# Guidelines for Writing Quality Impact Statements for Workload and Marketing[1]

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Purpose: Impact statements tell the story of UF/IFAS Extension and how our work helps people solve real problems that impact their everyday lives.

Good educators know that getting people interested is the first goal of instruction. Storytelling has long been acknowledged as an effective means of developing interest (Benge & Harder, 2008). Extension faculty can use this same technique to develop strong impact statements that represent the results of their programming.

## Writing Your Success Story: Using the Interest Approach

**Real Person**: Introduce the real person or people who were positively impacted by UF/IFAS Extension. Include enough details to make this person come alive but do not use that person's real name.

**Setting:** When and where does the story take place? Is there anything important the listener needs to know to understand the rest of the story?

**Real Person's Goal:** What did this person want to do? What challenge did he or she face? What problem did he or she want to solve? Be succinct.

**Barriers:** What internal or external barriers prevented the person from achieving his or her goal?

**Extension's Involvement:** Describe how Extension became involved in the person's pursuit of his or her goal and how Extension helped that person overcome barriers. Be specific in details; this is the heart of your story.

**Resolution:** What happened? Did the real person succeed in achieving his or her goal?

**What is the meaning of the story?** How is this story indicative of the good work being done by UF/IFAS Extension?

## What's the Impact? Connecting the Success Story with the Big Picture

**Response** (750 characters max): The response section of your impact statement should describe what was done and for whom. This is the section in which you will report the "numbers."

- Which and how many teaching methods did you use (e.g., field days, workshops, classes, Webinars, publications, day camps, community clubs, consultations)?
- Who was the target audience, and how many of that audience were reached?
- Who were the principal partners, collaborators, or contributors?
- Include financial contributors, such as funding agencies.
- Include internal (UF, FAMU) and external (other NGOs, community organizations) partners.

You should be able to pull information about *anticipated* responses from the educational methods section associated with any priority work groups with which you are affiliated, as well as *actual* responses from your ROA/POW. If you work in 4-H, you can also use the ES-237.

**Results** (1000 characters max/ ~½ page max): The results section of your impact statement should focus on what happened because of a program. Using verifiable, evidence-based data, answer the following questions:

- What knowledge was gained?
- What skills were increased?

- What are participants doing differently now as a result of the program?
- What were the environmental benefits (e.g., reduced water usage, decreased use of pesticides, adoption of xeriscaping, improved water quality)?
- What were the economic benefits (e.g., financial savings, increased profits, obtaining a new job or promotion, improving credit score, decreased medical costs)?
- What were the social benefits (e.g., improved family or work relationships, resolution of a community issue or problem, increased education levels)?
- How do you know? How did you collect data to determine the results?

A well-written results section will place more emphasis on both what participants are doing differently now as well as the environmental, economic, and social benefits of the program. It is not good enough to only report the knowledge and skills learned.

**Relevance** (1000 characters max/~ ½ page max): The relevance of your impact statement section should convince the reader of the need for the program by stating the relevant issues in the community. In language the average citizen can understand, describe what problem you are trying to solve and why it is relevant.

You should be able to pull information about program relevance from the situation statements associated with any priority work groups with which you are affiliated, as well as your ROA/POW. State level statements would be used as a part of an impact statement representing the collective work of a priority work group. County level statements adapt the state level statement using local data.

**Recap** (140 characters/ a "Tweet"): In 140 characters, create a headline or provoking question related to the program impact and include a link for more information about it.

*Example:* Cleaner water, better lawns. Found out how at: http://ifas.ufl.edu

## Success Story with Impact Statement Example

In 2012, there was a young boy named Brandon who lived in Sunshine County, Florida. Sunshine County is a mixture of urban and rural communities. Brandon lived with his twin brother, older sister, and parents on a small farm outside of Gainesville. Brandon had a problem: he wanted money. There were a few problems with this goal. Brandon was ten, so he did not have any experience in business and was not old enough for a "real" job. He could not drive, either, which also presented a challenge. There was something that Brandon had going for him—Brandon was in 4-H.

Through 4-H, Brandon attended monthly 4-H club meetings and weekend workshops where he learned how to raise and care for chickens, keep animal health records, speak in front of an audience, track expenses, and calculate profit. At the 4-H livestock auction at the annual county fair, Brandon learned that if he produced a quality product, people would be willing to pay for it. Brandon took his proceeds and reinvested them into growing his flock. A year later, Brandon had earned a reputation as the supplier of the tastiest eggs in Sunshine County and counted several top restaurants and bakers among his regular clientele. 4-H provided Brandon a way to solve his problem and find his passion as a local entrepreneur.

Brandon is just one of the [# of] Sunshine County youth who learned valuable life skills through their involvement in [# of] 4-H community clubs last year. Community clubs are led by adult volunteers who contribute their time so that youth have a safe environment in which to learn about [# of] different projects, develop their public speaking skills, serve their communities, and engage in leadership roles. Sunshine County 4-H is supported by [# of] volunteers who contributed [x hours] valued at [$] in 2013.

The results of a 2013 survey of senior 4-H members (ages 14–18) in Sunshine County show youth are becoming better citizens through 4-H. 4-H members reported they learned to listen well to others, respect others, and work well with other youth because of 4-H. Over half of the surveyed members led a project through 4-H that made a difference in their community. Nearly 90% report being encouraged to volunteer more.

Floridians value the development of youth who mature into productive, well-adjusted citizens prepared for the workforce. An estimated 4 million youth live in Florida (United States Census Bureau, 2014). Lerner et al. (2012) found youth who participate in 4-H are less likely to engage in at-risk behaviors (such as smoking, drinking, bullying, etc.), contribute more to their family and community, and state they are more likely to attend college. All these factors lead to productive, well-adjusted citizens prepared for the workforce.

## Reference

Benge, M., & Harder, A. (2008). *Creating interest in learners*. AEC 393. Gainesvile: Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences. Available at https://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/WC074