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Program Building Committee's

CENTRAL PLANNING GROUP

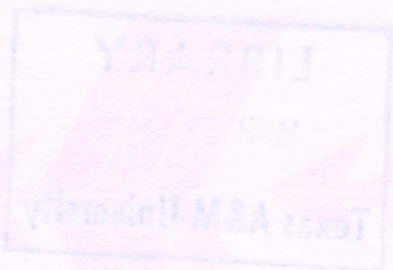


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Program Building Committee's **CENTRAL PLANNING GROUP**

This leaflet describes the role of the central planning group in the program development process. The central planning group is the highest leadership level in the program building operation. Actions by this body determine the organization's success from year to year.

This information outlines two structures for county program building committees and explains the responsibilities of the central planning group.

PROGRAM BUILDING COMMITTEE

The county program building committee works with Extension agents to plan, implement, evaluate and interpret accomplishments of Extension's educational program. Effectiveness of a county's Extension program depends on involvement of local citizens in program development.

The basic units of the county program building committee are:

- **CENTRAL PLANNING GROUP** (executive committee or overall committee — see pages 4-5)
- **PROGRAM AREA COMMITTEES** (sometimes called subcommittees)*

The central planning group is the part of the program building organization which gives overall leadership, direction and coordination. This group's role and responsibilities are similar to a corporation's board of directors or to a school board making decisions to guide an educational program.

* The role of program area committees is explained in detail in Extension publication B-1364, *Program Area Committees*.

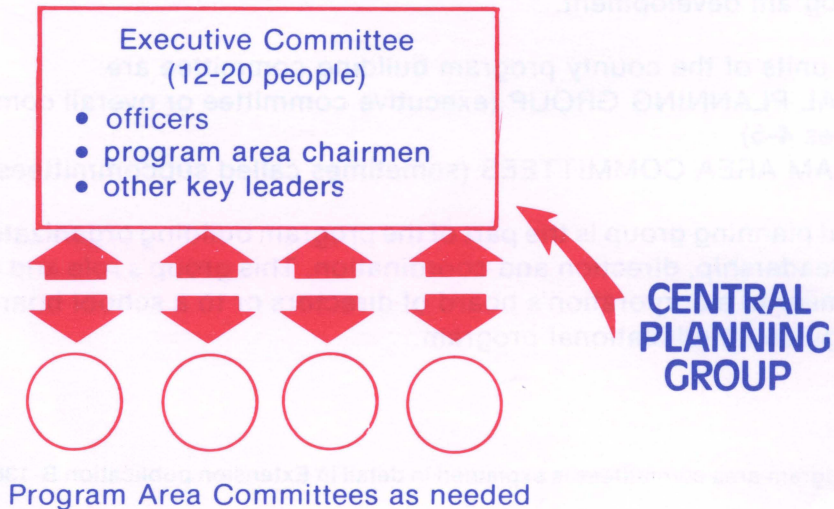
STRUCTURES

One structure for the program building committee involves forming an executive committee to serve as the central planning group. The group's membership ranges from 12 to 20 people serving as officers, program area committee chairmen and other key leaders.

Program area committee members do not serve on the central planning group, the executive committee of this structure, but are members of the overall program building committee.

The central planning group has leadership and coordination responsibilities, while program area committees implement specific educational activities in agriculture, family living, 4-H and youth and community development.

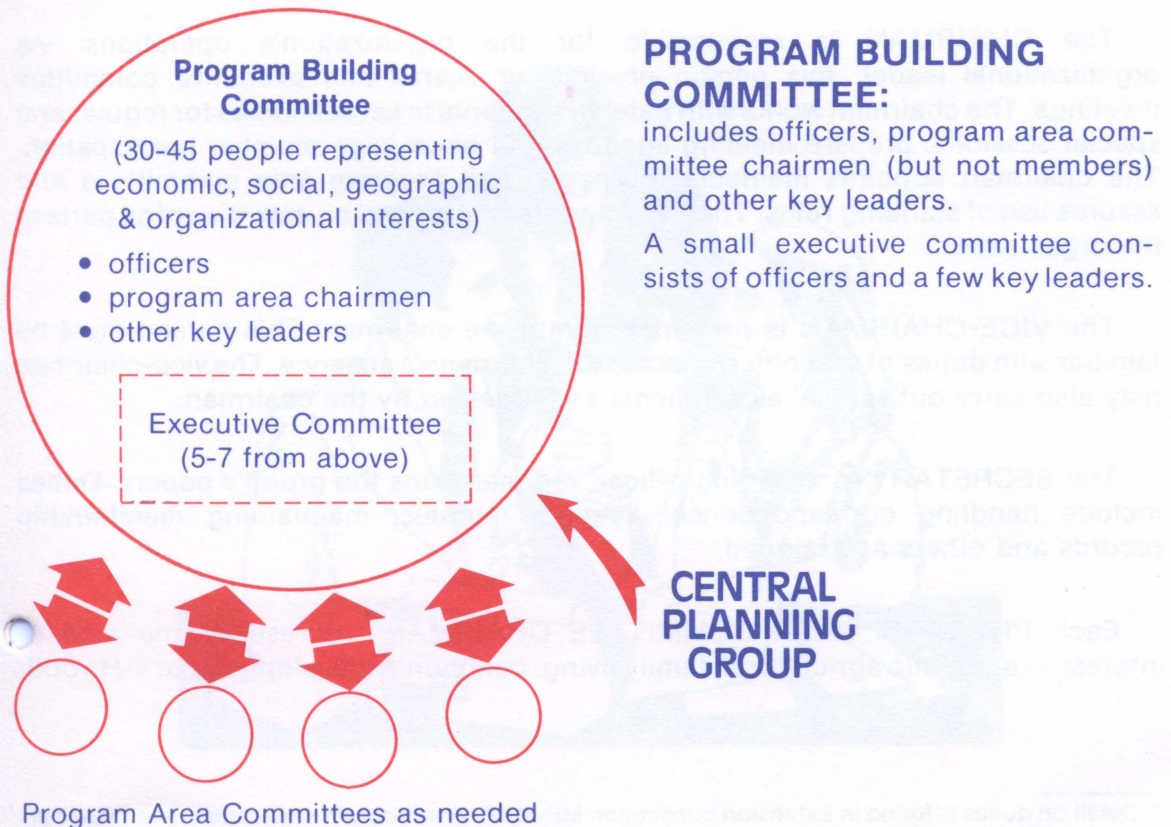
PROGRAM BUILDING COMMITTEE: includes executive committee and all members of program area committees.



Another organizational structure entails a large county committee that, as a whole, serves as the central planning group. These 30 to 45 committee members represent various social, geographic and economic interests as well as relevant county organizations. Within this body are officers, chairmen of all program area committees and other key leaders. Program area committee members usually are not part of the central planning group (or overall program building committee).

In this structure, the executive committee is small, five to seven people, and consists of elected officers and a few county-community leaders.

Here too, the central planning group leads and coordinates for the whole organization, while program area committees implement educational activities in the major program categories.



DUTIES OF OFFICERS AND MEMBERS

Membership of the central planning group in both structures is composed of:

- OFFICERS (program building organization chairman, vice-chairman, secretary, others as needed — treasurer or reporter, for example)
- PROGRAM AREA COMMITTEE CHAIRMEN
- OTHER KEY LEADERS

The CHAIRMAN is responsible for the organization's operations. As organizational leader this person presides at overall and executive committee meetings. The chairman works with Extension agents to set schedules for regular and special sessions, prepare meeting agendas and encourage member participation. The chairman appoints members to special and program area committees and assures use of standing rules. The chairman stays informed on activities of all parts of the organization.

The VICE-CHAIRMAN is principal aide to the chairman. This person must be familiar with duties of that office to act in the chairman's absence. The vice-chairman may also carry out special assignments as requested by the chairman.

The SECRETARY is recording officer and maintains the group's papers. Duties include handling correspondence, keeping minutes, maintaining membership records and others as assigned.

Each PROGRAM AREA COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN* represents one area of interest — a specific agricultural, family living, community development or 4-H youth

* Detail on duties is found in Extension publication MP-1247, *The Program Area Committee Chairman*.

committee within the program building structure. These people provide an important link between program area committees and the central planning group.

Other KEY LEADERS represent the county's major economic, geographic, social and organizational composition. They inform the central planning group of programming needs while conveying the purpose and activities of the program building organization to people in their communities.

Proper representation and rotation on committees and in offices strengthens Extension's educational program and broadens it to meet public interest.



ROLE OF THE CENTRAL PLANNING GROUP — FIVE PRIMARY FUNCTIONS

- **Maintain a strong organization**

The program building organization delivers the county's Extension educational program to the people. The purpose is not to maintain an organization just to have one, but to insure that structure and membership are adequate to plan, carry out and evaluate the educational program for people it is designed to help.

Organizational maintenance includes determining the number and types of program area committees needed. Committees divide or redefine their scope as situations change. When a need no longer exists, affected program area committees may dissolve or merge with others. The central planning group decides what program area committees are required to conduct educational programs in areas of greatest need.

A well-run organization applies standing rules or bylaws to its internal operations. In consultation with Extension agents, the central planning group develops standing rules, updates them and enforces them in decision making.

Organizational maintenance requires a schedule. With a timetable the central planning group can anticipate its meeting dates, major

REVIEW STRUCTURE

USE STANDING RULES

DEVELOP A TIMETABLE

activities and annual meetings. Program area committees and agents can plan educational events and promotion of them. The schedule will prevent time conflicts and concentration of events.

Program area committees and the central planning group need members and chairmen to plan, conduct and evaluate. New members vitalize and strengthen the organization while veteran members offer continuity and experience. Selection methods vary among counties, but members are chosen by the committee (and appointed by the chairman), not by agents. The central planning group is responsible for member and officer rotation consistent with its standing rules.

- **Keep educational program current**

The overall educational program must be kept current to use opportunities and serve people's needs. Rapid change in communities and the state requires review of present programs and anticipation of new possibilities.

The central planning group is aware of activities in all parts of the organization. It tries to be aware of community changes, problems and trends which can affect the Extension program. Program area committee chairmen regularly report efforts, plans and accomplishments at central planning group meetings. Another way to

ROTATE LEADERS

STAY INFORMED

stay informed is to invite local resource people to give short talks at central planning group meetings. Examples of local resource people are county and city officials, doctors, bankers, school personnel, state legislators and agency representatives.

In determining whether a program is current, the central planning group conducts studies or surveys to pinpoint problems and opportunities. It judges present educational programs according to their success in furnishing solutions and alternatives. If needs are not being met, additions or changes are made. Reviewing program priorities annually is an important function of the central planning group.

In addition to annual program review, long-range planning guides the direction and scope of educational activity. Since not all programs can be implemented at the same time, the long-range plan establishes priority goals and work. The central planning group produces a document, *The Long-Range Extension Program*, that describes the county program areas, highlights concerns and establishes long-range goals that committees and agents try to accomplish over a period of years.

When need for a new program area is established, the next step is to assign a group to plan an action program. The central planning group, assisted by agents and resource people, decides whether this need can be directed to an existing program area committee, a special committee, or to a new program area committee. It also decides

REVIEW PRIORITIES

MAKE LONG-RANGE PLAN

DELEGATE RESPONSIBILITY

how much priority the new program area has in relation to established programs.

Occasionally, program opportunities of a special nature become available either from outside sources or because of unexpected critical needs. Because the Extension Service is a public agency financed by federal, state and county funds, it is responsible for certain assigned educational programs initiated by legislative or executive action.

Examples of programs initiated at the national level are those designed to improve conditions of low-income people. Through Congressional legislation, Extension at state and county levels develops educational programs to assist low-income families and individuals. Programs for older adults and minority audiences are initiated at the state level.

With these special programs county committees may need to use additional program publicity, materials, resource people and occasionally financial assistance. In considering special program opportunities, the central planning group selects ways to use or adapt these for maximum local benefit.

UTILIZE SPECIAL PROGRAMS

- **Support program area committees**

As the program building organization's overall leadership body, the central planning group is in a

position to assist program area committees (sub-committees). This group can see opportunities to coordinate efforts, as well as lend additional support.

Two or more groups working together can accomplish more than the same groups working separately on related ideas, each unaware of the other's activity. Because program area committee chairmen are on the central planning group, they are in a position to coordinate committee work and better utilize resource people, develop major or in-depth programs and achieve more results.

An example of this coordination is beef and family living committees jointly conducting a short course for consumers which features beef products, costs and preparation ideas. Another example is 4-H and community development committees working together on a neighborhood improvement project involving beautification and landscape.

The central planning group assists committees that need help by obtaining financial assistance and resource people, suggesting ideas and in many other ways. Members of the central planning group can promote events by encouraging individuals and groups to take part.

COORDINATE COMMITTEES

PROVIDE RESOURCES

- **Interpret Extension and program building to others**

Interpreting the program and organization includes two parts: explanation within the program building organization and informing the public. An organization must not assume that its members or the public understands its objectives and activities.

Each part of the organization must understand and appreciate what other segments do. Activities of a specific area committee will be more successful if other program area committees support, help publicize and actively participate in them.

Effective exchange of ideas and communication are achieved within the organization at the annual meeting of the overall county program building committee. At this meeting, the central planning group enables each program area committee to tell the organization what it has done and what is planned. Posters, slide presentations and written or verbal reports by the chairmen are effective reporting methods.

A second interpretation task is informing key groups, individuals and the public of program building activities. The central planning group is responsible for gaining public support to maintain contact with other community groups and to make the educational program more effective and well known.

COMMUNICATE WITHIN

GET PUBLIC SUPPORT



Distribution of *The Long-Range Extension Program* promotes understanding of the organization and its functions. This document contains useful information of interest to county groups and individuals whose support is essential to program success.

When *The Long-Range Extension Program* is distributed, the central planning group arranges contacts. It decides who should receive copies, and divides the task of distribution and explanation. An open house, Extension Information Day and short programs given by members to community organizations will help gain support among groups with similar goals. This requires careful and complete planning by the group and Extension agents.

• Evaluate progress

The central planning group evaluates program accomplishments and the program building organization. The annual meeting is an excellent time for this.

At the annual meeting, each program area committee reports its achievements. This enables the central planning group to determine if combined results are reaching established program goals.

The organization also evaluates itself. The structure should be staffed with competent local leadership and possess appropriate and sufficient program area committees needed to fulfill its responsibilities.

CHECK
PROGRAM RESULTS

EVALUATE
STRUCTURE

CHALLENGE

The program building organization, Extension agents and other resource people, separately and as a team, develop programs to enhance the quality of life for people in a county. The central planning group has an important leadership task as it carries out the five primary program building functions. An effective committee guided by its central planning group will provide educational programs which fulfill the needs of people they are designed to serve.

CHALLENGE

Educational programs conducted by the Texas Agricultural Extension Service serve people of all ages regardless of socioeconomic level, race, color, sex, religion or national origin.

Cooperative Extension Work in Agriculture and Home Economics, The Texas A&M University System and the United States Department of Agriculture cooperating. Distributed in furtherance of the Acts of Congress of May 8, 1914, as amended, and June 30, 1914.