



Impact Statement

Project Title: Transforming Maricopa County Cooperative Extension into a National Leader for Metropolitan Extension Programming

Issue: The county of Maricopa Arizona is home to over 4 million people, 60% White, 30% Hispanic, 6% African American, 4% Asian, and 3% Native American. Although the majority of that population lives in urban settings, Maricopa County is still in the top 40 of US Counties for agricultural sales. The diversity in the population together with the diversity in the economic engines of the county, make Maricopa County a unique metropolitan region in the US. At Maricopa County Cooperative Extension (MCCE), the programs offered include many of the traditional programs we have had over the decades. Programs currently offered include agriculture, horticulture/Master Gardener, SNAP-Ed/EFNEP, and 4-H Youth Development. In addition, MCCE offers support for turf grass management, early childhood development, urban agriculture, Integrated Pest Management, agricultural literacy, and a rural leadership program called Project CENTRL. All of these programs have seen shifts in their clientele demographics over the years but in many cases, the program content, delivery method, and funding has remained fairly consistent for several decades. Furthermore, the faculty and staff often perceive marketing as bolstering and acting in a conceded, non-professional manner. However, there is much competition for funding within the County and the old notion of Cooperative Extension being the best kept secret is actually a hindrance to the success of the office. Furthermore, our inability in some programs to reach new audiences prevents us from expanding our clientele base, which is necessary to create sustainable economic, social, and political conditions that will assure Extension's success and our future in a metropolitan community as we help improve people's lives, communities, and the economy of Maricopa County.

What has been done: We have embarked on the development of a new Strategic Vision for the office. It began with first interviewing our clientele to learn what we do well, what we don't do so well, what are the characteristics of an effective Extension office, emerging issues we need to be aware of and what MCCE should be known for. We then gathered for a one day workshop to identify goals for the office. With over 75 people in the office, the day was long, the ideas were across the board, and in the end we were able to identify five areas that we believed we needed to work on to improve our office effectiveness and move closer to becoming a leader in Metropolitan Extension work. Those areas are: Funding, Diversity and Inclusion, Improved Office Workability, Technology and Innovation, and Marketing and Getting the Word Out. Since the initial meeting in May 2016, committees have formed and work has begun. Each committee was charged with setting goals in five-year increments, establishing methods to measure accomplishments and progress; recommend approaches to obtain goals; and provide quarterly reports. In May of 2017, an update workshop was held and committee reports were given. There has been the development of a Confluence website for all to see the progress made by each committee and for new personnel to look and see which committee they may want to join.

Impacts/New Partnerships: The project is and will always be, ongoing and evolving. As goals are met new ones will be developed. Our goals are to consistently improve and work to achieve greater efficiency and effectiveness in our office and our outreach and engagement efforts. The partnerships

