

FIRST STEP For Success
Extension Agent's Personal Journal

FIRST STEP For Success

The purpose of *FIRST STEP* is to provide new employees with an immediate opportunity to take

the first step towards developing a basic understanding of key Extension concepts, principles, and practices. During **FIRST STEP** the responsibility of the new employee would be to observe and experience the day-to-day operations of a typical county Extension office and to gain a general understanding of the expectations that they will face in the new county.

During the first month of your new career, you will have the opportunity to experience a wide variety of events, activities and processes that are common to most Extension offices in the state. Regardless of your subject matter discipline or program area, we believe it is to your advantage to learn about the entire Extension program and to be involved with each agent in your **FIRST STEP** county. While all counties are different in some ways, you are being placed in a county that closely resembles your assigned county in population, clientele needs and geography. You may also be asked to observe other counties nearby where significant activities or events are being conducted. Take advantage of your **FIRST STEP** assignment and get involved in as much as you can and take notes.

This short journal is provided so that you can log the activities that you participate in and take notes that can help you when you get to your new county. As each activity, event or learning objective is accomplished, we ask that you date your accomplishment and write a brief narrative of your experiences. This journal is yours to keep and refer to later in your career. It will also be useful to you as you complete the New Agent's Self Study Guide. Be prepared to provide a completed copy of this journal to your District Extension Administrator at your **FIRST STEP** exit conference.

You are now a part of a large team of informal educators across the state of Texas and the United States. Extension's mission is, **"To provide quality, relevant outreach and continuing education programs and services to the people of Texas."** Good luck and enjoy your new career.

Name: _____

Title: _____

County: _____

FIRST STEP County: _____

ACTIONS/OBJECTIVES

The new agent will gain an awareness of or experience:

Date Completed

❖ **Core principles of working with Extension clientele**

- Office visits
- Phone calls
 - Answering phone calls
 - Returning calls
- Site visits
 - Scheduling site visits
 - Preparing for effective site visits
- Handling the upset or irate client

Things I learned or observed:

The new agent will gain an awareness of or experience:

Date Completed

❖ **Roles and responsibilities of County Extension Agents**

- Job description
- Job roles and responsibilities worksheet
- County coordinator
- Ag/NR, FCS and 4-H coordinator
- County Extension Agent titles

Things I learned or observed:

The new agent will gain an awareness of or experience:

Date Completed

❖ **Developing programs and resources**

- Have the opportunity to make a formal educational presentation
- Observe Extension programs in action and a variety of program delivery methods
- Become more familiar with Extension-related organizations (4-H, TEEA, Master Volunteers, etc.)
- Curriculums and program materials
 - Which ones to use
 - What is still valid
 - Where to go to get replacement resources if they are gone
- Developing program plans and components of a plan (TE_xAS)
 - Understanding how Banner Programs fit into meeting county needs
 - Outcome plans
 - Output plans
 - Organizational support plan
 - Individual development plan

Things I learned or observed:

The new agent will gain an awareness of or experience:

Date Completed

❖ **Planning and conducting a program/result demonstration**

- Planning group involvement
- Steps for planning
- Educational methods
- Program presentation tips
- Evaluation efforts
 - Individual activity evaluation (customer satisfaction survey)
 - Outcome program evaluation
 - >> Clientele change
 - >> Program impact
 - >> Evaluation methods
- Materials needed to conduct a program

Things I learned or observed:

The new agent will gain an awareness of or experience:

Date Completed

❖ **Reporting process (TEexas)**

- What to report
- What forms are used
- How to complete specific reports
- When reports are due
- What information is captured
- Ag Reports (Ag Increment Report) and how information is gathered
- Web-based resources
- 4-H enrollment processes and procedures

Things I learned or observed:

The new agent will gain an awareness of or experience:

Date Completed

- ❖ **Marketing and interpreting Extension programs**
 - ➔ Working with the media (print and broadcast)
 - ➔ Commissioners' Court interpretation
 - ➔ Targeted audience interpretation
 - ➔ Identifying and involving stakeholders
 - ➔ Developing effective partnerships with other groups
 - ➔ Involvement in community and county activities

Things I learned or observed:

The new agent will gain an awareness of or experience:

Date Completed

❖ **Internal and external relationships**

- Teamwork
- Conducting office conferences
- Administrator relationships
- Regional Program Director relationships
- Coworker relationships
- Commissioners' Court
- Working with district and county support staff
- Specialists

Things I learned or observed:

The new agent will gain an awareness of or experience:

Date Completed

❖ **Time management strategies**

- Effective time management
- Developing a daily schedule
- Managing your calendar
- Observe the daily activities in the county office
- Scheduling time for family and personal needs

Things I learned or observed:

The new agent will gain an awareness of or experience:

Date Completed

❖ **Volunteer development and management**

- Volunteer recruitment
- Volunteer training
- Involving volunteers in program efforts
- Recognition of volunteers
- Observe the program development process in action (who, what, when, where, why and how)
 - Basics of INVEST
 - >> Leadership Advisory Boards
 - >> Program Area Committees
 - >> Task Forces/Coalitions
 - >> Youth Board
 - >> Associations and Chapter
- Extension support groups/organizations (4-H, TEEA, Master Volunteers)
- Cash management practices with support groups

Things I learned or observed:

The new agent will gain an awareness of or experience:

Date Completed

❖ **County budgeting process and developing program support funds**

- County budget development process
- Working with support groups and support group funds
- Cash management procedures
- Developing grants and associated procedures
- Managing donations
- Developing sponsorships
- Inventory procedures

Things I learned or observed:

The new agent will gain an awareness of or experience:

Date Completed

❖ **Civil Rights/Affirmative Action Guidelines**

- ➔ 4-H expansion and review
- ➔ Planning groups
- ➔ Program participation
- ➔ Documentation

Things I learned or observed:

The new agent will gain an awareness of or experience:

Date Completed

❖ **Extension terminology**

- Acronyms and the “Extension” alphabet
 - Internal acronyms (BLT, TCFE, FRED, etc.)
 - External acronyms (NRCS, FSA, etc.)

Things I learned or observed:

❖ **Result Demonstration/Applied Research (Ag/NR only)**

- Demonstration/research plans
- Submitting proposals
- Results

Things I learned or observed:

❖ **Develop an individual development plan during the *FIRST STEP* month**
