



Accomplishments

2020

The NUEL Executive Committee and Steering Committee continue to meet monthly by Zoom. The twice a year NUEL face-to-face meetings were substituted with meetings over Zoom. As a result of NUEL's work, the Extension Committee on Organization and Policy continued to identify Urban Extension as a priority for 2020. The [National Urban Extension Leaders](#) (NUEL) continued to advance the National Urban Extension Initiative Implementation Plan with the specific goals and tasks established in 2018. The "Implementation Plan" approved by ECOP in early 2019 serves as a blueprint for NUEL's actions for the next two to four years to move the national, and state, Extension systems forward and to enhance Extension's work in urban/metropolitan settings. The following set of accomplishments address the recommendations and goals set forth in the [Implementation Plan](#):

The National Urban Extension Communication Network:

- In collaboration with ECOP and Extension Directors/Administrators NUEL identify urban coordinators (UC) at 1862 and 1890 land-grant universities (LGU) in 2019. The urban coordinators serve as points of contact between NUEL and LGU. As of January 2021 eighty-seven urban coordinators have been identified. Currently five 1890, two in the Northeast region and one in the Western region LGUs have not identified an urban coordinator.
- Due to the restrictions in travel brought about by the pandemic, outreach to UC was limited to meetings with their respective regional networks and will be invited to participate in upcoming conferences and summits.
- The NUEL website is currently hosted by eXtension and updated by the Communications Action Team. The process of reviewing of success stories on the website was completed, and the process of securing new success stories for the website is underway.

2020 National Urban Extension Conference (NUEC):

- The conditions brought about by the pandemic caused the postponement of NUEC 21. The conference was postponed to 2022 and the venue moved from Atlantic City to Camden, New Jersey.
- In lieu of the conference NUEL and the Conference Planning Committee organized a virtual National Urban Extension Summit for May 2021 to meet and discuss issues relevant to urban Extension, the priority issues project and recognize the winners of the regional urban Extension leadership award.

Building national partnerships:

- **eXtension**
 - NUEL continues to collaborate with eXtension and to highlight work produced by eXtension fellows. The fellows worked with NUEL and eXtension to gather resources to create an [urban Extension eFieldbook](#) on the eXtension website.
 - The eFieldbook has a considerable number of resources for Extension professionals who work in urban environments.

- **American Farm Bureau Federation (AFBF) Urban County Coalition**
 - NUEL established a strong relationship with the leadership of the AFBF Urban County Coalition (AFBUCC) built upon the 2019 face to face meeting presentation by AFBFUCC and the second annual AFBF Urban Summit and strategic planning session held in 2019.
 - In January 2020 the NUEL chair was invited by AFBFUCC to be part of a panel to talk about the future of urban agriculture and potential for AFBF to support this type of agriculture at the Annual AFBF Convention in Austin, Texas.
 - An early year meeting with AFBFUCC identified the following cities as partners: San Diego, Miami, Newark, Indianapolis, Seattle, Raleigh, Columbus and New York City.
 - Regular meetings have been established with point persons from various cities in the country to discuss and coordinate efforts to respond to future proposals tied to the Urban Agriculture work described in the 2018 Farm Bill. The efforts of this focus group are focused on gathering information on research of economic and social impact studies, urban agriculture ordinances, and new farmer training programs.
 - At the end of May 2020, NUEL, AFBFUCC and Western Center for Metropolitan Extension and Research (WCMER), housed at Washington State University, hosted four national virtual listening sessions to gather input from urban, indoor and emerging agriculture stakeholders for NIFA to inform the criteria set for a new RFA that will be releasing \$40 million of new grant funding for urban, indoor and emerging agriculture over the next 3-5 years. Input from 136 stakeholders who participated, representing 39 states and U.S. territories, was summarized in a [report](#) provided to NIFA. Additional analysis of the input gathered is currently underway by WCMER and Michigan State University School of Planning, Design and Construction.
- **Diversity, Equity and Inclusion**
 - The pandemic required a rapid pivot from live to remote programming throughout Extension and it exposed the disparity in access and availability of information in social and economically challenged areas, as well as extensionists' capacity to respond and address these issues.
 - In partnership with the Southern Rural Development Center, NUEL hosted a webinar to discuss race in partnership with the Racial Healing training team. It was a robust discussion with 155 Extension staff from across the country on bias, recruitment, training and diversity/inclusion. Also discussion on the work in some universities. The webinar presented a model and mode of action for NUEL to address diversity, equity and inclusion.
 - In September 2020, NUEL shared the [feedback gathered](#) during the discussion with the ECOP Program Committee and each of the ECOP regional Executive Administrators for distribution through the regional Extension director associations.

NUEL Programmatic Focus Areas



**Strengthen
Communities**



**Protect the
Environment**



**Improve
our Health**



**Enrich
Youth**



**Feed
our Future**

Regional NUEL networks of Extension staff focused on programming:

- NUEL continued its work to build regional networks of Extension staff working in urban and metropolitan environments around urban Extension programming in the five NUEL program focus areas – Strengthen Communities, Protect the Environment, Improve our Health, Enrich Youth and Feed our Future.
- Virtual regional network meetings of urban Extension staff were held in all five regions during 2020, with most regions meeting on a regular schedule.

- Also, as part of NUEL's regional program networking efforts, and in collaboration with the Western Center for Metropolitan Extension and Research, work continues on the development of the [Leading Edge white papers](#).

Urban Priority Project:

- Within the National Urban Extension Initiative Implementation Plan, NUEL set forth several goals to facilitate cross-state collaboration and the identification and collection of promising programs, operations and leadership success stories or Best Practices within urban Extension. To advance these goals, NUEL worked with the University of Missouri Center for Applied Research and Engagement Systems (CARES) at the end of 2019 to brainstorm and design a process to kick off a national discussion about priorities for Extension's urban work.
- In 2020 NUEL launched the urban Extension Priority Issue Project (PIP). The [PIP Process Outline](#) was reviewed by the ECOP Program Committee in the spring.
- This process will build a more robust national network of urban Extension volunteers and identifies issues that serve as the primary mechanism for cross-state collaboratives and strategic partnerships. and pursue the development of additional resources regionally and/or across the system.
- During the summer, through the NUEL regional staff networks, over 400 Extension staff regionally identified urban issues and then prioritized them. After summarizing the regional issues identified, NUEL identified four - three programmatically focused and one administratively focused - urban issue areas to begin building networks and coalescing Extension resources around.
- The program area issues are: Food Access & Security; Urban Sustainability; and the Social-Emotional-Mental Health Wellbeing of Urban Residents. The administrative issue is: Extension's Urban Workforce.
- The regional urban priority issues and the four national urban priority issues with shared with the ECOP Program Committee in September and October.



Priorities/Goals

2021

The NUEL Steering Committee approved the following list of priorities or goals for 2021:

National NUEL LGU urban coordinators:

- Continue to work with ECOP and regional EDA staff to identify UC from missing LGUs and to keep the list up to date.
- Expand efforts to actively engage state urban coordinators in leadership roles in Regional Networks (RN) and NUEL Action Teams (AT) and encourage them to take leadership roles for achieving RN and AT goals/tasks.

Regional Networks (RNs):

(In the NUEL structure, the role of RNs is to regionally and nationally connect staff and programming across urban areas.)

- Continue to build programmatically focused RNs in all ECOP regions by:
 - Hosting RN meetings in each region during 2021.
 - Include tasks/steps identified in NUEL's National Extension Urban Priority Impact Project.
 - Creating additional opportunities, including virtual, for Extension programming staff to meet each other and network, share best practices, programmatic curriculum, evaluation strategies and explore potential multi-state programmatically focused projects, funding and partnerships as appropriate.

Action Teams (ATs):

(In the NUEL structure, the role of ATs is to work at the national level on professional development, communications and building partnerships.)

- Continue to explore and expand national partnerships with groups like AFBF, JCEP and Extension professional associations.
- Work to actively engage LGU/state UCs and other potential AT members identified through RNs and encourage them to take leadership roles for achieving AT goals/tasks.
- Each AT will update AT roles and responsibilities information sheet and identify a set of priorities to focus the AT work around in 2020, and into future years.

Enhance NUEL's communications ability:

- Develop a workable solution to address NUEL's communication needs identified in 2019.
- More fully active Communications AT to provide leadership for communications solutions identified.

NUEL National Extension Urban Priority Project:

- Finalize white paper outlining the processes and steps for the national Extension urban priorities project. Share the document with ECOP and the regional EDAs to engage them as partners and/or supports.
- Carry out the national Extension urban priorities project as outlined in the [PIP Process Outline white paper](#).

