



Accomplishments

2021

The National Urban Extension Leaders (NUEL) Executive Committee and Steering Committee continued to meet monthly throughout most of 2021 by Zoom. NUEL renewed the face-to-face semiannual meeting in 2021 by holding a meeting in Chattanooga TN. 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](#):

Communicating Across the National Extension System

- Virtual regional network meetings of urban Extension staff focused on building connections and learning from colleagues were held in all five regions throughout 2021, with most regions meeting on a regular schedule.
- Towards the end of 2019, ECOP asked 1862 and 1890 Extension Directors/Administrators to identify at least one lead point of contact, or urban coordinator, for their Extension system. These urban coordinators serve as points of contact between NUEL and their Extension system. As of January 2022, sixty-nine of the seventy-six 1862 and 1890 land-grant Extension systems had identified at least one urban coordinator as a point of contact to NUEL. As new urban coordinators were identified throughout the year, orientation to the role was provided by NUEL’s regional network chairs and an additional orientation session was offered, both as an in-person and virtual option, as part of the NUEL semiannual steering committee meeting in Chattanooga, TN. Outreach to urban coordinators continued through 2021 with more emphasis placed on engaging them in their respective regional networks. Some Regional Networks took advantage of remote quarterly meetings to connect directly with urban coordinators and strengthened communication and facilitated engagement.
- NUEL, with the support of the Western Center for Metropolitan Extension and Research, continued to maintain a national email list with names of over 1,100 urban Extension professionals on it.
- The content of the NUEL website, hosted by the Extension Foundation, was updated by NUEL’s Communication Action Team. The action team also worked with the Extension Foundation to establish or modify four urban-focused Connect Extension sites.
- In the last quarter of the year, NUEL received a \$25,000 New Technologies for Agricultural Extension (NTAE) grant through the Extension Foundation. The focus of NUEL’s NTAE project is two-fold.
 - The first focus is to allow NUEL to employ a Fellow to work with the NUEL Steering Committee on improving and building NUEL’s communication capacity. NUEL’s communication Fellow started in December and worked with the NUEL Steering Committee at its’ December meeting to begin putting together a broad communication strategy that will be finalized and implemented in 2022.
 - The second focus of NUEL’s NTAE project is to help provide leadership for the organization and initiation of a national ECOP Urban Agriculture and Food Systems Program Action Team.

2022 National Urban Extension Conference (NUEC):

- The National Urban Extension Conference planned for May of 2021 was postponed until May of 2022 in the hopes that the conference could be held as an in-person event. The site of NUEC was moved from Atlantic City to Camden, New Jersey. The conference will be held May 23-26, 2022. Updates and other Conference- related information can be found on the [NUEC22 website](#).
- In lieu of hold NUEC in 2021, May 2021 NUEL hosted the virtual National Urban Extension Summit. The Summit focused on refining and expanding the conversation amongst urban Extension professionals around the four urban priority areas NUEL identified in 2020 (urban food access and security, urban sustainability, the physical/emotional/mental well-being of urban residents, and concerns of Extension's internal urban workforce.) Additionally, the Summit was used as a mechanism to pilot the National Registry of Programs & Assets with Extension Foundation and begin to populate the database with programs specifically designed and delivered to urban audiences. Over 300 Extension professionals attend some portion of the first day plenary session. Around 175 staff participated in one of the priority program brainstorming sessions on the second day.

Building National Partnerships:

Extension Foundation

- NUEL continued to work collaboratively with the Extension Foundation through out 2021. These collaborative efforts are mentioned throughout the NUEL Accomplishment Report, but here are the highlights:
 - Received \$25,000 NTAE grant to support capacity and communication building of NUEL to increase NUEL's ability to effectively communicate across the national Extension system, and to support NUEL's work to help organize and initiate the new ECOP Urban Agriculture and Food Systems Program Action Team.
 - Extension Foundation continues to host NUEL website
 - NUEL worked with Extension Foundation to provide input into the development of the new National Registry of Extension Programs & Assets and was one of the first groups to introduce and promote the registry to begin to populate it with urban Extension programs.
 - NUEL launched two new Connect Extension groups, updated and expanded one, and worked with another Connect Extension group to develop an urban affinity subgroup within their group.

American Farm Bureau Federation (AFBF) Urban County Coalition

- In 2020 NUEL and the AFBF Urban County Coalition pulled together Extension and Farm Bureau representatives from eight cities, two from each ECOP geographic region, to discuss needs and opportunities that Extension and Farm Bureau might partner on around urban agriculture. The group continued to meet regularly throughout most of 2021.
- The group identified three potential needs or potential areas that they might partner around. The areas were: gathering information on research of economic and social impact studies, urban agriculture ordinances, and new farmer training programs.
 - Members of the group submitted a North Central Region SARA grant proposal to compile a sampling of urban ordinances that impact agriculture and develop training for farmers and key community leaders. Unfortunately, the proposal was not funded.
 - Members of the group submitted a conference proposal to NIFA to host a researcher conference to explore and develop scholarly interest in research around the economic and social impact of urban agriculture on urban communities. Again, unfortunately the proposal was not funded.
 - Members of the group submitted a proposal for a NTAE grant to do an inventory of current new urban farmer training programs and a literature review around urban agriculture. This project

was titled The New American Farmer and received a \$10,000 NTAE grant and an additional \$10,000 through the ECOP Program Committee.

- Also through this partnership with the AFBF Urban County Coalition, NUEL has been able to build a relationship with NRCS staff working in the new USDA NRCS Office of Urban Agriculture and Innovative Programs.
- In the last quarter of 2021, the AFBF members of this group were invited to join the new ECOP Urban Agriculture and Food Systems Program Action Team and this ad hoc partnership group was discontinued.

Extension Committee on Organization and Policy Program Action Teams

- In 2020 NUEL launched the urban Extension Priority Issue Project (PIP) which involve a national conversation with Extension professionals to identify a small number of urban program priorities that national initiatives and partnerships could be built around. In early 2021 NUEL shared with the ECOP Program Committee the four issues that were identified through the PIP. They were Urban Food Security and Access, Urban Sustainability, the Physical/Emotional/Mental Well-being of Urban Residents, and Concerns of Extension's Internal Urban Workforce.
- Around this same time:
 - NUEL was asked by ECOP to develop a white paper on urban agriculture, which a small task force pulled together by NUEL did, which became the Urban Agriculture and Food Systems information on the [ECOP Advocacy Toolkit webpage](#).
 - ECOP announced the desire to create seven Program Action Teams (PAT). The programmatic areas identified by ECOP covered or aligned with the urban priorities identified through the NUEL PIP. Hence, in August of 2021 the NUEL Steering Committee decided to discontinue work on the NUEL PIP and to fully support and engage with ECOP's efforts to form the seven new PATs.
- Additionally, NUEL has taken on leadership for organizing the ECOP Urban Agriculture and Food Systems PAT.

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, in July of 2020 NUEL hosted a webinar to discuss race in partnership with the Coming Together for Racial Understanding (CTRU) training team. It was a robust discussion with about 200 Extension staff from across the country on bias, recruitment, training and diversity/inclusion.
- In January 2021, NUEL in partnership with the Southern Rural Development Center and CTRU training team share the input gathered in July of 2020 with about 150 Extension staff and had a discussion to set priorities and gather ideas around ways to address the issues identified.
- A small ad hoc group formed by NUEL synthesized this information and created a report with a set of recommendations that was provided to ECOP/
- Given the level of concern, in December 2021 NUEL decide to create a NUEL Action Team to begin addressing some of the recommendations in the report. NUEL has identified the leadership for this new Action Team and will be launching it in early 2022.



Goals/Priorities 2022

The NUEL Steering Committee approved the following list of priorities or goals for 2022:

Support and Engage the ECOP Program Action Teams

- Provide leadership for the Urban Extension Program Action Team (PAT) and the development of Program Implementation Teams (PIT).
- Work with the other PATs and their PITs to ensure that urban voices, needs and Extension professionals are part of their processes.
- Encourage all ECOP PATs to consider funding opportunities and build partner relationships that will contribute to Extension's ability to expand its work with urban communities.
- Focus the administrative/leading edge dialogue track at the NUEC on the programs and work of the ECOP PATs.

Build and Expand NUEL's Capacity to Effectively Communicate with the National Extension System

- Complete the development of a comprehensive communication strategy, build the tools and develop the messaging necessary to carry out the strategy, and implement the strategy before the end of 2022. Make sure the strategy has a built in plan for continuation with the limited resources that NUEL has for effective use into the future. When will this take place? Do you have a plan for making this happen?
- Focus on enhancing communications between NUEL, Extension directors/administration, regional Extension director/administrator associations and the EDA team.

Land Grant University/State Urban Coordinators

- Continue to work towards having at least one NUEL urban coordination identified by all 76 1862 and 1890 Extension systems.
- Reach out to the 1994 Extension systems to begin to build a relationship with them.
- Continue to work 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.