

Frequently asked questions

Additional background on the nEXT Generation project:

Why is Cooperative Extension developing a new model for the future?

The State of Wisconsin's 2015-2017 biennial budget reduced University of Wisconsin System funding by \$250 million. These state funds are called general purpose revenue, or GPR. Cooperative Extension's portion of the GPR cut is \$3.6 million each year, or 8.3 percent of its ongoing general state funding.

We must address our budget cuts, but we're also viewing this as an opportunity to develop a more efficient and sustainable organization, and an opportunity to design modern, flexible models for Cooperative Extension education and research that remain focused on meeting local needs. With that in mind, the project to reorganize Cooperative Extension has been named *nEXT Generation*.

Can other UW-Extension or UW System funding offset these cuts?

Cuts in state general purpose revenue (or GPR) affect every UW program supported by GPR, meaning other programs are making their own reductions. Likewise, programs supported by other revenue sources (like tuition) do not need to make reductions.

Reducing expenses to match permanent reductions in GPR, combined with transformative change, is critical for the sustainability of Cooperative Extension. Other approaches would just delay changes that are ultimately necessary. That said, Cooperative Extension is using its one-time cash reserves to provide transition funds as *nEXT Generation* is implemented.

Beyond budget, are there other reasons to reorganize?

Climate survey results and other feedback collected during 2015 suggest that Cooperative Extension can better deliver educational programming by creating new opportunities for collaboration, helping faculty and staff focus on education, using technology in new ways, and adopting more integrated approaches to serving local needs and our communities.

What kinds of changes can we expect?

The *nEXT Generation* draft framework will make changes in how Cooperative Extension delivers programs at the local level, collaborates with other UW institutions, and administers Cooperative Extension from its offices in Madison.

Budget targets for county/tribal nation, campus, and administrative components reflect the amount of GPR funding each component receives. Anticipated savings will also cover funding cuts and provide a pool of flexible funds to address emerging issues.

Will these changes mean layoffs?

Between 50 and 80 jobs will be cut as Cooperative Extension restructures. Some cuts will occur by eliminating currently unfilled positions. Position cuts will likely occur late in 2016 and into 2017. It is too soon to determine what types of positions may be affected.

What will these changes mean for counties?

Proposed changes include creating multi-county areas with a shared administrative leader. Funded with state dollars, area leaders will consolidate and streamline administrative functions, letting local educators (supported by a mix of state and county funds) focus on educational programming.

Single-county areas will be established in counties with large populations. A virtual tribal area will unite Extension programs that serve Wisconsin's tribal nations.

How were the new multi-county areas identified?

Factors like similarity of needs and ongoing joint programming, transportation convenience and reasonable access for all residents, other regional entities (school districts, regional planning commissions, etc.), economic drivers, and more were considered when identifying multi-county areas.

Will each county and tribal nation still have a local Extension office?

Cooperative Extension intends to maintain a local office and local staff in each county and tribal nation that is currently home to an Extension office.

How will counties and tribal nations be engaged in planning?

County and tribal nation partners will be involved in every step of the planning, implementation, and staging and sequencing phases.

The project steering committee will engage face-to-face with partners about staffing models and educational programming starting early 2016 as implementation planning begins.

What is the timeline for staffing changes in the counties and tribal nations?

Staffing changes will begin in fiscal year 2016-17, most likely late 2016-early 2017.

How will changes to Cooperative Extension's model affect 2016 county budgets?

Changes should not significantly impact 2016 county budgets.