

Response from Beverly Sparks at Georgia Cooperative Extension

Provided by Bob Guinn

1. Are there legislative requirements in your state that require counties to help fund extension and/or extension programs? I am not aware of any legislative requirements. UGA Cooperative Extension has had a minimum funding level for county contribution (per agent position) for many years, but this is a UGA policy, not legislative requirement.
2. Is there an assigned specific level of funding by each county or does it vary and depend on the county and its' needs from extension? UGA minimum contribution from county include office, office operating, travel and minimum contribution toward each agent's salary. The minimum as of this writing is 12K per agent position (plus benefits costs of county portion of salary). We have many counties that go beyond the minimum and pay up to 50% of agent's salary. We have a few 100% county funded agent positions.
3. Who makes that determination and how does the level of funding get determined? Our district directors negotiate with the county commissioners to determine level of funding from the county. County Extension Coordinators are expected to keep commissioners involved in the local Extension programs and keep commissioners knowledgeable on the impact/importance of the Extension work at local and state levels.
4. What are the major obstacles that you experience in securing funds at the County level? Tight county budgets; new commissioners that do not understand/appreciate Extension; keeping local advisory/advocates in place that can speak for Extension.

5. In your jurisdiction, at the County level, who/what are the key funding sources that you pursue? County/Municipality Government? School District ? Public Utilities? Public-Private Partnerships? Associations? Grant Writing? Private Donations? Etc.? **Most of our funding at local level comes from county government. Second most important partner at local level are Boards of Education. We receive limited funding from United Way, Water Department, Recreation Departments. Agents have also become more interested in grants and securing private donations for local programs.**

6. What accountability is required for ensuring that funds are appropriately used by the State Extension service. Do the counties hold you accountable for use of the funds? Do you provide feedback to the counties on use of the funds? **Our District Directors work with county offices and our CAES Business office to ensure appropriate use of local funds. Our local offices are required to report (through county voucher reports) to state level. We also monitor counties and enforce policy/procedure in County Funding Management /Policy Guide.**

7. What happens to ensure that funding is requested/provided for the next budget cycle. **District Directors communicate with County Extension Coordinators to ensure annual budget meetings/reviews are complete and new funding is in place. This is usually based on the county's funding cycle.**

8. Is there a review process at the state level to ensure that funds are being requested for appropriate activities that support extension. **Each year the CAES administrative team (Dean and three Associate Deans) put together a list of high priority needs for the college. These needs are presented to key stakeholders and legislators prior to our legislative session. The list includes needs for Extension, research and our teaching program. The Extension needs include faculty lines at the county level.**

9. Annually, do you experience a shifting in funding sources based on changes in the economic, environmental and political climate? How do you stay tuned in to those shifting funding sources? We have certainly seen a shift from state funding to more local funding in the past five years. The importance of having county commissioners and strong advocates for Extension at the local level is very important to securing local funding as well as state funding.

10. Who is responsible and what resources do you use to initiate fundraising at the County level? Extension staff? Volunteers? Advisory Board members? Etc.? The County Extension coordinator as well as the agents in the office are all involved in fundraising for the overall program as well as their individual programs . They frequently involve volunteers and advisory board members to provide leadership/assist with fundraising.

11. Do you conduct fundraising year round or are their specific time frames in which you pursue fund raising? This would vary by county. Most counties are doing some sort of fundraising year round.

12. What marketing tools/materials/techniques do you use in your fundraising initiatives? What works well for you in messaging your needs for funding support?

First and foremost we place a high value on establishing relationships with funding partners and work to keep them informed on the importance and impact of our programs. We collect and publish impact data and also use those that benefit for our programs as advocates/spokespersons for us.