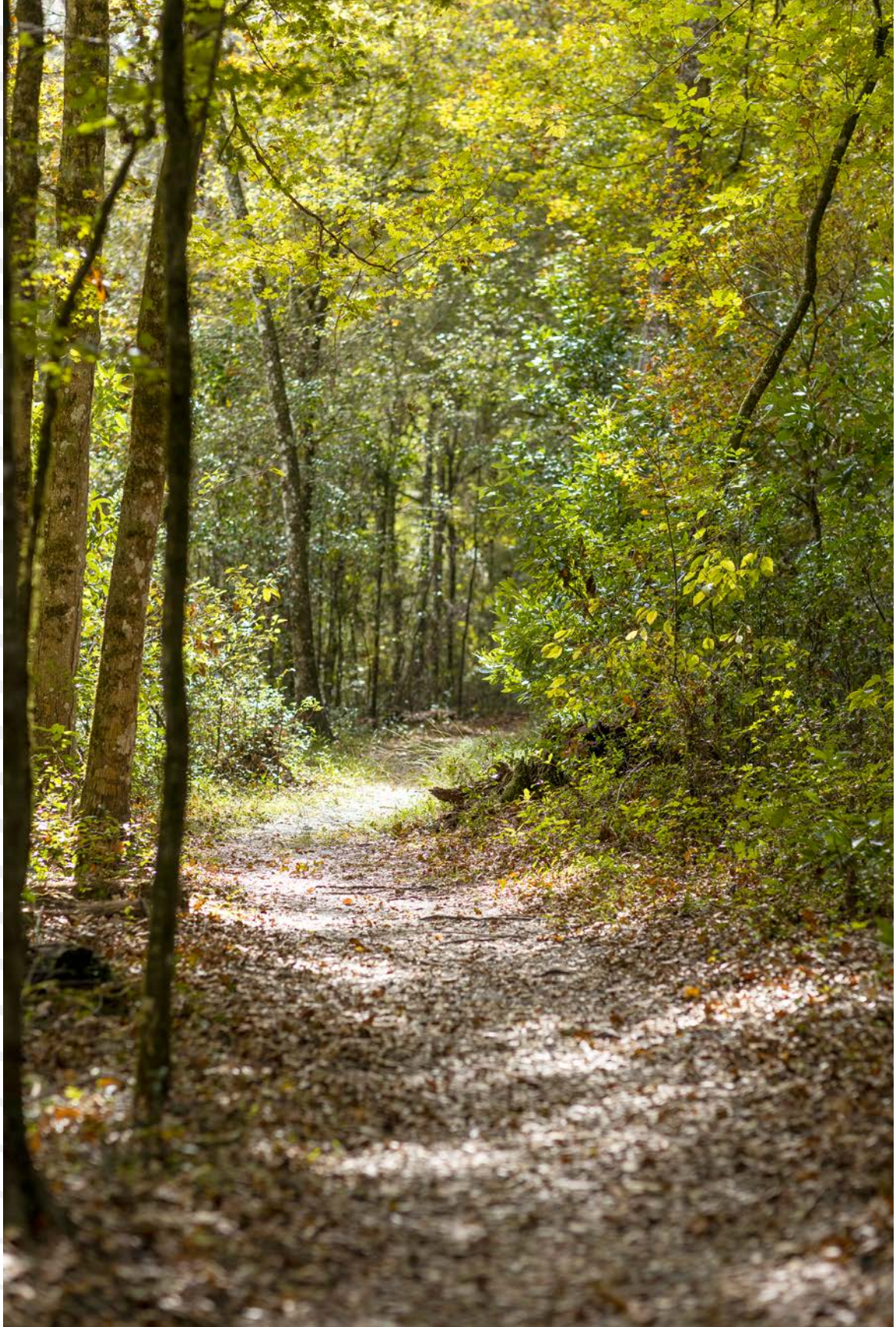


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## Message from the Dean for Extension

This document is a new pathway to guide Florida Cooperative Extension efforts for the near future, from 2024-2029. We're calling this a pathway rather than a roadmap because it is intended as an evolving set of trail-markers through a rapidly changing landscape. With new leadership at the University level and the onset of new information technology including artificial intelligence, we need a strategic plan of work that is more agile at adapting to change. Extension is in the process of re-examining our methods of collecting, analyzing and reporting data about our impacts and our responsiveness to the needs of Florida's residents. Nevertheless, this strategic plan must be rooted in our core values and in the priorities identified by stakeholders in our previous roadmap.

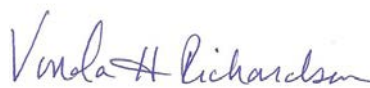
This pathway is the result of a process that began in 2020 with the formation of the Florida Cooperative Extension Strategic Plan Steering Committee. Over a period of months, the steering committee conducted engagement sessions that involved UF/IFAS and FAMU leadership, the Extension community, and key stakeholders throughout the state. In 2023, we brought on a team to fine-tune our initiatives and goals and conduct a program evaluation. The result is a pathway to excellence with priority initiatives that better align with the needs of Floridians today, and new organizational goals to address issues such as alleviating administrative burdens, improving our data infrastructure, increasing Extension's visibility, and strengthening the bonds between personnel across UF/IFAS and FAMU.

I wish to thank every person who participated in the process of putting this pathway document together. Your guidance, insight and feedback have been invaluable, and will continue to inform our progress. The work of Extension will continue to evolve, and our path will come into sharper focus as we move forward, but the core values, goals and initiatives outlined in this document will guide us for the foreseeable future.



**Andra D. Johnson**

*Dean for UF/IFAS Extension and  
Director of the Florida Cooperative  
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# Introduction

Florida Cooperative Extension provides Floridians with educational programs that support lifelong learning through the University of Florida (UF) and Florida A & M University (FAMU), the state's two land-grant institutions. Since the U.S. Congress established them through the Land Grant (Morrill) Acts of 1862 and 1890, UF/IFAS and FAMU have continuously extended knowledge to all of Florida's residents. Today, our Extension specialists and agents continue to translate the latest scientific research, information, and technology into applied and practical solutions for Florida residents. With offices located in each of Florida's 67 counties and partnerships between federal, state, and local governments, Florida Cooperative Extension creates learning opportunities that help adults and youth enhance their lives and communities.

Florida Cooperative Extension is amongst the largest systems in the U.S. Over our long history, Florida Cooperative Extension has adapted to meet the needs of all Floridians. Extension programming is designed to respond to the priority initiatives identified in this document, grouping them to increase their impact across the state. However, since Florida Cooperative Extension is a dynamic, adaptive organization that responds to the emerging needs of Floridians, there are and will continue to be unique programs that cannot be constrained to the existing structure and must be organized and managed in different ways to ensure that the invaluable work of our agents and specialists is accounted for and its value reported.

As we move into the future, Florida Cooperative Extension will continue to shape Florida's urban and rural communities using cutting-edge tools such as artificial intelligence to improve the lives of our stakeholders. As Floridians seek innovative solutions to complex problems such as the impacts of climate change, invasive species, and challenges within food systems and public health, Florida Cooperative Extension must have a clear pathway to follow.

This document is the result of a continuous process of development, and refinement of our mission. With input from citizens, stakeholders, faculty, staff and leaders, *Florida Cooperative Extension: Pathway to Creating Engagement Through Innovation & Excellence* will guide our efforts for the next five years. This document provides a mission, a vision, and a direction that embraces our core values and addresses priority initiatives, while affording flexibility of action. With the help of this new pathway, Florida Cooperative Extension will continue to create social, economic, and environmental opportunities for all Floridians to enhance their health, wealth and quality of life.











# Florida Cooperative Extension Service: Vision, Mission and Values

## **Vision:**

To be a leading provider of research-based solutions that empower individuals, families, and communities to improve their quality of life while creating a better tomorrow for all Floridians.

## **Mission:**

Florida Cooperative Extension engages with individuals, families and partners with communities to provide quality, relevant education and research-based expertise to foster healthy people, a resilient environment, and a strong economy.

## **Values:**

- 1. Integrity:** We serve all with mutual respect and honesty.
- 2. Excellence:** We provide relevant, high quality, unbiased, research-based educational programs that empower the people of Florida to improve their lives.
- 3. Responsiveness:** We provide timely solutions that are research-based, practical and relevant.
- 4. Lifelong Learning:** We value the personal development of our faculty, volunteers and the people we serve.
- 5. Access:** We support Florida's diverse population, and we ensure that our programs are accessible to all.









## Priority Initiatives

After analysis of the issues we heard from our stakeholders, the Florida Cooperative Extension Strategic Plan Steering Committee developed a set of priority initiatives to help focus educational programming and efforts. These initiatives have been largely preserved for this document, with significant changes to Initiative 4.

### **Initiative 1:** Increasing the sustainability, profitability, and competitiveness of agricultural and horticultural enterprises

Agriculture, horticulture, and related industries are vital components of Florida's economy. It is imperative that our agricultural and horticultural producers continue to be economically and environmentally sustainable, as these enterprises provide the products that increase our quality of life and provide access to safe and nutritious food.

#### **Sustainable agricultural and horticultural production**

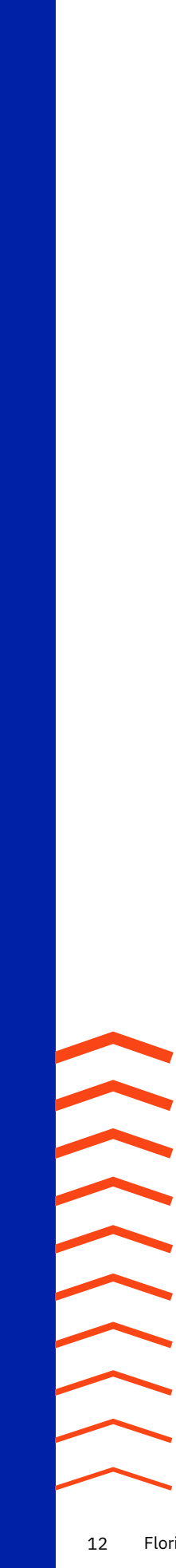
Florida's agriculture and horticulture producers face increasing challenges, including rapidly changing technologies, local-to-global markets, climate extremes, varying consumer demands, and increasing regulations.

Hence, Florida Cooperative Extension's educational programs must provide farmers, ranchers, and producers with the research-based knowledge they need to improve sustainability and profitability. Adoption of new technologies, new production practices, alternative crops, new marketing options, and a trained labor force will result in viable agricultural and horticultural production that continues to be sustainable and profitable and contributes to the state's economy.

#### **Food Systems, Food Safety, and Food Security**

The number of farm and food entrepreneurs is increasing in rural and urban communities. Most communities do not have established food systems that can deliver food products from the farms to the consumers. Food system development includes farmers' markets, community gardening, food hubs, processors, and wholesale/direct market development. Food system development also includes programs like Farm to School and Farm to Institution. Extension education programs that focus on farm food safety, beginning farmer and rancher classes, food manager certification, marketing/business planning, and consumer education are needed to enhance understanding of food systems in local communities and to ensure access to safe and affordable food.





## **Initiative 2:** Enhancing and protecting water quality, quantity, and supply

Water plays a critical role in sustaining Florida's environment and economic vitality, which are keys to a high quality of life. Florida must enhance and protect its domestic water supply while also meeting the water requirements of agriculture, horticulture, tourism, and industry, as well as the state's 22.6 million inhabitants and its natural systems, all without placing undue pressure on a finite resource.

### **Water Quality**

Water-quality problems have been associated with highly urbanized areas and with intense agricultural, horticultural, and industrial land uses. Florida's approach to water resource protection is centered on voluntary Best Management Practice (BMP) programs developed to meet water-quality standards. Florida Cooperative Extension educates producers, urban landscape managers, homeowners, county and city government officials, and others about the science that supports BMPs, how they enhance and protect water quality, and how to implement and maintain them. To enhance and protect water quality, Extension programming will continue to focus on creating behavior changes, such as installing improved management systems, using new procedures, and implementing innovative techniques that reduce pollution and ultimately result in more water bodies meeting their designated uses.

### **Water Quantity and Supply**

Water shortages are not uncommon in Florida. Compounding this problem is the state's projected population growth, which increase demand for water by as much as 150 gallons per day for each additional resident. In the long term, Florida will rely greatly on water use efficiency, conservation, desalination, and reclaimed water to assure a sufficient future water supply. Through current Extension efforts, major water users, including agricultural and horticultural irrigators, urban landscape managers, and homeowners learn how to use water efficiently through improved understanding of irrigation scheduling, low- volume irrigation systems, Florida-Friendly Landscaping™ (FFL) principles, and domestic water-saving techniques. To achieve the outcome of maintaining plentiful water for all, Extension programming must continue to provide educational programs that result in behavior change, including improved management and use of the latest technology to increase water conservation and decrease pressure on our resources.



### **Initiative 3:** Enhancing and conserving Florida's natural resources and environmental quality

Florida's natural resources and environment are vital to a strong economy and sustainable communities. The natural environment is directly connected to tourism, sustainable community development, human health, and jobs. Natural resources must be conserved and enhanced to develop and support a strong local economy. For communities to flourish, Florida must actively manage finite natural resources and develop strategies to minimize environmental impacts.

#### **Natural Resources**

Pressure on our natural resources varies widely across Florida. Pressures include the loss of natural areas, an increase in urban development, the use of energy and water resources, and growing impacts on marine ecosystems.

Florida Cooperative Extension helps communities respond to all of these challenges. Educational programs teach Floridians about natural resource conservation, public issues, and community resource efficiency. Programs in this area provide in-depth training for volunteers to assist in our educational efforts. Florida Extension must focus on resource conservation and efficiency, community engagement and development, and BMP implementation. By doing so, Floridians will acquire a better understanding of their individual and collective role in the state's effort to enhance and protect natural resources.

#### **Environmental Quality**

Local governments must provide leadership on the issues that balance the needs of the people and the economy with environmental safeguards. Florida Cooperative Extension provides science-based information for environmental quality issues involving water, soil, urban and agricultural lands, and aquatic systems. Extension programs must educate Florida's diverse audiences about ways to address environmental impacts and assist local communities in improving environmental quality.





#### **Initiative 4:** Creating sustainable urban and suburban communities

Currently, our clientele come from a continuum of communities ranging from rural to metropolitan areas. Rapid growth in population centers has resulted in loss of land available for agriculture and natural resources. In order to create a balance between population centers, agricultural land and natural areas, Extension must help to plan and maintain sustainable urban and suburban communities.

##### **Green Buildings and Environmental Landscape**

Promote the adoption of best design, construction, and management practices that measurably reduce energy and water consumption and environmental degradation in the built environment. These practices can help to create more sustainable communities that are better for the environment and for people.

##### **Urbanization and Pests**

Make Florida a world leader in training the structural pest control industry by delivering quality instruction using science-based information on current technologies, with concern for the environment and human health and well-being. This will help to ensure that structural pest control professionals are using the most effective and environmentally friendly pest control methods to overcome the negative effects that urbanization has on the natural control of some pests.

##### **Energy Conservation Practices and Efficiency Improvement**

Save energy by educating citizens and businesspeople about the social, economic and environmental effects of energy use in Florida and conservation practices they can adopt as an integral part of their everyday lives.

##### **Citizen Engagement**

Prepare and empower citizens to become trusted resources for promoting awareness, understanding, and respect of Florida's urbanizing landscape and natural world, the control of urban invasive species, and the adoption of Florida-Friendly Landscaping™ (FFL) practices in their communities. This will help enhance the sustainability of urban and suburban developments and ensure that Florida's water and wildlife are protected for future generations.

##### **Community Policy Development**

Improve community policy and management decision-making quality and capacity by educating professionals in the built environment, government, and industry about how to foster environmental, economic and social forces to shape sound foundations for sustainable change.



## **Initiative 5:** Improving individual, family and community health

The health and well-being of individuals, families, and communities is essential for a thriving workforce and strong economy. Florida Cooperative Extension provides research- and evidence-based programs and promotes strategies that empower Floridians to achieve their full health potential. Adopting healthier lifestyle behaviors; enjoying better mental health and well-being; increasing income, wealth, and employment; securing safe and stable housing; effectively managing financial resources; and having supportive social environments all contribute to individuals becoming healthier and more productive members of society. Our greatest potential for improving population health includes tailoring approaches to the unique needs of communities that experience the poorest health outcomes, addressing conditions beyond the individual that influence overall health and well-being, and working collectively with communities to ensure optimal health for all Floridians.

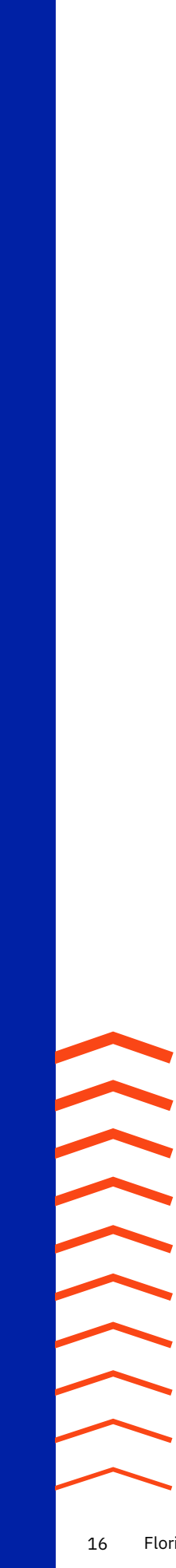
### **Healthy Eating, Food Access, and Lifestyle Behaviors**

Poor diet, limited availability of nutritious food, and physical inactivity are linked to the high prevalence of diet- and lifestyle-related chronic conditions, such as heart disease, cancer, and diabetes among Floridians. These chronic conditions affect length of life, influence quality of life, reduce worker productivity, and increase economic strain on individuals and families. Florida Cooperative Extension's programs increase awareness of health risks, promote nutrition literacy, and educate Floridians on how to manage and prevent chronic conditions through evidence-based lifestyle interventions. We also work in partnership with communities to create community-wide changes that increase access to healthier foods and health-related resources.

### **Food Safety and Food Entrepreneurship**

Emphasizing food safety through proper handling, processing, cooking, and storage is crucial to preventing foodborne illnesses, which can severely impact health. Food entrepreneurship also has far-reaching benefits—promoting innovation that drives new product development, creates jobs, promotes income and wealth, and addresses food challenges. Florida Cooperative Extension's programs offer comprehensive food safety training for a variety of individuals and food businesses, including educators, food handlers, and food processors. Food entrepreneurs who produce food in the home, in shared-use commercial kitchens and beyond, receive education and resources on food safety, labeling, food laws and regulations, business planning, and other topics.





### **Mental Health and Well-Being**

The environments in which people are born, grow, live, work, and age have a profound effect on mental health and well-being. Creating spaces where individuals and families feel safe to seek help and are equipped with coping strategies fosters adaptability. Florida Cooperative Extension's programs aim to improve the conditions and systems that influence mental health and well-being. Through educational campaigns, workshops, and programs, we address mental health concerns by raising awareness and facilitating early intervention. By focusing on these aspects of mental health, we also recognize the importance of supporting individuals, families, and communities in times of crisis. We help people navigate and access resources when preparing for and recovering from natural disasters. These programs ensure that Floridians can cope with and recover from adversities, improving overall health outcomes.

### **Housing and Financial Well-Being**

Affordable housing, proper home maintenance, and effective financial management are pressing challenges for Florida families, significantly influencing health outcomes. Many families lack access to the resources needed to secure healthy, stable housing, build wealth, and achieve long-term financial stability and resilience. Florida Cooperative Extension's educational programs equip Florida families with the tools, financial skills, and knowledge necessary to build financial capacity. We provide education on responsible renting, achieving homeownership, estate planning, maintaining healthy homes, and disaster preparedness and recovery. Additionally, we offer programs on budgeting, saving, credit management, and financial resource management to enhance overall financial well-being.

### **Healthy Relationships**

Floridians are experiencing increasing stressors at home, work, and school that impact their physical, behavioral, and mental health and well-being. The development of healthy and supportive intrapersonal, interpersonal, and familial relationships significantly increases physical, behavioral, and mental health across the lifespan. Therefore, strengthening these relationships is critical to improving overall health and well-being. Florida Cooperative Extension's family and relationship education programs promote healthy relationships and supportive environments and increase overall health and well-being. Our programs for couples, parents, children, youth, schools, and the workplace teach effective interaction strategies to reduce conflict and promote positive communication knowledge, skills, and competencies.



## **Initiative 6:** Strengthening urban and rural community resources and economic development

Challenges are abundant in Florida's rural and urban areas. Florida Cooperative Extension's Community Resource Development (CRD) program seeks to engage and empower communities to bring about change through economic development, capacity building, public policy education, and civic engagement.

### **Economic Development**

Economic conditions have increased attention on unemployment, underemployment, job loss, business loss, stagnant incomes, and other associated economic impacts throughout the state. Even in strong economic times, these issues are at the top of concerns expressed by Floridians. CRD programs help counties, cities, and individuals understand their local economies and assess the impacts of potential economic loss or development. Additionally, through the CRD program, Extension can aid individuals, entrepreneurs, local governments, existing businesses, and others with training for business start-ups, retention, and/or expansion.

### **Community-Based Capacity Building**

Issues such as land use and growth and the interface between rural/urban and incorporated/ unincorporated areas and climate change will continue to challenge Florida's residents, local governments, and communities.

Florida Extension programs will focus on teaching alternative strategies that can be used to address these issues and to build leadership in our communities to direct developments.

### **Public Policy Education and Civic Engagement**

Florida Cooperative Extension must be among the leaders in helping counties and communities engage citizens in determining their communities' strengths, challenges, opportunities, and vision that will lead to increased community vitality. This program will continue to educate not just local elected decision makers about their duties, roles, responsibilities, and how to make public policy choices, but all who wish to engage in the process of community building. Expanding partnerships with statewide organizations that represent elected officials on policy alternatives will be critical to the success of this program.







## **Initiative 7:** Preparing youth to be responsible citizens and productive members of the workforce

Today's youth are tomorrow's citizens, consumers, parents, and leaders. Florida Cooperative Extension's 4-H Youth Development Program offers age-appropriate, learn-by-doing educational opportunities that complement K–12 education to develop knowledge, life skills, and leadership abilities in Florida's youth. These qualities empower youth to positively influence their communities and become contributing members of society.

### **Youth Development**

Community members, leaders, and local officials are very concerned about opportunities for youth in their communities. Florida 4-H programs must continue to work to supplement formal education, enhance life skills development, and prepare youth for tomorrow's workforce. Participation in 4-H clubs provides the positive, supportive environment youth need to succeed. School enrichment, day and residential camps, and other types of programs introduce youth to longer-term learning experiences. Through participation in 4-H clubs and other educational activities, efforts will focus on meeting the highest-priority educational needs: helping youth develop science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) literacy; helping youth develop an interest in learning that will equip them to succeed in a rapidly changing society and global economy; teaching youth responsibility, developing their ability to become leaders, and engaging them in their communities; helping youth develop healthy lifestyles; and encouraging youth to get outdoors to appreciate nature, agriculture, and natural resources.

### **Developing Organizational and Volunteer Systems to Support Youth Development**

Research shows that the continuous presence of caring adults is critical to achieving positive youth development.

With limited staff, volunteers can assist in reaching more youth. Florida 4-H is committed to developing youth and adult volunteers, valuing inclusiveness, and increasing the diversity of program participants. Extension will provide training needed for volunteers to serve youth and their communities. In addition, Extension will work to provide the support needed for volunteer-led organizations to be effective in helping the 4-H Youth Development Program meet its mission and goals. As an integral part of the land-grant mission, the 4-H program is relevant to diverse youth, achieves positive youth development, and, in the process, also provides opportunities for adults to develop their own leadership and workforce skills. Because 4-H is the youth development program of the Florida Cooperative Extension Service, UF and FAMU Extension faculty and staff will contribute their expertise to 4-H to achieve Extension's youth development goals.







# **Organizational Goals**

## **Goal 1:** Quality of Educational Delivery

Meet the relevant, identified needs of patrons and associates through evidence-based programs that utilize the best science available and a broad array of proven, effective learner-centered teaching strategies to advance agriculture, natural resources, youth and community-related sciences, and address Florida's economic, social, and environmental issues.

### **Objectives**

- 1.** Identify current and emerging needs of Floridians that are relevant to Extension's work.

#### **Action Items:**

- i. Conduct systematic needs assessments across all programmatic areas in all counties.
- ii. Ensure that representative samples participate in the needs assessments.

- 2.** Ensure that existing and new programs are responsive to identified, relevant current and emerging needs and challenges of Florida's communities, industries, and natural resources.

#### **Action Items:**

- i. Establish county-level procedures to assess the responsiveness of existing and new programs to the identified needs, generate recommendations for required changes in existing and new programs to enhance their responsiveness to the identified needs, and certify program's relevancy.
- ii. Provide training and development opportunities for Extension faculty and staff in program development.

- 3.** Enhance the quality, consistency, and accessibility of Extension programs by ensuring they align with current research, utilize sound educational methods, and effectively leverage online resources.

#### **Action Items:**

- i. Involve state specialists in regularly assessing and certifying the technical accuracy and instructional value of both existing and new programs. This should include generating recommendations for necessary updates to enhance the technical and instructional quality of the programs.
- ii. Offer ongoing training and development for Extension faculty and staff, focusing on subject matter content, instructional design, teaching methods, written communication, and virtual instructional design and delivery. This aims to continually improve the quality of program delivery and content relevance.

- iii. Foster enhanced collaboration between agents and specialists to ensure a cohesive approach in program development and delivery. Utilize various educational delivery methods to improve accessibility and engagement for diverse audiences.
- iv. Coordinate statewide content development for EDIS publications and Extension Online Learning courses. Create district-level virtual programming teams, provide them with technical support and resources, and establish an award mechanism to recognize high-quality online educational contributions.

## **Goal 2:** Visibility and Engagement

Ensure Extension's programming and products are broadly available to our clientele and actively engage new and existing audiences and partners.

### **Objectives**

- 1.** Enhance the awareness and appreciation of Extension among Floridians.

#### **Action Items:**

- i. Proactively promote Extension's work and impacts through select success stories that are strategically disseminated.
- ii. Provide tools and trainings to simplify and enhance the process of writing and disseminating success stories.
- iii. Develop and implement comprehensive marketing strategies focused on expanding the reach and engagement of Extension's online resources. This includes investing in paid advertising and forming media partnerships to target new audiences, enhance follower base, drive increased traffic to our online platforms, and boost visibility among county and state officials.
- iv. Leverage the communication networks of collaborators and partners.

- 2.** Ensure the participation of key audiences in Extension's programming.

#### **Action Items:**

- i. Increase diversity and ensure parity of Extension clientele participants.
- ii. Disseminate available programs and products to relevant audiences as identified through the needs assessment exercises.
- iii. Establish a systematic mechanism to monitor and evaluate participation.



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3. Expand and strengthen Florida Cooperative Extension’s collaborations and partnerships.

**Action Items:**

- i. Provide training to Extension faculty and staff on the establishment, management, and participation in productive collaborations and partnerships.
  - ii. Develop resources to help Extension faculty and staff establish and manage productive collaborations and partnerships.
  - iii. Create and foster new and existing collaborations and partnerships within and outside UF.
  - iv. Establish a systematic mechanism to evaluate existing and new collaborations and partnerships.
4. Consolidate UF/IFAS Engagement as a strategic partner to connect non-IFAS units within UF with the extended communities served by Extension.

**Action Items:**

- i. Raise awareness across FAMU units, non-IFAS UF units, and all 67 county government offices about the existence and role of UF/IFAS Engagement and the mechanisms to collaborate with it.
- ii. Establish communication channels to identify, across county governments, relevant needs not currently targeted through existing Extension Initiatives.
- iii. Establish communication channels to identify, across FAMU units and non-IFAS UF units, opportunities to extend evidence-based information and practice to address identified or emerging needs not currently targeted by Existing Extension Initiatives.
- iv. Communicate to county governments, FAMU units, and non-IFAS UF units the array of needs and opportunities that exist, as well as past experiences of successful collaborations.
- v. Provide support to establish the required outreach programs connecting county governments with FAMU units and/or non-IFAS units.

### **Goal 3:** Accountability and Impact

Produce positive, measurable changes in agriculture, natural resources, youth and community-related sciences, and on Florida's economic, social, and environmental issues through impactful programs that are systematically monitored and evaluated.

#### **Objectives**

##### **1.** Enhance reporting systems and data quality.

###### **Action Items:**

- i. Establish a web-based secure platform for real-time reporting and visualization of monitoring and evaluation data.
- ii. Implement standardized procedures to assess and maintain the quality of the data.
- iii. Seamlessly integrate data across reporting databases (e.g., Workload) by user, county, district, program, priority work groups (PWGs), Initiative, and key performance indicators (KPIs).
- iv. Develop and deliver training and resources to enhance the ability of Extension agents, specialists, and staff to collect and report high quality data.

##### **2.** Simplify and standardize the collection of monitoring and evaluation data across Extension programs.

###### **Action Items:**

- i. Create/update simple standardized instruments that can be used by Extension agents, specialists, and staff to collect monitoring and evaluation data for their programs.
- ii. Focus data collection on the relevant key performance indicators (KPIs) for each program.
- iii. Make available ready-to-use tools and how-to guides that Extension agents, specialists, and staff can utilize to analyze evaluation data.
- iv. Provide Initiative-level evaluation expertise to support the development and implementation of standardized tools and procedures for monitoring and evaluation.
- v. Communicate clear expectations and requirements for monitoring and evaluation across all levels of the organization.

##### **3.** Improve utilization of monitoring and evaluation data.

###### **Action Items:**

- i. Engage Extension agents, specialists, and researchers from relevant disciplines in the translation of medium-term outcomes (i.e., changes in behavior) into credible broader economic, environmental, and social impacts using sound and rigorous methodologies.

- ii. Utilize the documented outcomes and impacts to inform key action items and strategic planning processes across all goals of the organization.

#### **Goal 4:** Employee's Professional Growth, Satisfaction, and Retention

Make Florida Cooperative Extension an organization recognized for having a highly trained, professional, committed, and satisfied workforce.

#### **Objectives**

1. Improve recruitment and onboarding of Extension agents and specialists in order to attract top talent who are diverse, qualified, and motivated.

##### **Action Items:**


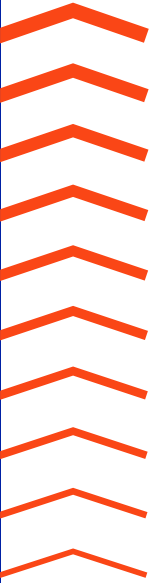
- i. Ensure that job descriptions align with programming priorities, strategically address emerging needs, and include the necessary soft skills.
  - ii. Implement recruitment strategies committed to diversity and provide a qualified applicant pool.
  - iii. Promote Extension as a career to young people enrolled in 4-H and at Land Grant Universities, including at the University of Florida and Florida A&M University (both within and outside of CALS).
  - iv. Provide internship programs within both UF and FAMU to place students in county offices.
  - v. Develop opportunities for shadowing experiences that allow new agents and specialists to shadow experienced agents, and specialists. This shadowing should involve agents shadowing specialists and vice versa.
2. Build Extension professionals' competence to develop and deliver high-quality educational programs and products by providing ongoing professional development opportunities relevant to all career stages.

##### **Action items:**

- i. Identify core competencies by programmatic area and within the overall Extension framework.
- ii. Develop in-service trainings (ISTs) to engage faculty over their career lifespan focused on improving core competencies and addressing skill gaps.
- iii. Restructure new agent training utilizing feedback from early career agents and their experience.
- iv. Establish a systematic and strategic mentoring program for county agents and state specialists.





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3. Maintain high levels of satisfaction and retention among Extension staff, county agents, and state specialists.

**Action items:**

- i. Conduct annual employee climate surveys and utilize the findings to improve processes and policies with the goal of increasing the employees' sense of belonging, engagement, and recognition.
- ii. Facilitate discussions with county governments, department chairs, center directors, district Extension directors, and county Extension directors regarding Extension programming priorities and the implementation of consistent policies to supervise and evaluate county agents and state specialists.

**Goal 5: Operational Effectiveness**

Implement our processes with the utmost efficiency with a continuous focus on organizational improvement.

**Objectives**

1. Streamline procedures to enhance efficiency and reduce administrative burdens.

**Action Items:**

- i. Analyze organizational processes regularly and utilize the findings to streamline procedures and create or update policies as needed.
- ii. Establish and/or revise standard operating procedures (SOPs) with a focus on simplifying processes and eliminating redundancies.
- iii. Create a repository of resources and how-to guides to support operational knowledge base.
- iv. Establish mechanisms to allow all employees to provide feedback aimed at enhancing administrative processes.
- v. Reward/recognize employee's initiatives that improve the efficiency of the organization.

**2.** Create models for revenue enhancement.

**Action Items:**

- i. Develop a mechanism for business plan for large revenue generating programs.
- ii. Establish a policy for how revenue enhancement should be implemented statewide based on program to establish parity across all revenue generating programs.
- iii. Update trainings and resources (e.g., event budgeting tool) and communicate about them regularly.
- iv. Facilitate inclusion of county agents as Co-Principal Investigators or key personnel on grants with state specialists, along with appropriate resource allocation.
- v. Strengthen existing stakeholder partnerships and explore new opportunities for revenue enhancement.

**3.** Support decision-making processes with the best available data on organizational effectiveness.

**Action Items:**

- i. Integrate monitoring and evaluation data across all Florida Cooperative Extension's goals and objectives.



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