The Extension Mentoring Program for New County Extension Directors (CEDs)

“Before you become a leader, successful is all about growing yourself. When you become a leader, success is all about growing others.”

- Jack Welch

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Extension Organizational Development (EOD) oversees and is responsible for the management of the Extension Mentoring Program for New County Extension Directors for North Carolina Cooperative Extension. However, EOD could not have created this Mentoring Program and this Desk Reference Guide without the guidance and support of the following people:

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Notes

“Extension” refers to North Carolina Cooperative Extension, the organization that includes employees from both North Carolina State University and North Carolina A&T State University.

“CED” refers to County Extension Directors. CEDs are the leaders in county extension offices who serve as department heads in their counties, supervise staff, manage budgets and oversee all of the administrative aspects of their county offices.

“Mentee” always refers to the new County Extension Director who has been hired and who has been assigned a mentor. “Mentor” always refers to the experienced CED who provides the mentoring.
Notes

“District Extension Directors (DEDs)” refers to those who oversee an assigned Extension District. DEDs manage all personnel aspects and financial budgets for their assigned district. They also supervise CEDs and Area Specialist Agents (ASAs), foster county government relationships with Extension, and serve as liaisons between Extension Administration and the county offices.

“Regional Extension Directors (REDs)” refers to the North Carolina A&T State University administrators who are in roles similar to that of the “District Extension Directors (DEDs)” at North Carolina State University.

“EOD” refers to Extension Organizational Development, the unit in Extension responsible for the professional and leadership development of Extension employees.
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Introduction

Purpose

The purpose of the Extension Mentoring Program for County Extension Directors (CEDs) serves to add an important element to the onboarding process for our new leaders where they can develop a professional and informational support system through the assignment of the designated mentor. The Mentoring Program provides a formalized relationship where the new CED will:

- Learn about the importance of their role to Extension and the citizens of North Carolina;
- Build a relationship with a trusted advisor so that the new CED can learn the various responsibilities associated with their leadership role;
- Develop as a leader, manager and supervisor in Extension with the support and guidance of not only their District Extension Director, but also with focused guidance and support from their mentor.

This training manual serves as a guide for both the mentor and the mentee. All mentors and mentees are required to read this manual in its entirety before the first meeting between mentor and mentee.

Scope of the Mentoring Program for New County Extension Directors

New County Extension Directors (CEDs) have a vital role in the day-to-day operations in each of North Carolina’s county centers. Their job can be quite complex at times as they have to navigate the procedures, policies and processes associated with both county and state (i.e., the university). Most also have programmatic responsibilities in addition to their role as leader, director, manager and supervisor. Having a mentor is meant to help the new CED learn their job so that they can become knowledgeable, effective and efficient leaders.

It is important for the new CED to know that North Carolina has 101 county centers and each of those centers has its own approach to how administrative and county departmental duties are handled within their respective offices. A county extension office is viewed as a “department” within the county, and there are other county offices such as Budget, Communications, Emergency Services, Finance, Health, Human Resources, Sheriff, Social Services and others. The number of departments within in a county will more than likely depend on the size of the county. It will be very important for the new CED to establish relationships with other county department heads who work in their same county so as to build collaborative and supportive relationships within the county. The new CED will also need to build a strong relationship with their administrative support staff as often these are the employees who know the most about the procedures, policies and rules associated with the county extension office. The new CED should also talk, on a regular basis and as needed, with their District Extension Director (DED). The DED supervises CEDs within the district and is an important point of contact for questions, concerns, and information. The mentor’s role is to help onboard the new CED to their leadership role, but the scope of support a mentor can provide will more than likely not include many of the nuances of the new CED’s county and its operations, processes, policies and procedures.
The County Extension Director (CED) Role: Its Importance

The County Extension Director is a leader within Extension and their county, serving as an important connection between North Carolina State University and their county office. The CED is expected to exercise sound judgment in their leadership role. The CED has a vital role in coordinating the efforts of the county Extension staff in developing an effective total county Extension education program. Additional expectations associated with the CED role include organizing and allocating resources, marketing the Extension program, preparing budgets, supervising and managing their county Extension team, interpreting and communicating policy, teaching, evaluating, and writing reports. The CED is a department head within their county as well and needs to maintain the expectations associated with their role within county government.

The County Extension Director (CED): Major Responsibilities

- Develops and maintains a comprehensive understanding of the North Carolina Cooperative Extension Service as an educational agency and its implications for administration and programming in the county.
- Provides leadership and exercises sound judgement for personnel management of the county Extension staff.
- Markets county Extension programs and services to the community using various media.
- Provides leadership in planning and initiating action needed to implement all areas of program responsibility in the planned program.
- In cooperation with the Extension staff and County Extension Advisory Leadership System, plans all areas of the total county program.
- Work collaboratively with other Extension programs, staff, agencies and community organizations to meet the specialized needs of the community.
- Maintains liaison with civic organizations, related businesses, informal educational organizations, and other voluntary groups.
- Continuously strives to maintain and encourages the county Extension staff to maintain a high level of professional competence.
- Ensures that the county Extension office follows, where appropriate, North Carolina Cooperative Extension, North Carolina State University, North Carolina A&T State University, state, county and national laws, policies, regulations and guidelines.
- Maintains an effective administrative relationship with county government and represents county government in managing appropriated county funds and assigned county resources.
- Maintains the affirmative action plan of North Carolina Cooperative Extension.
- Subject matter responsibilities as assigned.
- Other duties as assigned.

County Extension Directors have a very dynamic position that requires them to be leaders, managers, supervisors, decision-makers, advocates, delegators, collaborators and relationship-builders (just to name a few). The mentor is to help the new CED understand the importance of their role in the county and guide them for how to develop, implement and utilize various skills and knowledge so that their county team experiences both engagement and success.
Origins of “Mentor”

The term, “mentor,” originated from Greek mythology. “Mentor” was a loyal friend and advisor to the King of Ithaca, Odysseus. Odysseus had a son, Telemachus, and Mentor helped to raise Telemachus while Odysseus was away fighting the Trojan War. Mentor became not only Telemachus’ teacher, but he also served as the boy’s coach, counselor and protector, building a relationship based on trust. Today, “mentoring” is synonymous with the process by which mentors guide and guard others. Thus a “mentor” is someone who is seen as a trusted advisor and teacher who can share wisdom, support and direction.

Definition

Mentoring is defined as “a deliberate pairing of a more skilled or experienced person with a less-skilled or experienced one, with the agreed-upon goal of having the lesser skilled person grow and develop specific competencies.”

The distinction is made between role models and mentors in that role models may never realize that they have influenced someone else. In the Extension Mentoring Program, mentors and mentees are entering into a specific agreement to carry out a formalized mentoring relationship that facilitates the skill development, knowledge and expertise of the new CED.

1 https://www.etymonline.com/word/mentor

Mission, Vision, Philosophy and Goals of Extension’s New CED Mentoring Program

Mentors have an important role in the professional development of their mentees. Mentors are integral to the mentee’s integration into their county extension director role within Extension. Given this, the **MISSION** of the *Extension Mentoring Program for New County Extension Directors* is to provide our new CEDs with a trusted advisor who can guide them during their first year as a county extension director so that the new CED can gain a strong understanding of what it means to serve as a CED and learn the skills to be successful in their role as a leader, director, and manager.

Extension exists to empower people and provide solutions. Mentors contribute to this mission by empowering their mentees and providing them with the wisdom, support and insight they need to effectively lead and serve both their county office teams and the citizens of North Carolina.

The **VISION** of the *Extension Mentoring Program for New County Extension Directors* is to establish a strong mentoring program where seasoned CEDs assist with and enhance the development of new CEDs so that new county extension directors develop the knowledge, skills and attitudes that promote their leadership within their respective county offices.

The following five statements communicate the **PHILOSOPHY** of the *Extension Mentoring Program for New County Extension Directors*:

- Mentoring is a partnership.
- Mentoring is a supportive professional and collegial relationship.
- Mentoring is communicating with one another effectively.
- Mentoring enhances the development of the new county extension director.
- Mentoring benefits the mentee, the mentor, the counties, Extension and the university.

The main **GOAL** of the *Extension Mentoring Program for New County Extension Directors* is to provide a professional and informational support system for new CEDs. This goal can be realized by the MENTOR achieving the following objectives with their MENTEE:

- If the CED is new to North Carolina Cooperative Extension, educating them about our vision, mission and goals ([https://www.ces.ncsu.edu/our-vision/](https://www.ces.ncsu.edu/our-vision/)).
- Informing the new CED about the university’s and county’s expectation regarding the county extension director role.
- Identifying resources and other employees in the organization who can serve as a resource for the new CED.
- Sharing with the new CED the skills, knowledge and insights of an experienced and successful CED so that new director can learn and gain what is needed to be successful in their roles.
- Fostering open communication and dialogue that leads to engaged, productive and well-trained new county extension directors.
- Strengthening the leadership and management skills of the new CED.
The following general guidelines will apply to each mentoring relationship and should be understood by both the mentor and the mentee:

- Mentors (seasoned CEDs with at least five years of experience) are identified by the District Extension Directors (DEDs).
- Mentor/mentee pairings are based on proximity. Extension Organizational Development (EOD) has the primary responsibility for the oversight and administration of the *Extension Mentoring Program for New County Extension Directors*. The DEDs of both the potential mentor and mentee need to approve the pairing before formal notification is made to both the mentor and the mentee.
- DEDs will be copied on the notification sent to the mentor and mentee about their pairing and the next steps for starting the mentoring relationship.
- Commitment to the formal mentoring process is for one (1) year. Mentors are encouraged to maintain informal contact with their mentees after the formal mentor relationship ends.
- The mentee will be provided notification of who their mentor is as close as possible to their start date/promotion to County Extension Director with Extension. The mentor should contact the mentee within the first week after the mentor/mentee assignment has been confirmed.
- The mentor and the mentee are required to meet *face-to-face or online (through software such as Google Hangouts, Zoom or Skype) at least once a month during the first six months of the mentee’s new CED role*. A minimum of nine (9) face-to-face (or face-to-face online) visits should occur between the mentor and the mentee within the first year of the new CED’s employment as a county extension director.
- Mentors and mentees should correspond frequently (at least once every two (2) to four (4) weeks) either by phone, email, Zoom, Google chat, or in-person. Both participants need to make sure that this communication occurs on a regular, on-going basis.
- “NO FAULT” Arrangement: Throughout a person’s career, all employees face various challenges and changing circumstances which are often unexpected and may make it difficult to continue serving as a mentor. The *Extension Mentoring Program* operates with a NO FAULT philosophy that allows mentors and mentees to request changes or reassignments *without fear of repercussions*. The mentor or mentee may request a change or release from the assignment by contacting Extension Organizational Development (EOD) ([https://eod.ces.ncsu.edu/about-eod/](https://eod.ces.ncsu.edu/about-eod/)).
- The mentor may encourage the mentee to work with other professionals with the approval of the mentee’s District Extension Director (DED).
- The mentee’s District Extension Director (DED) is encouraged to communicate with the new County Extension Director about their progress throughout the mentoring process.
- Both the mentor and the mentee will come prepared to their meetings so that their time together is productive and effective.
- Both the mentor and the mentee will read this manual and familiarize themselves with their respective roles within the mentoring process as well as the suggested topics and activities to engage in over the course of the mentoring relationship.
Mentors undoubtedly have a strong influence on a mentee which, ultimately, will lead to an impact on the organizational system. Given this, it is essential that mentors have the following:

QUALIFICATIONS:
- Commitment to the mission of Extension;
- Demonstrated and effective skills as a leader, manager and supervisor with their county Extension teams and within their county Extension offices;
- Knowledge and clear understanding of the policies and procedures of North Carolina State University and/or North Carolina A&T State University (if applicable), North Carolina Cooperative Extension, and their respective counties;
- A minimum of five (5) years of experience as a County Extension Director;
- Currently serving in a district and/or county similar to that of the new CED.

In the mentor selection process, preferences and priority will be given to individuals who possess the following CHARACTERISTICS (listed below in no particular order):
- Strong leader, ethical manager and effective supervisor;
- Team player; positive attitude; self-confident and well-skilled in their director role;
- Trustworthy; ethical professional behavior;
- Strong communication skills; attentive listening skills;
- Respected by peers and shows respect for others;
- Listens and communicates effectively;
- Patient, encouraging and caring; recognizes and encourages excellence;
- Appreciates and encourages diversity;
- Flexible, adaptable and is receptive to new ideas.

SELECTION of mentors involves administrators within Extension. Mentors are identified by their District Extension Directors (DEDs). These names and additional information (position, years of employment in Extension, contact information, county) are submitted to Extension Organizational Development (EOD). EOD provides training to the County Extension Directors who are selected to serve as mentors. EOD works with the DEDs to make mentor/mentee assignments and appropriate matches as new County Extension Directors are hired. The District Administrative Associates (DAAs) provide lists of new hires each month so that matching can occur as close to the New CED’s start date as possible.

TRAINING of mentors will occur once they have been identified and selected. This training is required and will be either face-to-face group trainings and/or offered online. Mentors are required to attend the training before they can be matched with a new CED hire. The training will cover information important to the success of the mentoring relationship.
The Mentoring Program: Benefits

The following is an outline of some of the general benefits of mentoring. However, it is important for mentors to realize that they play an important role not only in the success of their mentees, but also in the overall success of Extension as an organization. Sharing their wisdom, time and experiences with those who will continue to carry Extension forward is greatly appreciated.

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Recipient</th>
<th>Benefit</th>
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| Mentor    | • Enhanced personal growth and development.  
        | • Revitalized interest in work.  
        | • Close relationship with the new county extension director/mentee.  
        | • Gratification from watching the new CED develop.  
        | • New ideas and perspectives generated.  
        | • Development and promotion of positive aspects of Extension.  
        | • Gives something back to the organization (time, talent, wisdom).  
        | • Passes on knowledge to the next generation of Extension leaders.  
        | • Sense of accomplishments through mentee’s success. |
| New Hire  | • Supportive atmosphere.  
        | • Information on leadership, management and director skills.  
        | • Development of new proficiencies.  
        | • Development of new CED’s confidence in their new role.  
        | • Knowledge of Extension and the land-grant system.  
        | • Insight into organizational aspects of Extension.  
        | • Professional networking.  
        | • Non-evaluative feedback.  
        | • Opportunity to be successful.  
        | • Will learn the multiple responsibilities CEDs have. |
| Organization | • Enhanced performance of the new CED.  
        | • Increases the employee retention rate and reduces turnover as new CED learns to lead and manage effectively.  
        | • Positive work environment and organizational climate.  
        | • Development of future leaders.  
        | • Development and/or enhancement of talent and skills at the leadership level.  
        | • Continuity of organizational culture.  
        | • Increases collegiality and teamwork.  
        | • Increases productivity, efficiency and effectiveness. |
Expectations of a Mentor

Thank you for agreeing to take on the role of Mentor for a new County Extension Director hires in North Carolina Cooperative Extension. The Mentoring Program is part of the Extension Onboarding process, and the goal of the Mentoring Program is to provide newly hired CEDs with a mentor from their district (or a neighboring district) for one (1) year. Upon receiving their assignment of a mentee, the mentor needs to initiate contact with the new CED within five (5) days. Please know that your role as a mentor means that you agree to devote time and energy to the mentoring relationship; this same expectation is true for the mentee.

You were chosen as a mentor because you exhibit a majority of these characteristics:

- You have extensive knowledge and experience within North Carolina Cooperative Extension;
- You have a commitment to the mission of Extension;
- You are a strong and positive leader in your CED role and in your county;
- You have good communication skills;
- You have established a network of resources; and
- You have had experience managing time and tasks.

In addition, you are respected among your peers, your opinions are sought by others, and you exhibit collegiality and teamwork. You are also open to new ideas and to supporting the next generation of Extension leaders.

Mentors convey the organization’s culture, traditions, values and strategies for accomplishing goals to their mentee. Mentors also provide non-evaluative support for newly hired CEDs and an open atmosphere for dialogue. In addition, mentors should:

- Pass on leadership, management, supervisory and organizational skills.
- Listen and question.
- Teach specific competencies related to being a county extension director.
- Provide appropriate guidance and encouragement.
- Demonstrate trust.
- Build confidence within their mentee.
- Provide support and counsel.
- Act as a role model and maintain a professional relationship with the mentee.
- Give constructive feedback.
- Foster creativity.
- Assist with self-evaluation.
- Help identify ways to establish appropriate professional boundaries so that work/life balance is practiced and realized.
- Provide networking opportunities.
- Discuss mentee’s accomplishments.
- Act as a colleague, ally and co-leader.
- Initiate contact and follow up with the mentee on a regular basis.

[List continued on next page]
- Maintain confidentiality - this is essential for the mentoring relationship to be successful given that private or sensitive information may be shared. **However,** if something concerning the mentor or the mentee needs to be discussed with others, it should first be discussed within the mentoring relationship. In addition, if there are concerns of an illegal nature or concerns about the health/safety of the mentor or mentee, these matters can and should be discussed with the appropriate DED, EOD or Extension Human Resources. Any matters that cannot be resolved between the parties involved need to follow the appropriate chain of command that first starts with the DED.
- Keep in mind that the DEDs are the supervisors and are the ones to whom County Extension Directors report.

The mentor has an important role in the development of the new CED. However, there are certain things mentors should AVOID in the mentoring relationship:
- Criticizing the mentee.
- Criticizing Extension and/or the Universities.
- Gossiping about others in Extension and/or the county.
- Trying to solve all of the mentee’s problems.
- Trying to give advice to the mentee on everything.
- Encouraging the mentee to be totally dependent upon you.
- Complaining about your own problems to the mentee.
- Being too busy and not following up when the mentee needs your support or guidance.
- Taking responsibility for the mentee’s programs or duties.

Both the mentor and the mentee have many things to juggle in their day-to-day work schedules. Given this, during their first meeting with one another, mentors and mentees need to schedule their meetings and determine how they will maintain on-going interactions. The mentor should talk with their mentee every two to four weeks to discuss the mentee’s progress either in person, over the phone or online. Mentor and mentee need to meet face-to-face (either in person or online) at least once a month for the first nine months of the mentoring relationship.

As a mentor, it is important to remember that your mentee may have limited knowledge and experience either with Extension and/or as a leader and manager. Get to know her or him as an individual. Use this knowledge of her/his abilities, interests and goals as a foundation upon which to build during the next twelve (12) months.

One other consideration regarding the mentoring relationship is that the mentor can, and will, gain knowledge and insight from the mentee as well. Mentoring is a “two-way street” where both parties can learn from each other and benefit from the mentoring relationship.
To begin the mentoring relationship and continuing the process:

- Write a letter to your assigned mentee (see Appendix A).
- Complete your Mentor/Mentee Biographical Sketch within the first week of your mentee’s employment (see Appendix B).
- Send copies of the letter and biographical sketch to your mentee.
- Call the mentee to initiate the relationship.
- Get started early! Set up the first face-to-face meeting as soon as possible and no later than two weeks of the new CED’s hire date.
- Within the first 30 days of the mentoring assignment, Extension Organizational Development (EOD) will check in with both the mentor and mentee. This check-in will be in the form of a Mentor Program Evaluation. The purpose of the check-in is to verify that initial contact has been made and progress is being experienced. It is at this point that an online survey will be emailed to both the mentor and the mentee.
- During the course of the mentoring relationship, EOD may email or call the mentor and the mentee to check in with them informally.
- Formal evaluations will be done at the 3-month, 6-month and the conclusion of the one-year mentoring relationship. Online evaluations forms will be emailed to both the mentor and the mentee; please complete these.
- If at any point during the mentoring process a change needs to be made within the mentoring relationship, EOD will work with the respective DEDs to make those changes.
- Upon completion of the first year of the formal mentoring process, the mentor should complete the Mentoring Program Evaluation Form (Appendix D) and submit it to both the mentee’s CED and Extension Organizational Development (EOD) within one month of the mentor/mentee relationship officially terminating.
- Mentors and mentees are encouraged to informally maintain their mentoring relationship after the first year of formal mentoring. Although no formal evaluation will take place, mentors are asked to continue to be available to their mentees for consultation, guidance, leadership development suggestions, and other work-related topics of discussion.
General Roles for Mentors*

Communicator

- Encourages two-way exchange of information.
- Listens to the mentee’s work-related concerns and responds appropriately.
- Establishes an environment for open interaction.
- Schedules uninterrupted time to meet with the mentee.
- Acts as a sounding board for ideas and concerns.

Coach

- Works with mentee to identify and understand career-related skills, interests and values.
- Helps mentee evaluate the appropriateness of leadership and management decisions.
- Helps mentee plan strategies to achieve mutually agreed-upon professional goals.
- Helps to clarify leadership goals and developmental needs.
- Teaches leadership, management and supervisory skills.
- Reinforces effective on-the-job performances.
- Recommends specific behaviors in which the mentee needs improvement.
- Leads by example.

Advisor

- Communicates the formal and informal realities and expectations in the organization.
- Recommends training opportunities from which the mentee could benefit.
- Recommends appropriate strategies for leadership role.
- Helps the mentee identify resources required for director role.
- Helps the mentee identify challenges and how to address these in an appropriate and professional manner.

Referral Partner

- Expands the mentee’s network of professional contacts.
- Helps link the mentee with appropriate educational opportunities.
- Identifies resources to help the mentee with specific problems.
- Follows up to ensure that the referred resources were useful.
- Encourages mentee to seek additional guidance and support from other “informal” mentors.

Mentor Code of Ethics*

In addition to the roles and responsibilities outlined for mentors in this manual, mentors are also expected to adhere to the following ethical guidelines:

As a mentor:

- I will meet with my mentee regularly in accordance with the expectations and instructions set forth in the Extension Mentoring Program for New County Extension Directors.

- I will endeavor to listen to and not lecture my mentee.

- I will provide guidance and feedback in an appropriate and supportive manner.

- I will help my mentee understand that I am a colleague on whom they can rely for guidance and support.

- I will serve as a positive role model for my mentee, helping them see the need for adherence to the expectations and responsibilities associated with being a new CED.

- I will keep my mentee’s confidence to the extent possible without violating policies, laws or ethical principles associated with N.C. Cooperative Extension, North Carolina State University and North Carolina A&T State University. I will inform my mentee as to the limitations on my ability to keep their confidence. If there is a reason that I need to disclose anything relating to my mentee, I will attempt to do so in a manner that is least harmful and most beneficial to my mentee and to the Extension Mentoring Program for New County Extension Directors. I know that the way to address a problem is to first discuss it with the person(s) involved; if not resolved, then involve the DED. If not resolved at the CED level, then talk with the appropriate administrator and/or office in Extension such as Extension Human Resources or Extension Organizational Development.

- I will keep in mind my commitment to always act in the best interest of my mentee and of the Extension Mentoring Program for New County Extension Directors. I will assist my mentee with attaining the knowledge and skills needed to be a responsible, productive and successful CED. I will avoid any activity that detracts from these goals.

- I will avoid any impropriety, or the appearance of any impropriety, in my relationship with my mentee and the Extension Mentoring Program for New County Extension Directors.

*Adapted from: “Mentor Code of Ethics”, www.humdevcrt.org, Milwaukee, WI
Responsibilities of a Mentee

The following are the expectations for the mentee. It is important for you, as the mentee, to keep in mind that your mentor is a supportive colleague who has a desire to support and guide you in your new role as a County Extension Director. You, as the mentee, need to plan to devote time and energy to the relationship, just as the mentor will. Both the mentee and mentor can (and should) benefit from the mentoring relationship. While you will be assigned one mentor formally, we do encourage you to seek out the advice and support of others. You also need to keep in mind that your DED is your direct supervisor, so seeking information and direction from your DED is extremely important as well as expected. Having regular conversations with your DED and understanding their expectations of you will help you gain further knowledge and information to make you more successful in your leadership role.

In order for the mentoring relationship with your assigned mentor to be successful, you as the Mentee, are expected to:

- Review your mentor’s biographical sketch to learn more about their background.
- Complete the biographical sketch (Appendix B) and share it with your mentor within the first week of your mentor assignment.
- Establish open and honest communication as well as a way to exchange ideas.
- Maintain confidentiality; this is essential. If something concerning the mentor or the new support staff member needs to be discussed with others, first discuss it within the mentoring relationship. If not resolved within the mentoring relationship, then discuss it at the next level of management which is the DED. If not resolved at the DED level, then discuss the situation with either Extension Human Resources or Extension Organizational Development or other appropriate administrator within Extension.
- Understand what you need, in terms of learning the different aspects of your job, from the mentoring relationship and communicate your goals and aspirations to your mentor.
- Understand you have as much to give to the mentoring relationship as you have to receive.
- Act on the mentor’s advice when it is applicable to your situation.
- Follow up with resources and references the mentor shares to find answers or needed information.
- Keep all scheduled appointments with the mentor, display professional behavior and dress as appropriate.
- Schedule biweekly contact with the mentor through telephone, email or face-to-face meetings.
- Be flexible on meeting times and places.
- Be realistic and maintain a positive attitude.
- Understand that you have a formal mentor that is assigned to you. You are encouraged to build a network within Extension, so you are encouraged to seek informal mentors such as those who work in the same type of county as you, who are specialists, and who you can collaborate with on career-related endeavors.
- Be ambitious and enthusiastic.
Given the fact that the mentor has a full-time role within Extension and that the purpose of the mentoring relationship is to provide guidance, new CEDs should AVOID:

- Asking advice on everything; have a purpose in each request.
- Asking the mentor to tell you precisely what to do or to act in your place.
- Relying on the mentor to give or seek answers to all of your questions or requests.
- Complaining about other people or missed opportunities in an unprofessional manner.
- Committing yourself to obligations you cannot keep.
- Cancelling meetings or visits with the mentor at the last minute.
Expectations of a Mentee

A Mentee is expected to:

- Utilize the mentoring relationship in a way that builds their capacity and ability as a leader, manager, supervisor and director so they can, in turn, be effective and successful in their role as a County Extension Director.
- Be willing to accept constructive feedback.
- Communicate regularly with their mentor.
- Act professionally.
- Exhibit flexibility.
- Demonstrate initiative.
- Notify their mentor of problems or concerns.
- Maintain confidentiality (unless as noted in this manual).
- Express appreciation for their mentor’s efforts.
- Maintain a professional relationship with the mentor and have appropriate boundaries within the mentoring relationship (i.e. not calling on mentor during non-work hours or asking personal favors of mentor).
- Plan for leadership and professional development.
- Be open to new ideas.
- Respect their mentor’s time.
- Take action on the information provided by their mentor.
- Pass on the gift of mentoring to others.
Suggestions for a Successful Mentoring Visit

Monthly face-to-face visits will result in effective communication between the mentor and the mentee. The visits will be in addition to phone/email/online contacts aimed at building rapport, fostering growth and helping the new CED acclimate to their new leadership role within North Carolina Cooperative Extension.

The following guidelines for mentors will help assure a productive and successful visit with their mentee:

- Schedule adequate time with minimal interruptions to foster a positive mentoring relationship.
- If needed, provide directions to meeting location(s).
- Be ready and accessible for mentoring visit(s).
- Know what you want to accomplish to enhance the mentoring visit.
- Have information readily available for sharing.
- Allow time for an office tour and introduction of county staff wherever the meeting is being held.
- Plan out activities that may benefit the mentee such as:
  - Allowing the mentee to see the mentor work with budgets, accounts, etc.
  - Discussing how to organize CED responsibilities.
  - Processing best practices for engaging team members, evaluating office staff, delegating, managing time, communicating, etc. – i.e., the important components of being an effective and efficient leader, manager and supervisor.
  - Sharing key contacts and resources with mentee.
  - Showing mentee how to effectively use different university systems that are critical to the role of the County Extension Director such as those pertaining to performance reviews, financial operations, etc.
  - Inviting the mentee to an appropriate leadership or professional development meeting.
- Allow time for the mentee to ask questions, process concerns, share experiences, identify areas that need more clarity, or explore ideas.
- Share meeting agendas in advance.
- Keep in mind that the mentor and mentee can also meet at professional organization meetings, work-related activities, etc.; think about how to be creative with when, where and why you meet.
Questions for the mentee to ask the mentor:

- How long have you been serving as a county extension director?
- Did you work for North Carolina Cooperative Extension prior to becoming a CED? If not, what was your experience prior to becoming a CED?
- What is the greatest satisfaction in your job?
- What is the greatest challenge in your job?
- What are the first three (3) things I need to do as a new CED?
- What are the top three (3) things I need to know about my new role as a CED?

Questions for the mentor to ask the mentee:

- Have you met with your DED and do you understand the expectations your DED has in regards to your role as a CED?
- Have you met with your Extension office staff?
- What have you learned so far about your Extension office and your county?
- What goals do you have for the mentoring relationship?
- What can we do to help you meet those goals?
- What is something you want to make sure to ask me today?
- Have you ever worked with Extension before (in another state or while in school)?
- What has been your previous experience with Extension; i.e. were you involved with 4-H, etc.?

For both the mentor and mentee:

- How often will we meet? (keep in mind you need to meet at least 9 times over the first year of the new hire’s employment and it will be helpful to meet more often during the first six months of the new hire’s employment).
- On what dates will we meet?
- Who will take the initiative to see that the meetings occur? Shall we alternate taking the initiative meeting to meeting?
- What do we both hope to get out of the mentoring relationship?
- Are there leadership or professional development activities we both plan to attend where we can meet and talk?
The County Extension Office
- Transitioning from agent to building and leading a team (if new CED is a former agent)
- Becoming familiar with the county Extension office’s protocol
- Reviewing and understanding your Extension office staff’s job descriptions
- Setting individual expectations and goals for each member of your Extension office
- Setting expectations and goals with a county team
- Ways to effectively supervise your Extension team
- Understanding your county budget
- Reviewing POA, ERS and EPAT data; how to use this information to lead and manage
- Developing a strategy to learn about different programmatic areas
- Preparing for and conducting performance reviews, disciplinary actions, etc.
- Effective communication both inside and outside the county Extension office
- Financial operations and budgeting
- How to professionally and effectively handle conflict
- Ways to keep employees engaged
- How to build and lead an effective county extension program
- Determine how to measure success both on an individual and team basis
- How to demonstrate standards and “rules of engagement for your team” related to work ethic, professionalism, customer service, attitude, etc.
- What to do in a crisis
- How to manage time and responsibilities in an effective and efficient manner

North Carolina Cooperative Extension
- The North Carolina Cooperative Extension Vision and Mission (if applicable, i.e., if new CED is hired from outside the NCCE system)
- Cultural norms associated with Extension and with being a CED

Working in and with the County
- Meeting with key leaders in the county
- Working with your county manager and other county departments
- Understanding the county’s power structure
- Understanding the POW and its relationship with the county’s strategic plan
- Identify and develop ways to meet with stakeholders
- Working effectively with an advisory council
- Ways to build relationships and collaborations

Working with North Carolina State University
- Identifying university resources for CEDs
- Learning the various university systems that CEDS need to know
Suggested Activities for Mentors and Their Mentees

- Visit/tour your mentor’s county office
- Job shadow (accompany mentor on daily activities)
- Assist with reports/paperwork
- Share record keeping strategies
- Discuss “Extension” terminology
- Review resources and systems for county extension directors
- Host mentee at district/area meetings, professional association meetings
- Share knowledge between each other
- Attend relevant county-level meetings, events, workshops, etc.
- Socialize to build a positive relationship (lunch; birthday; etc.)
- Share copies of appropriate documents that can help new CED learn how to work with employees, stakeholders, county leaders, etc.
- Train how to handle difficult situations with employees and clientele; allow mentee to listen in on speaker phone if appropriate
- Share systems for daily activities and time management
Summary of the 16 Laws of Mentoring*


1. **The Law of Positive Environment**
   - Create a positive environment where potential and motivation are released and options are discussed.

2. **The Law of Character Development**
   - Nurture a positive character by helping to develop not just talent, but a wealth of mental and ethical traits.

3. **The Law of Independence**
   - Promote autonomy; make the learner independent of you, not dependent on you.

4. **The Law of Limited Responsibility**
   - Be responsible to them, not for them.

5. **The Law of Shared Mistakes**
   - Share your failures as well as your successes.

6. **The Law of Planned Objectives**
   - Prepare specific goals for your mentoring relationship.

7. **The Law of Inspection**
   - Monitor, review, critique, and discuss potential actions. Do not just expect performance without inspection.

8. **The Law of Tough Love**
   - The mentor acknowledges the need to encourage independence in the learner.

9. **The Law of Small Success**
   - Use a stepping stone process to build on accomplishments and achieve great success.

10. **The Law of Direction**
    - It is important to teach by giving options as well as direction.

Continued…
11. The Law of Risk
   - A mentor should be aware that the learner’s failure may reflect back upon him or her. A learner should realize that a mentor’s advice will not always work.

12. The Law of Mutual Protection
   - Commit to maintain privacy, protect integrity, defend character, and respect the experiences and the wisdom you have shared with each other.

13. The Law of Communication
   - The mentor and the learner must balance listening with delivering information.

14. The Law of Extended Commitment
   - The mentoring relationship may extend beyond the typical 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. business day and/or traditional workplace role or position.

15. The Law of Life Transition
   - As a mentor, when you help a learner enter the next stage of her/his life or career, you will enter the next stage of yours.

16. The Law of Fun
   - Make mentoring a wonderful experience - laugh, smile and enjoy the process.
Role of the District Director (DED)

The role of the District Extension Director (DED) is critical to the success of the mentoring relationship and to *The Extension Mentoring Program for New County Extension Directors* as a whole. The DED is involved in the following ways:

**Recommendations**
- Encourages qualified CEDs with five (5) or more years of experience to become mentors.
- Provides Extension Organizational Development (EOD) with suggestions for who to contact about becoming a mentor.

**Ongoing Support**
- Follows up with new CEDs by including the mentoring process as a topic for discussion on the new employee checklist (Example: “How is it going with your mentor?”; “Are you and your mentor meeting on a regular basis?”).
- Supports CEDs who agree to be a mentor by allowing them time to spend with their mentee, and understanding the mentor’s need to be out of the office more than usual to meet with their mentee.
- Encourages new CEDs to seek guidance from mentors.
- Attends the training session for mentors either in person or online.
- When appropriate, works with the mentor and/or mentee to resolve any concerns or address issues that are of a confidential nature.

**Evaluation**
- Provides input to Extension Organizational Development for ongoing evaluation and improvement of the mentoring program.
- Completes the DED Evaluation of *The Extension Mentoring Program for County Extension Directors* (Appendix D).
- Considers the mentor’s involvement, time and commitment to *The Extension Mentoring Program for New County Extension Directors* when conducting the mentor’s annual performance evaluation. Important to note that in the performance appraisal, there is a section where mentoring can be noted under “Professional Development Activities”. It is important that mentors are acknowledged for the time and guidance they provide mentees as this work encourages and supports both the present and future success of Extension and its workforce.
Evaluation

Evaluation of *The Extension Mentoring Program for New County Extension Directors* will take place at different intervals during the year-long mentor assignment to ensure a productive mentoring relationship is established and is effective.

At the 30-day, 3-month, 6-month, and 12-month marks within the year-long mentoring assignment, EOD will email a short online survey to the mentors and mentees to check on their progress and to determine if any changes are needed. EOD will work with the respective DEDs if changes need to be made.

Online evaluation forms will be completed at the end of the one-year formal mentoring relationship by both the mentor and the new CED. In addition, the DED for the mentor and the DED for the mentee will provide evaluative feedback. The purpose of these evaluations are two-fold. First, the DEDs and EOD want to determine the degree of success in achieving program objectives. Secondly, these groups also want to identify the areas of *The Extension Mentoring Program for New County Extension Directors* that may need to be improved so that the mentoring experience is more effective and impactful. The evaluation will be reviewed by EOD and decisions will be made regarding program changes.

See Appendix C for examples of each of the Evaluation forms. When appropriate and if permission is provided, information from the evaluations will be shared with the respective mentor and/or mentee by Extension Organizational Development. **All evaluations need to be submitted online by both the mentee and the mentor within one (1) week of the date they are emailed to them**
Appendix A:
Sample Letter Mentor Sends to Mentee
Sample Letter: The following is a sample of a letter that a mentor might send to their assigned mentee as a way of initiating the mentoring relationship.

[Put on county letterhead]

First Name, Last Name  
Extension Office Address  
City, NC Zip Code

Dear Mentee’s Name,

Welcome to your new role as a County Extension Director (CED) for North Carolina Cooperative Extension. I am pleased that we have been matched as mentor and mentee. This is an exciting opportunity for us to form a working relationship that will provide a positive support system for you.

During our time together, we will examine the responsibilities associated with being a County Extension Director. We will discuss topics related to leadership, management, supervision, decision-making, relationship-building, collaboration, planning and other areas relevant to your role. We will also discuss any concerns or questions you may have. We should plan at least nine (9) face-to-face visits during your first year of employment. We should also stay in regular contact at least two (2) times a month by phone, email or online using Zoom or Google chat.

I would like to set up our first meeting during this first month of your employment. Here are some dates and times I have available: [list a few date and time options]

Please check your calendar and let me know if any of these dates or times work; if not, please let me know times and dates that are convenient for you.

I look forward to being your mentor and to supporting you during your first year as a County Extension Director.

Sincerely,

Mentor  
cc: mentor DED and mentee DED
Appendix B:
Mentor/Mentee Biographical Sketch
Mentor/Mentee Biographical Sketch

The purpose of this document is to provide basic information to facilitate the development of a positive relationship. Please note that all personal information is voluntary.

Name: ____________________________  Position Title: ______________________________

Work Address: __________________________________________________________________

Work Phone: ________________________  Work Email: ______________________________

I chose to work for North Carolina Cooperative Extension because

________________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________________

The reason I am excited about/enjoy a career with North Carolina Cooperative Extension is because:

________________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________________

My most valuable strengths are:

________________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________________

My hobbies/leisure interests are:

________________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________________

Community activities I am involved in are:

________________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________________

(Mentee only) Topics I would like to discuss with my mentor are:

________________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________________
Appendix C:
Mentor/Mentee Evaluation Forms
30-Day Mentor/Mentee Evaluation

1. What is your first and last name? ____________________________________________

2. What is your email address? ________________________________________________

3. The person completing this evaluation... □ New CED/Mentee □ Mentor

4. How do you connect and/or keep in contact? Note all that apply.
   □ Face-to-face □ Phone □ Text □ Zoom □ Other
   If “other” explain: _________________________________________________________

5. Please list topics you have discussed.
   ________________________________________________________________
   ________________________________________________________________
   ________________________________________________________________

6. What is your perspective on the effectiveness of this relationship?
   ________________________________________________________________
   ________________________________________________________________
   ________________________________________________________________

7. Describe three or four activities which have been most helpful in developing your Mentor/Mentee relationship.
   ________________________________________________________________
   ________________________________________________________________
   ________________________________________________________________
   ________________________________________________________________

8. Describe any challenges that are currently impacting the development of the Mentor/Mentee relationship at this point.
   ________________________________________________________________
   ________________________________________________________________
   ________________________________________________________________
   ________________________________________________________________

9. I understand that part of the Mentor Program involves a willingness of both mentor and the mentee to learn and grow from the mentor relationship. Given this, I agree to allow Extension Organizational Development to share my feedback and comments with my mentor/mentee.
   □ Yes □ No □ Please contact me to discuss further

10. Please enter your email address and phone number if you selected “please contact me to discuss further.”
    ________________________________________________________________
3-Month Mentor/Mentee Evaluation

1. What is your first and last name? ____________________________________________

2. What is your email address? ________________________________________________

3. The person completing this evaluation... □ New CED/Mentee  □ Mentor

4. When did your mentor/mentee relationship begin (month/year): ________________

5. How many times have you met to date? □ 0-5  □ 6-10  □ 11-15  □ 16-20  □ 21+

6. How do you connect and/or keep in contact? Note all that apply.
   □ Face-to-face  □ Phone  □ Text  □ Zoom  □ Other
   If “other” explain: ________________________________________________________

7. To date, what topics have you discussed?
   _________________________________________________________________________

8. From your perspective, this mentor/mentee relationship is...
   □ Very effective  □ Effective  □ Somewhat effective  □ Neither effective or ineffective
   □ Somewhat ineffective  □ Ineffective  □ Very ineffective

9. Describe three or four activities which have been most helpful in developing you Mentor/Mentee relationship.
   _________________________________________________________________________
   _________________________________________________________________________
   _________________________________________________________________________

10. Indicate any challenges that are currently impacting the development of your mentor/mentee relationship.
    □ Distance  □ Time  □ Mentor busy  □ Mentor is new to their role  □ Mentee busy
    □ Counties operate differently  □ Personality differences  □ Other: ______________

11. Comments regarding this relationship:
    _________________________________________________________________________
    _________________________________________________________________________

12. I understand that part of the Mentor Program involves a willingness of both mentor and the
    mentee to learn and grow from the mentor relationship. Given this, I agree to allow Extension
    Organizational Development to share my feedback and comments with my mentor/mentee.
    □ Yes  □ No  □ Please contact me to discuss further

13. Please enter your email address and phone number if your selected “please contact me to
    discuss further.”
   _________________________________________________________________________
6-Month Mentor/Mentee Evaluation

1. What is your first and last name? ________________________________

2. What is your email address? ____________________________________________

3. The person completing this evaluation…  □ New CED/Mentee  □ Mentor

4. When did your mentor/mentee relationship begin (month/year): ________________________

5. How many times have you met to date? □ 0-5  □ 6-10   □ 11-15 □ 16-20 □ 21+

6. How do you connect and/or keep in contact? Note all that apply.
   □ Face-to-face  □ Phone □ Text □ Zoom □ Other
   If “other” explain: ________________________________________________

7. To date, what topics have you discussed?
   ________________________________________________________________

8. From your perspective, this mentor/mentee relationship is…
   □ Very effective  □ Effective □ Somewhat effective □ Neither effective or ineffective
   □ Somewhat ineffective □ Ineffective □ Very ineffective

9. Indicate any challenges that are currently impacting the development of your mentor/mentee relationship.
   □ Distance  □ Time □ Mentor busy □ Mentor is new to their role □ Mentee busy
   □ Counties operate differently □ Personality differences □ Other: ______________________

10. What is your perspective on the effectiveness of this relationship?
    ________________________________________________________________

11. Describe three or four activities which have been most helpful in developing you Mentor/Mentee relationship.
    ________________________________________________________________
    ________________________________________________________________
    ________________________________________________________________

12. I understand that part of the Mentor Program involves a willingness of both mentor and the mentee to learn and grow from the mentor relationship. Given this, I agree to allow Extension Organizational Development to share my feedback and comments with my mentor/mentee.
    □ Yes  □ No   □ Please contact me to discuss further

13. Please enter your email address and phone number if your selected “please contact me to discuss further.”
    ________________________________________________________________
Year-End Mentor/Mentee Evaluation

1. What is your first and last name? __________________________________________

2. What is your email address? _____________________________________________

3. The person completing this evaluation… ☐ New CED/Mentee ☐ Mentor

4. When did your mentor/mentee relationship begin (month/year): ________________

5. How many times have you met to date? ☐ 0-5 ☐ 6-10 ☐ 11-15 ☐ 16-20 ☐ 21+

6. How do you connect and/or keep in contact? Note all that apply.
   ☐ Face-to-face ☐ Phone ☐ Text ☐ Zoom ☐ Other
   If “other” explain: ______________________________________________________

7. To date, what topics have you discussed? __________________________________

8. From your perspective, this mentor/mentee relationship is…
   ☐ Very effective ☐ Effective ☐ Somewhat effective ☐ Neither effective or ineffective
   ☐ Somewhat ineffective ☐ Ineffective ☐ Very ineffective

9. Describe three or four activities which have been most helpful in developing you Mentor/Mentee relationship.
   _______________________________________________________________________
   _______________________________________________________________________
   _______________________________________________________________________

10. Indicate any challenges that are currently impacting the development of your mentor/mentee relationship.
    ☐ Distance ☐ Time ☐ Mentor busy ☐ Mentor is new to their role ☐ Mentee busy
    ☐ Counties operate differently ☐ Personality differences ☐ Other: ______________

11. Comments regarding this relationship:
    _______________________________________________________________________
    _______________________________________________________________________
    _______________________________________________________________________

12. What might we do to improve the program?
    _______________________________________________________________________

13. What one or two things should remain unchanged?
    _______________________________________________________________________
    _______________________________________________________________________

14. I understand that part of the Mentor Program involves a willingness of both mentor and the mentee to learn and grow from the mentor relationship. Given this, I agree to allow Extension Organizational Development to share my feedback and comments with my mentor/mentee.
   ☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Please contact me to discuss further

15. Please enter your email address and phone number if your selected “please contact me to discuss further.”
    _______________________________________________________________________
    _______________________________________________________________________

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Appendix D:
Communication Tips and Generational Differences
Tips for Mentors and Mentees: Communicating Across the Generations

1. **Find common ground with communication and help the mentee learn the “rules of engagement” for Extension:** In terms of formality, what is and is not acceptable within Extension, best ways to communicate both with each other as mentor and mentee and with others (such as the Extension employees, clients and citizens Extension serves). Be sure that the mentee is aware of the Community Standards of Extension. (https://eod.ces.ncsu.edu/wp-content/uploads/2019/05/Community-Standards.pdf?fwd=no)

2. **Use multiple communication avenues:** Such as text, email or Zoom. Encourage the mentee to think through the way in which their colleagues and clients prefer to communicate. As the mentor, talk with the mentee about their communication preferences and how these can help with the way in which you, the mentor, provides mentoring.

3. **Respect differences and value similarities:** Mentor and mentee are encouraged to talk with each other about what they value in terms or work, building relationships (an important component of an Extension support staff professional’s job), and other professional areas of life. Recognizing what you have in common and how you differ can enrich the mentoring relationship.

4. **Discuss what motivates you:** Motivation refers to what drives people to accomplish goals and can take on different forms of needs and wants. For the older generations, getting the job done was often the top priority. Younger generations tend to value praise and guidance. Discuss with each other what motivates you and why.

5. **Ask, don’t assume:** Don’t automatically assume what your mentor or mentee is thinking. Ask them what they are thinking, what they need, and what they prefer. Assumptions can lead to miscommunication; it is important to communicate as clearly as possible and to explore what another person may be thinking or feeling rather than jumping to a conclusion about it.

6. **Be willing to teach AND to be taught:** Both the mentor and the mentee have a lot to gain from the mentoring relationship. Be open to being taught and guided as well as sharing your own experience and advice.

7. **Acknowledge the difference:** Respect what each has to offer the mentoring relationship as well as Extension as a whole. Differences in strengths, perspectives and approaches add value to our organization and to how we can best serve the citizens of North Carolina.

Adapted from: 8 Tips to Communicate with 4 Generations in the Workplace. Online at https://www.iofficecorp.com/blog/8-tips-to-communicate-with-4-different-generations-in-the-workplace