Oregon State University Extension Metro Initiative

*Extension Metro Model: A Work in Progress*

**OSU Extension Mission:**
The Oregon State University Extension Service engages the people of Oregon with research-based knowledge and education that strengthens communities and economies, sustains natural resources, and promotes healthy families and individuals.

**Metro Vision:**
OSU Extension partners in the Portland metropolitan region to strengthen the economic, environmental, and social wellbeing of urban residents and their communities. As a national urban Extension model, this effort is replicated in cities and metropolitan regions across the U.S. *(Note: In this case “Metro” is defined as the Oregon counties that make up and surround Portland.)*

**Elements of the Extension Metro Model:**

**Phase I: Build the Foundation**

A. *Context for Programs*—Addressing high priority metro area issues in which there is significant scholarship (i.e., University and other public and/or private research bases) and which is inclusive of community partners. Extension’s Metro programs:

1. Engage the community in ongoing needs identification.
2. Prioritize and focus community needs.
3. Align with identified priorities, using market analysis to help set priorities.
4. Address niche markets for Extension and avoid duplicating efforts.
5. Respond to complex issues and seek expertise from multiple disciplines.
6. Reflect the diverse cultural issues that are found in urban environments.
7. Reflect scholarship and knowledge bases that exist at the University or with partners or that can be created.
8. Position Extension as an integral part of the University’s metro vision—providing coordination, linkages, and leadership.
9. Encourage broad University involvement from colleges and departments across the campus.
10. Build on partnerships, utilizing comparative advantages of multiple institutions and organizations.
11. Show potential for success and provide opportunity for achieving significant impact.
12. Support risk-taking and encourage trying something different.
13. Explore the non-traditional (e.g., audiences, methods, roles) while staying true to Extension’s values and mission.
14. Tackle issues where Extension has capacity or can build capacity.
15. Link to the Extension strategic plan.
B. **Partnerships**—New opportunities for internal and external partners which include funding, program delivery, geographic regions, content, etc. Extension’s metro partnerships:

1. Include opportunities for both program development and delivery, bringing additional expertise to the table.
2. Form funding alliances with governments, universities, community colleges, foundations, corporations/private businesses, and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) that share common goals and objectives.
3. Include government entities such as universities, cities, counties, metro, state, and federal that prefer intergovernmental agreements to guide the work.
4. Include corporate and NGOs that prefer contracts for service to guide the work.
5. Involve multi-county, multidiscipline collaborations.
6. Engage all colleges and units of the University.
7. Share goals, desired outcomes, and credit among the partners.
8. Target volunteers in multiple roles including episodic short-term and long-term roles.

**Phase II: Frame the Program**

A. **Engagement with Learners**—Engages and empowers the community to identify and solve its problems. Community members, in addition to faculty and staff, are actively involved in the solutions. Extension’s metro engagement commitment addresses:

1. How (instructional design):
   i. Learners identify and assess needs.
   ii. Emphasizes co-learning.
   iii. Frames issues and ideas through multiple lenses.
   iv. Establishes learning environments for exchanging ideas.
   v. Champions action research/discovery.
   vi. Acknowledges that learning is incremental.

2. Who (target audiences):
   i. Professionals who provide direct service to the public; Extension provides professional development and technical assistance.
   ii. Government staff—city, county, metro area, state, and federal.
   iii. Business and corporate managers and owners.
   iv. Community and non-governmental organizations.
B. Program Delivery—Audiences and delivery techniques differ in urban areas. The higher and more dense the population the greater the balance may shift from direct client service delivery to education for the direct service provider.

1. The urban audiences Extension serves are expected to pass their new knowledge and skills on to others within their community, work, or profession. While there are exceptions to this expectation, the emphasize is less on direct service delivery and more on:
   i. Consulting services and technical assistance.
   ii. Training of direct service providers.
   iii. Tailored professional improvement and development.
   iv. Preparing Extension volunteer middle-managers.

2. Instructional delivery and teaching enhanced learning and communication techniques are mixed and include:
   i. Multi-media.
   ii. Mass media.
   iii. On-line and other distance delivered instruction.
   iv. Pod-casting.
   v. Vod-casting
   vi. Contemporary technologies appropriate to the learners.

C. Desired Outcomes and Evaluation—Driven by the logic model framework, outcomes are based on the scholarship of engagement which is incorporated into teaching, research, and outreach work. Outcomes and evaluation methods (summative as well as formative) are shared with and by our partners. Desired outcomes and evaluation characteristics of Extension’s metro programs include:

1. Measurable objectives.
2. Clearly defined outcomes.
3. Plans for evaluating programs to capture outcomes.
4. Tangible, attainable deliverables.
5. A system for capturing and reporting impact from indirect delivery.
6. Contributions to scholarship and knowledge base.
7. Extension faculty and programs that are visible and are viewed as a valued resource.
Phase III: Establish Sustainable Resources

A. Funding—All new program initiatives will have a sound business plan which includes multiple funding streams that support sustainability. There will be internal mechanisms to fund and manage projects. Funding options for Extension’s metro programs include:

1. Sustainable funding models.
2. Self supporting philosophy.
3. Fee for service (direct and indirect cost recovery; market rate).
5. Grants and contracts.
6. Product sales (market rate with income returned to the developer).
7. Public, private and NGO finding partnerships that share common goals and objectives.
8. Staff development for assisting faculty, staff and administrators to become confident and savvy entrepreneurs.

B. Flexible Staffing—A project driven hiring model will be employed which consists of a greater mix of faculty and staff (tenured and tenure track faculty, contract faculty, instructors, professional faculty, and classified employees). Extension metro staffing:

1. Reflects the diverse cultures and languages represented by residents.
2. Creates a mix of discipline-, pedagogy-, process-, and management-oriented faculty and staff.
3. Screens and hires professionals with specific expertise.
4. Purchases skills rather than whole people when appropriate.
5. Includes project contracts which may be annual and/or rolling multi-year contracts, and sub-contracts for employees.
6. Utilizes cross-county, cross-state, and cross-institution employees.
7. Includes collaborating with other Higher Ed institutions for needed expertise.

C. Community Integration—Offices and programs share physical location with various partners . . . location counts! Community integration for Extension metro is characterized by:

1. A central, visible physical location with multiple satellite office sites.
2. Strong, clear University and Extension visibility and identity.
3. Easy access to a virtual presence as well as a physical location.
4. Communities of practice, communities of interest, and communities of place.

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