

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT NEEDS ASSESSMENT

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Extension faculty are expected to provide a broad range of informational and educational services to adults and youth throughout Utah. While this role requires substantial subject matter expertise, it also calls for soft competencies related to non-formal learning, program planning and evaluation, and communication. Extension professionals' performance of job-specific competencies reflect the professional capacity of Utah State University (USU) Extension to provide quality educational programming to meet the needs of stakeholders and clientele. Therefore, this report is an assessment of the professional capacity of Extension professionals at USU Extension. Results show there is a need for USU Extension faculty to improve in several competency areas and should be implemented in future professional development. Those professional development priorities for immediate attention are shown on the right.



PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT PRIORITIES



PROGRAM DESIGN

- Identify the major problem/issue addressed by your program
- Conduct a needs assessment
- Use the results of a needs assessment to create an impact statement



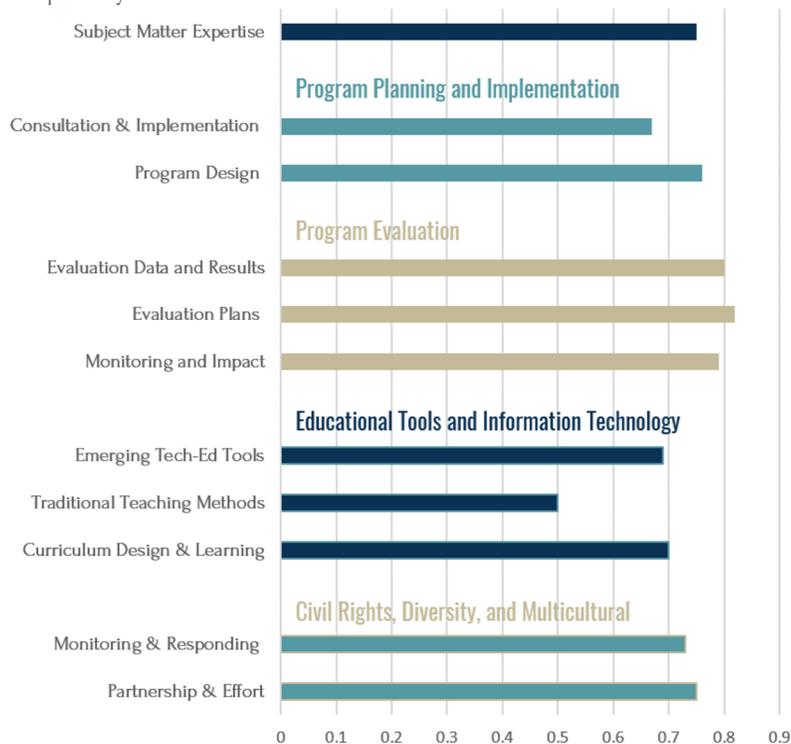
EVALUATION PLANS

- Create an evaluation plan during program planning
- Conduct follow-up surveys to measure changes in participants' behavior (e.g. practices adopted)
- Develop measurable long-term outcomes to assess program impact (e.g. changes in a problem or need)
- Develop measurable short-term outcomes (e.g. knowledge, skills, attitudes, and intentions)
- Develop measurable medium-term outcomes (e.g. behavior change, practices adopted)
- Conduct follow-up surveys to measure program impact (e.g. changes in a problem)



Results

Table 1
Professional Development Themes: Standardized Priority Index (SPI) over .75 indicates the high level of priority.



Conclusion

Equipping USU faculty with the knowledge and tools they need in these competency areas will improve current and future programming and ensure the success and longevity of the USU Extension programming. Recommendations for immediate action include providing faculty with professional development opportunities targeted to competencies listed as an essential priority. This includes developing both face-to-face and online trainings and resources tailored specifically to the faculty; trainings need to be accessible to all faculty, regardless of geographic location and/or subject area expertise. Though providing resources and training for all competencies are necessary, it is also suggested additional trainings focus on those competencies with an above average priority for professional development. An annual assessment of professional capacity and competencies is critical to preparing USU Extension faculty to meet the evolving and complex needs of clientele and stakeholders throughout Utah.

Professional Development PRIORITIES



EVALUATION DATA & RESULTS

- Use data gathering tools to collect evaluation data (e.g. questionnaires)
- Use online survey tools such as Qualtrics to collect data
- Write evaluation questions
- Evaluate program impact in relation to a problem area
- Analyze and interpret quantitative evaluation data
- Analyze and interpret qualitative evaluation data
- Prepare program reports to discuss evaluation findings



MONITORING & IMPACT

- Establish benchmarks to determine program impacts
- Identify indicators of program success or failure
- Monitor program activities throughout the program's lifespan

