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Kristina D. Hains
University of Kentucky, k.hains@uky.edu

Jeff Young
University of Kentucky

Addie Reinhard
University of Kentucky, addie.reinhard@uky.edu

Bryan J. Hains
University of Kentucky, bryan.hains@uky.edu

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Reconsidering Extension: Defining Urban Extension in Kentucky

Kristina D. Hains
University of Kentucky

Jeff Young
University of Kentucky Cooperative Extension

Addie Reinhard
Bryan J. Hains
University of Kentucky

As the vast majority of the population in the United States shifts to dwelling within large population centers, it is necessary to examine the responsibility and role that Cooperative Extension has to serve urban communities. Throughout its history, the land-grant system, through Cooperative Extension, has demonstrated the ability to impact the lives of individual citizens and communities positively. Within this theoretical discussion, we illuminate Cooperative Extension's responsibility to serve urban communities in the 21st Century and highlight essential milestones in the development of urban Extension throughout the past 100 years. Also, we explore the foundations and relevance of recently developed urban Extension frameworks to the practice of urban Extension and outline a process utilized to define urban for Cooperative Extension within {southern state}. Finally, we conclude by examining examples of urban Cooperative Extension initiatives and discussing their implications in broader social, environmental, and health settings.

Keywords: Urban Extension, urban clusters, urban programming, urban engagement

Introduction

The Cooperative Extension System, hereafter referred to as Extension, administered through our nation's land-grant universities, originated with the passage of the *Smith-Lever Act of 1914* (Hillison, 1996; Olson, 2013). Fundamentally, Extension was created to educate and inform community members regarding novel research in the areas of agriculture, home economics, leadership, 4-H, economic development, and other related subjects. As one of the most innovative educational models ever developed, Extension has long served as a community pillar, delivering research-based information generated within the land-grant university system into local communities, ultimately improving the quality of life for those served.

Direct correspondence to Kristina Hains at k.hains@uky.edu

The role of Extension has shifted over time. Initially, the focus of Extension was on disseminating knowledge to rural populations, but with the major shift in population from rural to urban areas in the past 100 years, Extension has adapted to the needs of serving urban populations as well (Warner et al., 2017). The need for Extension to expand programming and services offered in urban locales has never been greater. As of 2010, the U.S. Census Bureau (2019a) reported that 80.7% of the U.S. population lived in urban (metropolitan) areas, and the urban population growth trend is expected to continue.

Urban areas have unique needs and considerations that have not been accounted for in the traditional rural Extension model. As such, modifications to programmatic delivery and how Extension operates in urban environments must be considered as researchers have documented that traditional rural programming is not as effective with urban audiences (Ruemennapp, 2017; Warner et al., 2017). A primary difference between rural and urban audiences is that Extension professionals serving urban communities work with large and diverse populations who may not be aware of the role of Extension within the community. This creates unique challenges not accounted for by rural Extension programming, who have been served extensively by Extension (Paulsen, 1973).

Furthermore, some issues appear to be of greater concern to urban populations than rural populations, such as affordable housing and poverty (Pew Research Center, 2018). Fehlis (1992) argued that while rural and urban communities may face similar issues such as water quality and waste management, the underlying causes of these issues differ within an urban context, creating a unique need for different types and contexts of Extension resources and support. Recently, there has been more focus placed on the unique needs of urban populations and how to better serve urban audiences through Extension.

As urban populations grow, so do urban legislative representation in local, state, and federal governments. Historically, Extension has depended upon the support of locally elected officials to sustain the county presence and focus available resources on issues of greatest need. However, Warner et al. (1996) reported that awareness and appreciation for Extension and its services were decreasing among the population who elected these officials, thereby emphasizing the difference in understanding of Extension between rural and urban citizens.

Warner et al. (2017) noted that today's urban populations are an untapped, varied, and especially salient sector of potential Extension clientele. Because the United States population has shifted into a more urban landscape, those who represent Extension must focus attention on the necessity for "urban" Extension and its ability to positively impact the lives of individuals. Therefore, the purpose of this article is to provide a thorough discussion on the history of urban Extension within the United States and to outline an approach to defining urban Extension areas at the state level through a discussion of urban counties within Kentucky.

Theoretical Discussion

Defining Urban and the Urban Context

The U.S. Census Bureau (2019a) identified urban areas as densely developed territories and defined explicitly “Urbanized Areas” as geographic areas of 50,000 or more people and “Urban Clusters” as geographic areas of 2,500 to 50,000 people. All other areas are considered rural. The U.S. Department of Agriculture Economic Research Service (2019) developed Urban Influence Codes to distinguish metropolitan and nonmetropolitan areas based on population size and proximity to metro and micropolitan areas. These definitions are important to note in the context of social migrations within the United States.

In the late 1800s to early 1900s, the population of the United States shifted from predominantly rural to urban, and by 1920, more than half of the population lived in urban areas (U.S. Census Bureau, 2019b). It is important to note that while there are varying definitions of urban, it is apparent that a majority of the U.S. population lives in more populous areas.

Part of defining the meaning behind urban is also describing the urban context, or what makes the urban audience and environment unique. According to Ruemenapp (2017), urban areas differ from rural areas based on “the combination of social, demographic, political, and environmental factors” (p. 12). Ruemenapp goes on to say urban areas also contain a diverse range of cultural norms and beliefs. There is greater ethnic diversity in urban areas than in rural areas, and the growth of diversity continues to climb at higher rates within metropolitan areas than in nonmetropolitan areas (Lee & Hughes, 2015). In addition, urban areas are densely populated, leading to the unique need of serving a larger number of individuals per intervention than in rural communities.

Needs between rural and urban audiences are often similar; however, the context is different between the two audiences (Fehlis, 1992). Drug addiction is seen as a significant problem in both urban and rural settings, but urban residents were more concerned about crime, the quality of public schools, affordable housing, and poverty than their rural counterparts (Pew Research Center, 2018). To discover the needs of a specific urban area, it is necessary to also understand the political, economic, and geographic factors of that area (Ruemenapp, 2017).

History of Urban Extension

After the passing of the Morrill Act of 1862, which created the land-grant university system and the Smith-Lever Act of 1914, establishing the Cooperative Extension Services, little research was conducted on the role of Extension in urban areas until the mid-1900s. The Association of Land-Grant Colleges and Universities (ALGCU) Committee on Problems of Urban Educational Extension (ALGCU, 1954) noted this shift in population from rural to urban areas and surveyed Extension professionals to determine what services were currently being offered to urban

populations. The ALGCU determined that Extension in most states served urban groups when requested, but it was problematic for some agencies due to the lack of sufficient financial resources, difficulty in adapting traditional Extension programming to meet the needs of the urban population, and lack of trained staff to work with urban populations. The ALGCU found that only a few states had designated personnel for serving urban populations. This report demonstrated that while Extension agents were indeed serving urban populations, there were many difficulties in providing quality programs targeted at the unique needs of this population (ALGCU, 1954).

In 1966, the Ford Foundation published a report on their experiences in early urban extension efforts recognizing the traditional role of Extension was not sufficient in serving the rapidly growing and changing urban population. The Ford Foundation reported that they recognized the need for urban Extension efforts and offered grants for programs addressing the unique issues of urban populations, including low-income families lacking education, health care, and housing, and for the improvement of problems in the physical environment in urban areas (Ford Foundation, 1966). The initial grants provided the foundation for some of the first formal urban Extension programs. In 1968, a joint USDA and National Association of State Universities and Land-Grant Colleges Extension Study Committee (1968) made similar recommendations for Extension to increase its commitment to urban areas and increase the range of its programming to more adequately address the broad range of social and economic problems of the nation.

A survey of state Extension administrators conducted by Paulson (1973) found that 98% of state Extension administrators who participated in this survey fully or partially validated the effectiveness of the “Extension Model” and methodology in addressing urban issues. Paulson also identified existing barriers that limited Extension’s ability to make an effective impact on these issues. He noted the following:

- 1) Personnel were not oriented toward urban problems,
- 2) Unwillingness to adapt organizationally to meet urban needs,
- 3) The delivery system needs major adjustment to reach urban audiences,
- 4) The research base for building urban models was very fragmented,
- 5) Heterogeneity of urban population,
- 6) The public image of Extension was mainly agricultural, and
- 7) Sheer volume of the urban audience made it difficult for Extension to address given limited resources (Paulson, 1973).

An examination of these seven challenges draws a dramatic contrast to rural communities where Extension has demonstrated its ability to successfully address communities’ needs and issues.

What followed in the next thirty years was a broader expansion of Extension services to address changing societal issues to better serve the urban population. Program funding was applied to a broader variety of urban programming, including urban gardening and nutrition education

(Steele, 1981). In Texas, an urban initiative was implemented to address the growing needs of urban populations and focused on developing urban faculty, creating educational programs targeted at the urban population, and involving urban leaders in program development (Fehlis, 1992). As Extension in the urban sector began to rise in popularity, a National Extension Urban Task Force was developed to focus on urban Extension efforts (CSREES, 1996). In this report, CSREES defined goals of urban Extension, including

- 1) Expanding resources to support urban Extension;
- 2) Developing partnerships with agencies, groups, and organizations sharing a standard urban vision;
- 3) Increasing Extension professionals and organization's urban knowledge base;
- 4) Raising awareness of urban issues and defining the role of Extension; and
- 5) Advocating for urban policy issues through educating and informing key decision-makers.

While these goals were clearly communicated, the current National Urban Extension Leaders (NUEL), a group of administrators working in metropolitan areas in the United States, criticized the recommendations (NUEL, 2015), and they were never fully implemented. This led to continual experimentation of models by state Extension systems.

Frameworks for Urban Extension

In recent years, frameworks for urban Extension have appeared in the literature. Through a historical literature review analysis, NUEL identified four themes of focus for urban Extension: positioning, programs, personnel, and partnerships (Fox et al., 2017). The NUEL framework provided literature-based recommendations relevant to the future of urban Extension. Fox et al. summarized this framework stating Extension needs to be positioned by communicating the role and value of Extension at various levels, and programs need to be research-based and consider the specific needs of urban areas. The framework also suggested that urban Extension personnel should be culturally competent, skilled employees that are trusted resources within communities, and partnerships should be made with organizations and key decision-makers to share resources for collective impact (Fox et al., 2017). The NUEL (2015) framework suggested a call to action that Extension needed a significant presence in cities and metropolitan areas, providing culturally appropriate, research-based, community-centered educational initiatives to ensure the future of Extension.

Apparent from this framework, the role of Extension is changing within the United States and adapting to the growing needs of the urban population. To achieve the call to action in the changing landscape of Extension, NUEL (2015) outlined six goals for the National Urban Extension Initiative:

- 1) Create a substantial presence in cities and metropolitan areas and ensure a viable future by responding to the demographic trend of urbanization.
- 2) Create a wide range of partnerships/collaborations at a multitude of levels with organizations where roles are distinct, yet missions are aligned, and where visibility, credit, and resources are shared.
- 3) Develop programming and other urban Extension initiatives that are transdisciplinary in nature, meet the needs of urban residents, and address the issues of urban communities.
- 4) Create authentic professional development activities to address the needs of extension personnel in urban areas.
- 5) Examine how current funding structures are utilized and how existing funding lines can be transformed or created from idea generation, dialogue, and fresh innovations to ensure they are more inclusive and complimentary.
- 6) Empower urban advocates internally, within such groups as ECOP, USDA-NIFA, and NEDA, and externally that support NUEL's acknowledged purpose of advancing the strategic importance and long-term value of urban Extension activities by being relevant locally, responsive statewide, and recognized nationally (NUEL, 2019, pp. 3–7).

Another recent urban Extension framework was developed several years ago in Florida. Warner et al. (2017) from the University of Florida Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences (UF/IFAS) formed a task force of Extension professionals to develop an urban Extension strategic plan using a modified Delphi and strategic adaptive management format. The UF/IFAS task force also developed a mission statement for urban Extension stating, “to develop knowledge in human, natural, and agricultural resources and to make that knowledge accessible in metropolitan regions to sustain and enhance the quality of human life” (Warner et al., 2017, p. 4). Some of the urban Extension goals described by Warner et al. included supporting the positive development of urban youth, strengthening urban community resources, empowering urban populations to build healthy lives and achieve socioeconomic success, protecting urban water, and conserving energy and Florida's urban natural resources and environment. Using a modified Delphi process, Warner et al. developed a strategic plan with 29 essential elements, each with key outcomes grouped into four frameworks: institutional framework, Extension resources framework, partnership framework, and implementation framework. The framework developed by these researchers added to the continued development of urban Extension programming across the United States.

Current Urban Extension Initiatives

As previously mentioned, while some underlying aspects and the overall process by which urban Extension is facilitated are fundamentally different than rural Extension, the broad programmatic foci of both rural and urban Extension work are quite similar (Fehlis, 1992). To illustrate, one

current focus of urban Extension is to create programs that enhance agriculture in urban areas. There have also been many examples of positive youth development adapted to suit the needs of urban populations. Some Extension professionals have used the traditional concepts of Extension programming to serve urban populations with success, while others have departed from the traditional model by adopting innovative approaches.

For urban agriculture Extension efforts, it has been suggested that programs should be created to address market gardening, caring for urban livestock, soil testing, business management and marketing, community development, and educating nonfarmers, informing them of the critical role agriculture plays in urban areas (Reynolds, 2011). Reynolds suggested that some groups may need more help when developing these efforts than others because of economic status, level of education, access to technology, or inequalities. In one example, California Extension agents created initiatives focused on agriculture and incorporated existing Extension programs (e.g., 4-H) to target urban audiences. California's urban agriculture Extension efforts consisted of five full-time personnel employed by University of California Cooperative Extension (UCCE) with some portion of their work dedicated to urban agriculture, including nutrition, leadership, youth development, support for horticultural production, and natural resource management (Diekmann et al., 2017). Many of these urban Extension efforts focus on urban agriculture and food systems, including on-farm food safety training programs and *Master Gardener* programs.

There are many examples of youth urban Extension efforts in the literature. University of Connecticut Extension developed Tools for Healthy Living to educate urban youth on how to foster a healthy home environment and advocate for healthy homes (Bothell et al., 2017). Cornell University Cooperative Extension in New York City implemented several strategies for working within urban areas, including a partnership with *Juntos*, a 4-H program for Latino students (Tiffany, 2017). The *Stronger Kids, Stronger Communities* program was created to serve urban Latino youth. (Bovitz et al., 2018). Through the implementation of this program, Extension professionals discovered that standard 4-H programming created unique challenges, such as logistical issues and language and cultural differences. Bovitz et al. (2018) discovered that through building trust and key partnerships within the community and altering traditional approaches to 4-H programming, they were better able to meet the needs of the Latino youth population. It is important to note that while traditional youth 4-H programming can often be adapted to urban settings, changes may need to be made in the delivery and implementation of these programs to best suit the needs of urban youth.

Some urban Extension initiatives have continued to utilize traditional Extension concepts and applications but apply these concepts to contemporary urban issues. Obropta (2017) of Rutgers University described creating an urban Extension program to address combined sewer overflow issues with green infrastructure by developing a community-based green infrastructure initiative. Obropta detailed the program development, which included educating the public on the issue, providing technical support to community members advocating for change to community

leaders, and educating municipal officials, environmental commissioners, and public works directors. Obropta (2017) concluded that using a traditional Extension model of community engagement successfully generated funding and created an impactful program in an urban area.

Other urban Extension efforts are departing from the traditional Extension program-based model and changing to a “project-based” model. Washington State University created a Metropolitan Center for Applied Research and Extension, a subject-matter center, that conducts time-bound, extramurally-funded, deliverable project-based Extension (as opposed to the traditional program-based model) to strengthen communities through innovating, collaborating, conducting action-oriented research, and Extension outreach (Gaolach et al., 2017). Gaolach et al. described the center’s primary purposes as strengthening the local communities in Puget Sound through research, innovation, and outreach that sustains local economics and supports government and nonprofit organizations in the region.

It is apparent there are a wide variety of foci and methods for outreach within current urban Extension efforts. Some current urban Extension efforts focus more on providing traditional youth development or agriculture Extension services tailored to the needs of the urban population. Other efforts are applying concepts from traditional Extension to create programs to impact urban environmental issues. Diverging from the traditional Extension programming, other Extension professionals have created innovative “project-based” models to serve the needs of the urban population. Because of the wide variety of issues that the urban landscape presents, it will be difficult for urban Extension professionals to provide adequate outreach for all concerns within urban populations. In addition, while traditional programming may be effectively applied within an urban landscape, these programs have often required adaptation to meet the needs of a large and diverse urban population. The needs of one urban area may differ substantially from the needs of another urban area; thus, it is essential for urban Extension professionals to conduct a thorough needs assessment of the specific urban area they are serving.

Urban Extension and the “Bigger Picture”

At its core, urban Extension programming can make social impacts. One of the focus areas for the NUEL is to strengthen communities through enhancing the quality of life for community residents (NUEL, n.d.). By promoting urban Extension efforts and promoting community-strengthening initiatives, urban Extension programs can strengthen urban communities. Demonstrating this, the social impacts that were most frequently documented in the literature included youth development opportunities, improving land access, building social capital and enhancing community development, and creating opportunities for cross-generational and cross-cultural interactions (Surls et al., 2015).

It has been suggested that Extension plays a critical role in promoting the health of the U.S. population through research and educational programs that highlight nutrition and exercise (Henning et al., 2014). Programs like *Tools for Healthy Living* that provide health education for

urban youth can promote health; this particular program increased the youth's understanding of environmental health hazards and how to decrease these risks within their homes (Bothell et al., 2017). Surls et al. (2015) noted that health impacts were commonly reported in the urban agriculture literature, and some urban agriculture programs have led to increased consumption of fruits and vegetables, improved food access and security, and improvements to health and well-being. With many preventable diseases present in the U.S. population, urban Extension becomes vital in educating the public on healthy practices.

With an increasing world population and environmental changes occurring, it has been suggested that Extension plays an important role within outreach and engagement in environmental protection. NUEL suggested that protecting the environment by sharing scientific knowledge and technical support to urban communities is one of the key focus areas for urban Extension efforts (NUEL, n.d.). In addition, Henning et al. (2014) suggested that Extension must, considering the issue of climate change, promote the preservation and protection of natural resources through education. UF/IFAS Extension emphasized the importance of natural resources in their urban Extension mission statement and created goals to enhance and protect urban water, enhance and conserve urban natural resources and environmental quality, and conserve energy in urban regions (Warner et al., 2017). Promoting environmental conservation is important within urban Extension practice because through education of the public on these crucial issues, Extension can make significant impacts on the environment.

Several examples of urban Extension programs that can impact the environment, improve public health, enrich youth, and strengthen communities have been reported, yet there are few findings within the literature that provide evaluative data to support these claims. One area for improvement is evaluating and reporting the impact of urban Extension initiatives within urban communities. If we can better understand if and how these initiatives impact urban communities, Extension professionals will be better able to provide evidence-based impactful initiatives.

How Kentucky Approached Defining Urban

As mentioned, a primary purpose of this article was to outline an approach to defining urban Extension areas at the state level. The following discussion will center on the process of defining urban, which will then be demonstrated through the application of this process within the state of Kentucky.

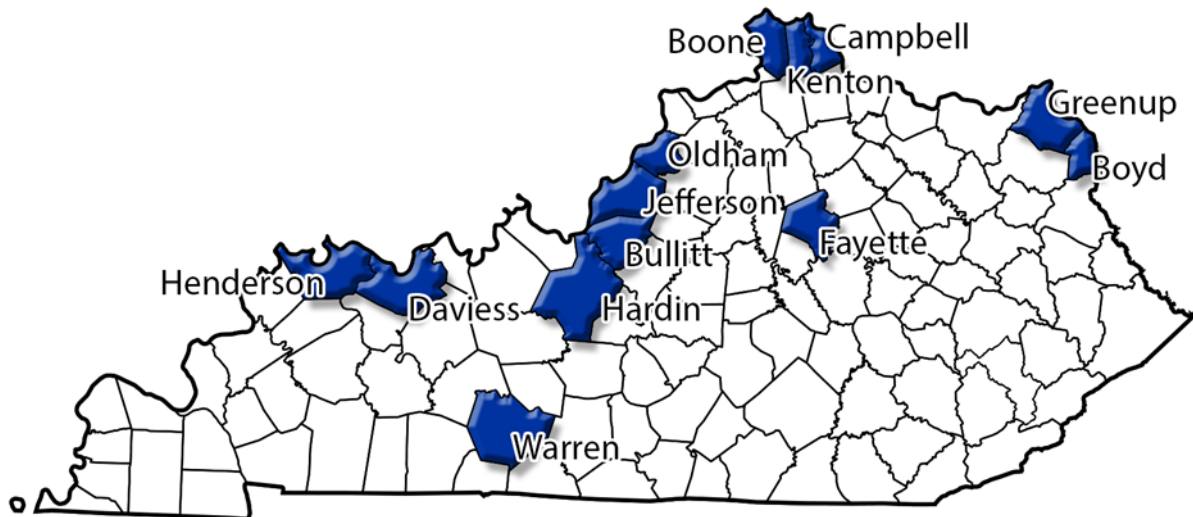
Kentucky Cooperative Extension agents reported a unique need for promoting initiatives within urban areas across the commonwealth. Early in the planning process, Extension leaders within Kentucky wanted to identify counties to implement urban initiatives and training for Extension professionals working with urban populations. The goal was to identify the counties that were considered the most urban within the state. Several techniques and approaches were taken to classify the most urban counties, but the following approach utilizing U.S. Census data was the most effective at generating a small inclusive list of the core urban counties across the state.

The Process of Defining Urban

The U.S. Census Bureau (2019a) identified urban areas as densely developed territories of residential, commercial, and nonresidential land settled by at least 2,500 people. The Census Bureau further classified urban areas as “Urbanized Areas,” geographic areas of 50,000 or more people, and “Urban Clusters,” geographic areas of 2,500 to 50,000 people.

To establish which counties in Kentucky were considered most urban, data was gathered from the 2010 U.S. Census that provided percentages of county populations living in urban areas, Urbanized Areas, Urban Clusters, and rural areas. Because Urbanized Areas by definition contain more than 50,000 people in a geographic area, these areas are considered the most urban. The counties in Kentucky were analyzed, and those with a majority of their population living in urbanized areas (>50%) were considered the most urban counties in Kentucky. These counties include Jefferson, Fayette, Kenton, Boone, Campbell, Oldham, Boyd, Daviess, Bullitt, Warren, Hardin, Henderson, and Greenup (see Figure 1).

Figure 1. Kentucky Counties Defined as Urban by Kentucky Cooperative Extension



This technique gathered the most inclusive set of counties considered most urban in Kentucky. If a list was created of the most urban counties of the state solely based on the population size of the largest town or city within a county, key urban counties might be excluded. Many counties in large metropolitan areas may not contain one large city but are made up of multiple smaller towns and cities directly adjacent to each other and densely populated. For example, Campbell County, Kentucky, is one of the counties included within the urban area of Cincinnati, OH-KY-IN. This county consists of multiple smaller towns of 5,000-20,000 people. If only counties with the state’s largest cities were included in Urban Extension efforts, this county would be excluded because it does not contain one large city. However, when evaluating the Census data, Campbell County contains over 90,000 people, with over 80% of the population living in an Urbanized Area; therefore, this county is considered one of the most urban counties of Kentucky.

Conclusions and Implications for Extension

As the population of the United States has shifted from rural to urban, unique community issues have arisen. Extension professionals have long served the needs of rural communities, but in the mid to late-1900s, there was a shift to recognize the needs of urban communities. Advances have been made in the field of urban Extension, especially in the past ten years with the development of frameworks to guide urban Extension initiatives and an increase in the number and type of programs and projects developed for urban populations.

While many advances have been made in the field of urban Extension, there is still much to be done. The populations within today's urban areas are often remarkably diverse; with this diversity comes the need for culturally relevant engagement and programming. Moreover, how is Extension handling recruiting and marketing in urban areas? One important way to reach new and diverse audiences is to employ individuals that come from those specific communities. Looking forward, we recommend that Extension focus more heavily on recruiting future Extension agents from the same urban communities in which it strives to serve.

Research is another vital area that needs focus to continue making advances in urban Extension. There have been few publications describing specific urban Extension programs or projects that have had their efficacy and outcomes evaluated with sound research practices. It is important to note that many urban Extension programs were presented in the literature, but few discussed the evaluation and efficacy of these programs (Diekmann et al., 2011; Gaolach et al., 2017; Reynolds, 2011; Tiffany, 2017). The dissemination of evaluative information on urban Extension programs, including successful and unsuccessful aspects, could help provide the foundation for other research-based urban Extension programs. The practice of urban Extension can make a positive impact on broader societal issues, but urban Extension programming must be relevant to the needs of a specific urban community and research-based to make the most significant impact. By using the frameworks suggested in the literature (Fox et al., 2017; NUEL, 2015; Warner et al., 2017) and assessing the needs of a local urban community, urban Extension programs and projects can be created and evaluated to help serve the unique needs of urban populations.

Regardless of how Extension administration identifies urban areas within their own state, a further consideration should be how Extension agents self-identify. Extension agents within more urbanized areas often operate differently; for example, due to larger populations within the urban setting, urban Extension agents may consider themselves more conveners of various groups rather than those conveying expert knowledge for the county. Having administration united with on-the-ground educators allows for these agents to be valued according to the actual work they are doing within their communities and allows for more consistency in how urban areas and issues are valued, addressed, and resolved.

But will past and present work to enhance the relevancy of Extension in urban communities have the desired impact? Young and Vavrina (2014) noted a 1988 survey by Clemson University

Extension of the South Carolina legislature, which found only 11% understood Extension to have an educational focus (Miller, 1988). What's more, a 1995 national survey by Warner et al. (1996) found that while public consciousness regarding Extension has remained high, utilization of Extension services continues to decline. This study also showed lower usage among those in the Northeast and West, those in urban communities, younger age groups, and those who had lower education and income levels.

Loibl et al. (2010) conducted a follow-up to the work by Warner et al. (1996) and found that only 20% of respondents were familiar with Extension programs and services. As in the 1996 nationwide survey, awareness was lower among younger respondents, those with lower incomes, and those in more urban areas (Young & Vavrina, 2014). There continues to not only be a need for additional urban Extension efforts to be developed, but energy should also be put into clearly communicating and marketing the positive impact Extension has within urban settings.

If Extension is to gain understanding and appreciation for its urban work, Young and Jones (2017) noted that a "cookie-cutter approach to what has been sufficient in rural communities will not suffice in urban counties" (p. 155) because there are so many more people to be served with different issues to be addressed. In addition, while the overall curricular foci of Extension programs in rural and urban areas can be similar, the process of facilitating and overall structure of urban programming must be different.

For Extension agents working in more urban locales, convening rather than serving as the community expert is one way to address the varied needs of urban areas. Other underlying issues – such as the diverse cultures found within many urban communities, an increased number of community organizations addressing similar concerns, and a lack of Extension recognition – are all potential issues unique to urban areas which should be considered when developing appropriate, innovative urban programming.

Warner et al. (2017) reported that it is important to understand that urban Extension and rural Extension are not discrete systems. Fundamentally, both settings are slightly different; their unique audiences, issues, and contexts should be considered when developing programming. Nonetheless, as Warner et al. (2017) concluded, "Extension must serve audiences of both types to uphold the land-grant mission" (p. 1). Part of the challenge of adding urban Extension efforts within states is the lack of a consistent definition of urban. While defining urban areas seems quite straightforward, the individual states clearly understand how these areas operate within their own state. With additional states choosing to define their own urban areas, more consistent efforts can be developed and tailored to that state's urban needs. The method of defining the most urban counties within a state using Census Bureau data, as presented in this manuscript, could provide a framework for other states trying to define the counties they wish to target for their urban Extension efforts.

The last decade has seen an effort by Extension professionals to focus on urban issues. The work of NUEL (2019) is important, and the *National Framework for Urban Extension* should be adapted for use in every state. By universally applying this framework, a consistent understanding of the Extension mission and the impacts of local educators, agents, and state-level specialists will become better appreciated in our urban communities.

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Dr. Kristina Hains is the co-director of the Community Innovation Lab, Cooperative Extension Specialist, and Associate Professor of Leadership Development in the Department of Community & Leadership Development at the University of Kentucky. Her outreach and research foci include urban Extension, community leadership, and engagement.

Dr. Jeff Young is currently the Director for Urban Extension for the University of Kentucky Cooperative Extension Service. His previous service includes Director of County Operations, District Director, and over twenty years as an Extension 4-H Youth Development Agent.

Dr. Addie Reinhard is a veterinarian and graduate student in the Department of Community and Leadership Development at the University of Kentucky. As a graduate research assistant for the Community Innovation Lab, she is currently researching innovations within communities of practice.

Dr. Bryan Hains is an Associate Professor of Community Education and Engagement in the Department of Community & Leadership Development at the University of Kentucky. He is the founder and co-director of the Community Innovation Lab and focuses on community education and development in his research.