How does MU Extension determine which programs to deliver and what its priorities are?

Priority setting and program delivery are determined through an annual planning process that involves continual assessment of local and statewide needs.

First, MU Extension listens

At the county level, regional faculty create an annual plan of work after seeking the input of current and prospective learners, program partners and other stakeholders. The county extension council, mandated by Missouri statutes, is the liaison between county residents, regional faculty and extension administration. Input is sought through regular meetings of the extension council, participant surveys, focus groups, and conversations with local government officials.

Additionally, input from stakeholders is gathered and analyzed through such means as Web page questions, random-sample phone surveys and community discussions. Faculty on the University of Missouri campuses also analyze research, demographic changes, emerging trends and policy issues to inform program-planning decisions.

Part of a national network

MU Extension files a plan of work application for funding with the National Institute of Food and Agriculture at the U.S. Department of Agriculture detailing the focused programs MU Extension plans to provide to meet priority issues outlined at the federal level. Recent priorities include alternative energy development and programs to change lifestyle behaviors to avoid childhood obesity.

Matching resources with needs

MU Extension then carefully matches federal, state and local resources with identified needs to deliver the highest-priority programs and

More than 100 entities partner with MU Extension through grants and contracts to serve constituents with services and education in a cost-effective and timely manner.
to leverage resources. MU Extension’s major program areas are:

- Agriculture and Natural Resources
- Business Development
- Community Development
- Continuing Education
- 4-H Youth Development
- Human Environmental Sciences

**Partnerships make the difference**

More than 100 entities partner with MU Extension through grants and contracts to serve constituents with services and education in a cost-effective and timely manner. MU Extension also charges for some programs and services and seeks private gifts to develop a diversified funding stream.

**Managing for success**

Missouri citizens’ demands for education and services outstrip MU Extension’s resources. Not all needs on a local or statewide level can be met. However, MU Extension manages its resources efficiently to fulfill its mission of delivering research-based information and educational programs to people where they live and work. Programs are tailored specifically to meet local needs. For example, the Pasture-based Dairy Program in Southwest Missouri teaches producers intensive grazing techniques, which are profitable and environmentally sound. An after-school program for inner-city youth at the West End Community Center in St. Louis is designed specifically to bolster academic skills and self-esteem among youth who may become the first in their families to attend college.

**Continuously improving and responding**

The process of creating and adjusting county and state program plans is ongoing and cyclical. MU Extension faculty members listen to stakeholder input constantly and deliberately, revising plans, implementing and evaluating programs accordingly, and collaborating with other agencies and institutions to maximize efforts.

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