

Extension Programming to Address Urban Issues

Case Study Snapshot Central Kentucky Job Club

According to the [Urban Institute](#), work is at the heart of our most important social issues and public policy debates. To advance career wellbeing, a Family and Consumer Science agent in Fayette County (Lexington) created the [Central Kentucky Job Club](#). Following a community assessment that determined that no other organization offered a free community job search program, Job Club was created in 2012 to provide free resources to those who were facing joblessness – many for the first time.



Job Club was designed to improve employability skills needed to compete in today's workplaces. Meetings feature a guest speaker or panel presenting job search topics such as resume writing, interviewing, LinkedIn, salary negotiation, networking, and transferable skills. Meeting times are reserved for networking and sharing job leads.

Research shows that the unemployed face numerous health challenges beyond the loss of income (Reine and Hammarstrom, 2012; Robert Woods Johnson Foundation, 2013). Job Club addresses health challenges by providing a positive environment for motivated job seekers to meet, connect, share, and learn demonstrating Extension's commitment to improving health and wellbeing during difficult times. Since its inception, Job Club has reached more than 5,000 job seekers and more than 200 employment recruiters with 186 jobs secured. Post-program evaluations indicated that 86% of past participants reported improved employability skills because of Job Club. Beginning in March 2020, Job Club began meeting online, which tripled program attendance.

Participant testimonials reinforce the value of the program. As one participant commented, "Losing a job equals losing identity, never mind the practical concerns. Job Club offered concrete suggestions and ideas to move the search for a new position forward. The encouraging environment of Job Club helped me maintain a positive attitude to secure employment."

To communicate Job Club opportunities, Fayette County Extension sends Job Club public service announcements to 68 mass media venues, leveraging university and community resources. In recognition of the program impact within the city of Lexington, the mayor endorsed Job Club for Lexington's urban community and the unemployment office officially recommends attendance. Successful job seekers frequently serve as panelists and share the value of Job Club during their job search.

In 2020, the founding Extension agent, Diana Doggett was awarded the Southern Region National Urban Extension Leaders Leadership Award for her work with Job Club. In addition to meeting important local needs, Job Club also addresses two of the NUEL primary focus areas of strengthening communities and improving health.

[Follow this link for the complete case study.](#)

Contributors: Dr. Jeffrey Young (jeffrey.young@uky.edu),
Director for Urban Extension and Diana Doggett (ddoggett@uky.edu),
Family and Consumer Sciences Agent,
University of Kentucky Cooperative Extension Service

This case study program snapshot is featured in the urban-themed chapter of
Understanding Cooperative Extension Education in the Social Sciences
Maria Rosario T. de Guzman and Holly Hatton-Bowers University of Nebraska-Lincoln
Cambridge University Press 2021

See more information about this program in the case study series led by
Julie Fox, Ph.D., Ohio State University Extension, fox.264@osu.edu