

# Impact

Colorado State University  
Extension

Sharing the difference CSU Extension makes in people's lives and their communities.

## Colorado State University Extension Impact Reporting

[www.ext.colostate.edu/impact](http://www.ext.colostate.edu/impact)

### *An Overview*

#### **Why Impact Reporting?**

Impact reporting gives our organization the opportunity to succinctly showcase how Extension programming has made a difference in people's lives and communities. It therefore demonstrates the value and relevance of CSU Extension programming around the state. Evaluation-based evidence is especially important to communicating impact. In tough economic times, the need for evidence of this kind is increasingly important.

During the 1990s, a nationwide effort to aggregate impacts for a USDA initiative resulted in a robust federal database that was used by administrators to highlight the value of colleges of agriculture and Extension research and education.

This past effort not only shaped the framework for how the CSU Extension Impact Reporting Team (Carol Busch and Joanne Littlefield) structures impact reports but also helped us clarify the role of impact reporting:

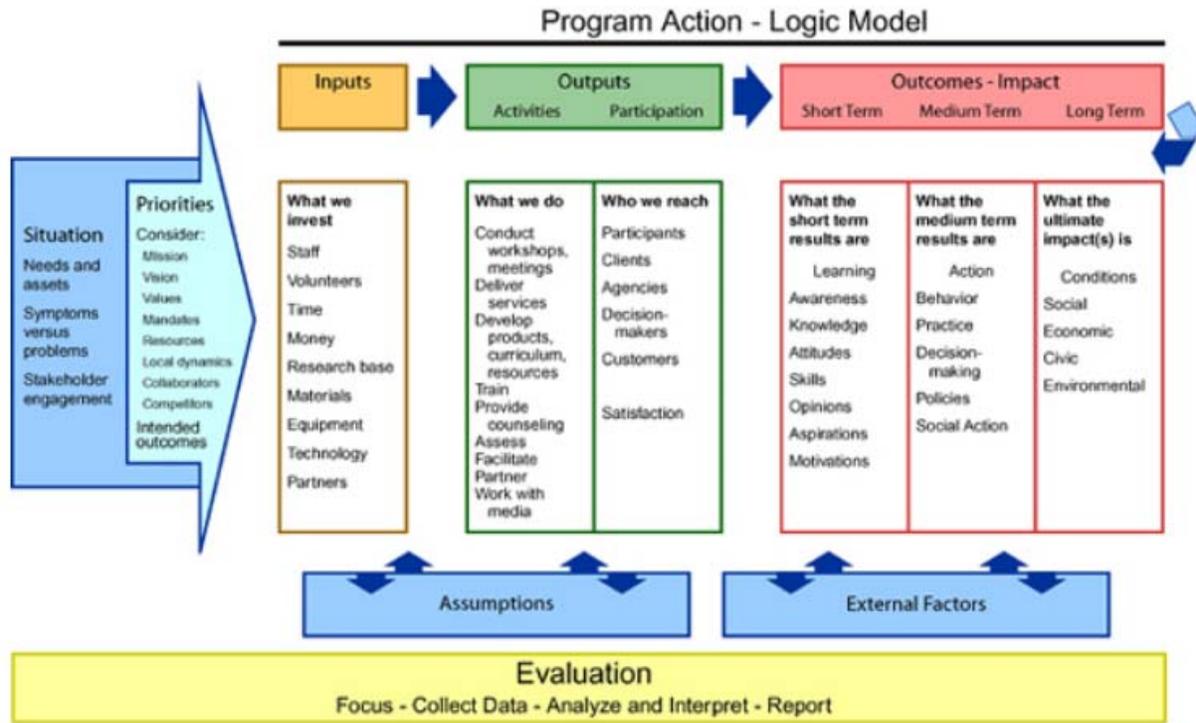
- To clearly explain how CSU Extension is uniquely suited to provide expertise, technical assistance, and education in helping solve problems and create opportunities;
- To demonstrate a change in condition that leads to social, environmental or economic improvements in people's lives and their communities;

As the impact reporting initiative evolves, we've identified three criteria for program outcomes that we think will help build stronger impact reports:

- Clear public value of program outcomes
- Program history (more than one year of programming has occurred)
- Qualitative and/or quantitative evaluation that tracks change over time

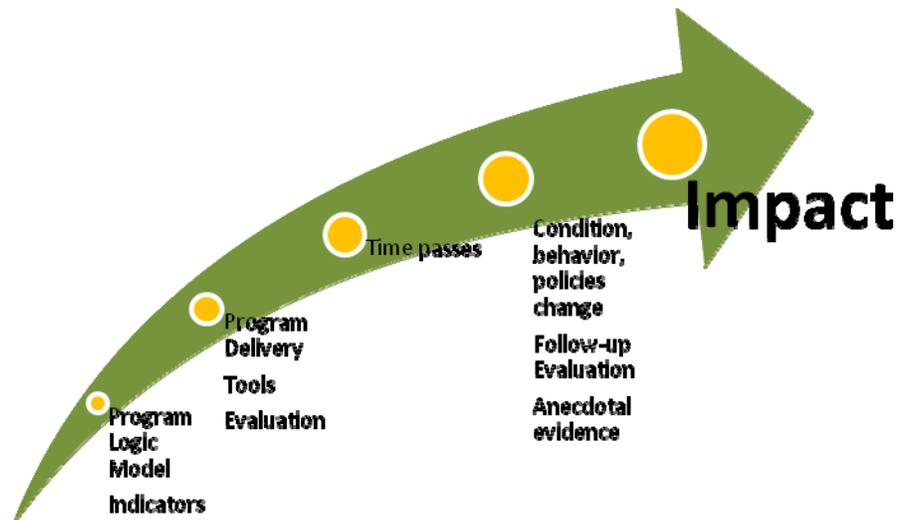
## What Makes Good Impact?

*Planning, delivery, time, and evaluation:* these components shape strong impact. Keep in mind that impact happens at varying degrees. The first step to generating good impact is defining desired outcomes (short, medium and long term) through program logic model planning:



[www.uwex.edu/ces/pdande/evaluation/evallogicmodel.html](http://www.uwex.edu/ces/pdande/evaluation/evallogicmodel.html)

Using the program logic model framework, impact therefore evolves like this:



[www.ext.colostate.edu/forum/presentations.html](http://www.ext.colostate.edu/forum/presentations.html)

### **Impact or Success?**

Another goal of impact reporting is to document local and regional demand for a program. With the current economic crisis, county commissioners and strategic partners are increasingly requesting focused priorities. Linking demand with objective measures of impact can encourage continued support.

Therefore, reporting the success of *all* programs builds the case for Extension. However, programs that don't meet the impact reporting criteria—but objectively demonstrate results and success in other ways—can and are being reported as 'Success Stories.' Depending on the purpose and scope of the program, 'Success Stories' might transition into 'Impact Reports' as criteria are met.

### **Reporting Opportunities**

To date, impact reports and success stories are derived from a number of places:

- Contribution Reports
- Partnerships & Collaborations
- Your Suggestions
- Recommendations
- Tracking: Grant Awards, New Programs & Newsletters
- Planning & Reporting System
- Annual Reports

### **Reporting Process**

Once an impact reporting opportunity has been identified, the Impact Reporting Team works with Extension agents and specialists to research, write and publish reports. Please e-mail or call Carol Busch, CSU Extension Impact Writer, for more information on this process (contact information below).

Following review by and input from the Colorado Extension Advisory Council (CEAC), final reports are posted on the Extension website ([www.ext.colostate.edu/impact](http://www.ext.colostate.edu/impact)).

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