

FIRST STEP GUIDELINES

District Extension Administrators

Before Hiring New Agent:

- Explain FIRST STEP program to the new agent prospect
- Determine county to be host county using criteria in FIRST STEP Guidelines. Talk to agents in that county to determine their interest and general schedule.
- In conferencing with FIRST STEP county and new agent, determine appropriate start date
- Submit proposed FIRST STEP county and start date to Kyle Smith and Sharon West and request travel authorization.

Prior To or At County Commissioner's Court Meeting:

- Prior to the court meeting date, brief the County Judge on the FIRST STEP program and it's benefit to the county and the new agent.
- Determine with the County Judge the best method to explain the FIRST STEP program to commissioners' court.

Within 1st Week of FIRST STEP Assignment:

- Meet with host county agents and new agent face-to-face or by phone. Provide an orientation of the FIRST STEP experience with agents. Review guidelines and expectations of new agent and host agents. Share and review the FIRST STEP Journal. Determine dates of activities and opportunities in the FIRST STEP county for the month. Review procedures for travel reimbursement. Answer questions or concerns. Set exit conference date.
- Determine what other opportunities need to be provided for the new agent in other counties.
- Determine a day for new agent to come to District Extension Center. This day will include: time with District Office Manager, District 4-H Secretary, DEA, and if available, RPDs. This is also a time for new agent to meet specialists in the building.
- Have District Office Manager review the guidelines for submitting the travel voucher for travel reimbursement.
- Help arrange lodging for new agent if necessary.

During FIRST STEP Month:

- Contact new agent and host agents once a week if possible to field questions and determine if the training is on track.
- Encourage new agent to submit travel voucher every 2 weeks. Encourage them to submit it to the District Office Manager for review first.
- Conduct the first DEA orientation with new agent. Assist new agent in adopting and editing the New Agent Individual Development Model Plan.

At End of FIRST STEP Month or Immediately Following:

- Conduct exit conference involving new agent and host agents. Review FIRST STEP experience. Assist new agent in developing a plan of action for first month on the job in county of hire.
- Determine if further assistance is needed with new agent.
- Provide one day of administrative leave for each agent in host county.
- Express appreciation in writing to host county agents and support staff.