

Strategic Plan for the Extension Family and Community Health Program

2015 – 2020

Oregon State University
College of Public Health
and Human Sciences

Oregon State University
Extension Service

Vision, Mission, and Core Values

Our Definition of Health

We define the health of an individual as a state of physical, mental, and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity. We define the health of a community as an aggregate of its social, economic, psychological, and environmental attributes that influence the health of an individual or family.

Our Vision

Lifelong health and well being for every person, every family, every community.

Our Mission

FCH builds individual assets and environmental supports that protect and improve health. We work with individuals to build knowledge and skills that help them make healthy and safe choices. We partner with families, organizations, and communities to create healthy and safe environments where people can live, work, learn, and play.

Our Core Values

We are responsive to Oregonians, faithful to our Extension mission.

We believe that all people should have the opportunity to live long healthy lives.

We strive for equitable distribution of resources to impact population health and address disparities.

We uphold partnerships that are based on core principles of reciprocity and mutual benefit.

We maintain that communities possess knowledge and resources unique and complementary to the knowledge and resources of the university.

We uphold that our primary contribution to solution-finding is research-based information and evidence-based programs.

We deliver high quality programs and services that produce measurable results.

We are collaborative, both within FCH and across sectors.

We embrace diversity, appreciating and respecting differences among people and ideas.

We hold ourselves accountable for efficient and responsible use of public resources.

We subscribe to a public health approach, striving to improve population health through prevention.

Program Goals

The strategic plan focuses on the achievement of four major program goals which correspond to levels of a typical social-ecological model (individual, family, organizational, and community). By working at multiple levels of a social system, and with academic colleagues, Extension stakeholders, and community beneficiaries, we increase our likelihood of producing meaningful and lasting change.

Promote Healthy Lifestyles (Individual Level)

The Extension Family and Community Health (FCH) Program will promote positive behaviors and habits that foster healthy growth and development. Similarly, it will discourage behaviors and habits that put people at risk of harm, obesity, unintentional injury, illness, and chronic disease. This work will produce behavioral patterns that are known to support individual health across the lifespan. Specifically,

individuals will meet physical activity guidelines,
individuals will meet dietary guidelines, and
individuals will reduce their risk of illness or injury
from exposure to avoidable environmental hazards.

Cultivate Strong Families and Support Systems (Family Level)

The Extension Family and Community Health (FCH) Program will support families in their efforts to ensure that all members have optimal care across the lifespan. Additionally, it will help families acquire and manage the resources needed to provide for the health and well-being of family members. This work will produce family relationships, systems, and resources that are known to support the health of families and family members. Specifically,

parents will utilize parenting practices that support positive child outcomes,
caregivers will use practices that produce positive outcomes for dependents,
individuals will manage individual and community resources for maximum benefit,
families will live in safe and healthy homes, and
families will have a safe, secure, nutritious, and affordable supply of food.

Grow Healthy Organizations (Organizational Level)

The Extension Family and Community Health (FCH) Program will help organizations (such as schools and workplaces) implement policies, systems, and environmental strategies that will support employees and clientele in their pursuit of optimal health. Similarly, it will work to minimize exposure to factors which contribute to negative health outcomes. This work will produce schools, workplaces, and organizations that enable students, workers, and members to live healthy lives. Specifically,

organizational leaders have the skills and commitment needed to lead change, and
organizations will implement policies and practices that equitably
support employees and clientele in their pursuit of optimal health.

Program Goals (continued)

Foster Healthy Communities (Community Level)

The Extension Family and Community Health (FCH) Program will help neighborhoods and communities create policies, systems, and environmental features that equitably support residents and visitors in their pursuit of optimum health. It will similarly work to minimize exposure to factors which contribute to negative health outcomes. This work will produce a culture of health in communities where people live. Specifically,

community leaders and stakeholders have the skills and commitment to make changes within their communities which help people live healthy lives, and communities are characterized by policies, systems, and environments that promote the optimal health, safety, and wellbeing of residents and visitors.

Operational Goals

Operational goals communicate the changes necessary in the way we organize to do our work. Achievement of the operational goals will increase both the efficiency with which we operate and increase the likelihood of achieving our program goals.

Align Programming and Improve Funding

- Align FCH programming under the broader umbrella of Health Extension.
- Partner with 4-H Youth Development, SNAP-Ed, and EFNEP where appropriate.
- Integrate with the teaching, research, and other outreach programs of PHHS.
- Engage new academic partners within Oregon and from across the nation.
- Determine gaps in programming that hinder achievement of program goals.
- Identify and procure funding to support new and ongoing programming.
- Implement an FCH staffing plan that optimally supports achievement of goals.

Make Strategic, Data-Informed Decisions

- Utilize the strategic plan as a guide for making decisions.
- Build efficient and comprehensive reporting systems to support decision making.
- Utilize valid and reliable sources of quantitative and qualitative data when making decisions related to programming.
- Build a model of shared leadership that supports transparent decision-making and builds interdependence.

Build the Capacity of the FCH Workforce

- Ensure stable 'transformational' leadership for the FCH program.
- Support faculty and staff in achievement of their educational and career goals.
- Increase issue and ecological system expertise.
- Build practice-based competencies among FCH faculty and staff.
- Build workplace competencies among faculty and staff, especially communication and human resource management skills.
- Address inequities, recognize and reward meritorious work.
- Increase opportunities for OSU students to engage in experiential learning opportunities with the OSU Extension Service.

Cultivate a Collegial Culture

- Establish and support communities of collaborative interest, learning, and practice.
- Create opportunities for interdisciplinary teaching, learning and growth.
- Create opportunities to share research, lessons-learned, and successes.
- Create opportunities to learn about innovations and discoveries from outside experts, practitioners, and scholars.
- Strengthen relationships between state and county FCH faculty and staff.

Operational Goals (continued)

Improve Communication, Marketing, and Branding

- Improve the FCH website and better utilize social media and web-based information systems.
- Increase and improve online education and information access.
- Increase and improve Extension's role in producing peer-reviewed publications and other scholarly products (scientific publications, presentations, and posters).
- Establish standardized branding and marketing tools for FCH.

Focus Areas

We believe that work in the following areas is necessary to tackle the root causes of the health inequities which exist within populations. Work in these areas should be framed by the core values of public health. That is, to improve the health of populations by focusing on those with greatest risk.

Food Systems and Healthy Eating

The Extension FCH program is committed to promoting thoughtful integration across various components of the system by which Oregonians produce, distribute, obtain, and utilize food products. This work includes efforts focused on food production, school and community gardens, food security, food safety, food preservation, and healthy eating.

Physical Activity and Active Lifestyles

The Extension FCH program will manage a suite of program resources that help people be physically active in their homes, schools, workplaces, and communities. Research confirms that physical activity across the lifespan coupled with a healthy diet can go far in preventing or delaying the onset of chronic disease.

Caregiving Across the Life Span

Every Oregonian will experience some time in their life when they will need care or provide care to others. As children, we need parents and other caregivers who provide for our basic needs and nurture our positive growth and development. Later in life, illness, disability, and chronic conditions may restrict our ability to care for ourselves and prompt a need for care by others. The Extension FCH program is committed to helping Oregonians acquire skills they need to navigate the myriad of resources that help them provide care for family members.

Safety, Unintentional Injury, and Disability

Unintentional injury is the leading cause of death for individuals between the ages of one and forty-five. These deaths result from such things as falls, distracted driving, prescription drug overdoses, poisoning, allergic reactions, drowning, bicycling, and occupational injuries. Interventions to promote safety and prevent injuries can easily be incorporated into ongoing programs or be the focus of targeted programs that respond to specific local needs.

Health Leadership and Community Change

The social, economic, and environmental features of a community can affect people's exposure to opportunities and risks that ultimately impact their health. While we will continue to help individuals gain the knowledge and resources needed to better manage their personal lives, we will also work to strengthen the capacity of communities to influence the social, economic, and environmental determinants of health. When citizens work together, contributing their vision, talents, and resolve to co-create a preferred future for their community, everyone benefits.

Strategies

Strategies represent the specific approaches we may employ to catalyze the changes that we desire in individuals, families, organizations and communities. The first three strategies focus on ways that we can influence people to change their behaviors through their interactions with Extension personnel or the people immediately around them. The remaining five strategies focus on ways that we influence setting or context in which people live, learn, work, or play.

Influencing People

Informational strategies include education, marketing, and media-based dissemination of information to individuals. The goal is often to raise awareness or increase knowledge of an issue. An explicit focus on behavioral change may not necessarily be a goal of this work.

Behavioral strategies may include dissemination of information, but with an explicit, theory-guided, focus on promoting a specific behavior in individuals. This approach frequently involves developing the cognitive and behavioral skills needed to perform and maintain a behavior.

Social Support strategies involve other people (family members, peers, co-workers, and neighbors) as influencers of behaviors in individuals. Supportive people help make the desired behavior easier to implement and sustain for an individual.

Influencing Place

Environmental strategies frequently include efforts to create assets in the community that promote health and well-being. Assets can consist of such things as material provisions, economic supports, positive social norms, heightened community expectations, and built or natural resources.

Systems interventions are strategies that fundamentally alter the way a program, organization, institution, or society operates with regard to a particular issue or area of concern.

Policy interventions are strategies aimed at creating, implementing or amending laws, ordinances, resolutions, mandates, regulations, or rules.

Capacity Building helps citizens, organizational leaders, community policy makers, and other decision makers lead, implement, and evaluate change efforts within their particular domain of responsibility. It also involves helping organizations, agencies, and communities continue to improve and develop over time.

Collaborative strategies involve more than the efforts of a single organization. Effective collaboration involves working across various sectors, organizations, and agencies to create measurable, shared, and sustainable impacts.