

Steps for Planning Extension Educational Programs

A worksheet to help plan programs before entering them into PEARS.

Title of the program: _____

Team members/partners: _____

1. **SITUATION/NEEDS ASSESSMENT**—What is the situation that indicates an educational program is needed? What are the hot topics or key issues facing your constituents? How do these issues relate to your subject matter area? Has a needs assessment been done to quantify the issues and problems?

2. **AUDIENCE**—Who is the target audience and what are a few of their characteristics? Remember, the **general public** is not a target audience.

3. **OUTCOMES***—What are you trying to achieve? Outcomes are the **achieved** results of instruction: what learning took place or what participants have now mastered. Learning outcomes should be measurable and observable. Effective learning outcomes use an action verb to describe what participants can do by the end of the program. Outcomes often are presented as short, medium and long term.

Outcome indicators are statements that describe accomplishment or progress.

a. Short-term

Outcomes—These outcomes address change that can be accomplished in a relatively short time frame, such as knowledge, awareness, skills, attitude, opinions and motivations, and can include reports of intention to change. **Example:**

Participants know recommended safe food handling practices for commercial food preparation.

Indicators—How will you know if you have reached your short-term outcome goals successfully? Can you measure this qualitatively or quantitatively? **Example:** *the number of food handlers receiving food safety training and education (HACCP, ServSafe, etc.)*

* Outcomes and objectives are often confused. Objectives describe the *intended* results of a program, while outcomes are the *achieved* results of instruction.

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b. **Medium-term**

Outcomes —Participants start using the knowledge from your program. What are they doing with what they know? Medium-term outcomes often are measured within several months of the program and include actions or changed behavior or practice, increased participation, planning or policy change based on what participants learned.

Example: *Participants will increase the adoption of recommended safe food handling practices in restaurants and food service sites.*

Indicators —How will you know if you have reached your medium-term outcome goals successfully? Can you measure this qualitatively or quantitatively? **Example:** *the number of food handlers adopting recommended hand-washing practices*

c. **Long-term**

Outcomes —Participants' lives are improved through time by using their knowledge. These outcomes often are measured a year or more after completion of the program and include changes in economic well-being, civic engagement and program efficiencies, as well as changed lives.

Example: *reduced incidence of foodborne illness*

Indicators —How will you know if you are successful in reaching your long-term outcome goals? Can you measure this qualitatively or quantitatively? Do you have an economic threshold that should be reached? **Example:** *the number of foodborne illness cases reported to medical professionals*

4. **PUBLIC VALUE** —What is the value of this program to the public? This is the value that a program contributes to those who are not directly served, or the benefit to society.

5. **OUTPUTS** —What are the best activities and training tools (outputs) to accomplish this education? How do you plan to facilitate the transformational learning process and not just provide information? Consider various ways to teach content, such as face-to-face workshops, online training, experiments, demonstrations, facilitation, publications, newsletters, videoconferencing, social media, self-study.

6. **MARKETING** —How will this program be marketed to your target audience? Why do they need this information? What media outlets or networks will you use to help market the program?

7. **EVALUATION/ASSESSMENT** —How will you assess the outcomes, measure the impact, evaluate the impact this educational program had on your target audience? Consider quantitative and qualitative options. How will you report the results and market the successes?