FIRST-YEAR ADMINISTRATIVE IN-SERVICE TRAINING NEEDS AS PERCEIVED BY COUNTY EXTENSION DIRECTORS IN OKLAHOMA

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DIRECTORS IN OKLAHOMA

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PREFACE

One of the major responsibilities of a County Extension Director in the Oklahoma Cooperative Extension Service is the accomplishment of numerous administrative tasks. However, the individual designated as county director normally has little, if any experience in administrative matters. In addition, very few in-service training opportunities are provided for those who are newly appointed to the position. The purpose of this study was to identify priority in-service training needs of first-year county Extension directors as perceived by the 75 county directors in Oklahoma at the time of this study. A questionnaire with 40 in-service training topics was mailed to the 75 county directors, all of which were completed and returned.

The researcher found that study respondents perceived a critical need for in-service training in administrative topics, especially in the categories of budget procurement and extension accounting policies and procedures. All of the 40 administrative training topics were perceived to be in the area of high or critical priority as related to need for training.

I wish to express my sincere appreciation to all the people who assisted me with this study. In particular, I am especially indebted to my major adviser, Dr. Roy Lessly, for his guidance, sincere interest, and invaluable help in the development of this study. I am also grateful to the other committee members, Dr. Robert Reisbeck and

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Mr. Jimmie Sallee, Northeast District Extension Director, has given me a lot of support and encouragement to complete the requirements for the Master of Science degree. I am most grateful for his help and encouragement and for the opportunity that Oklahoma Cooperative Extension provided to allow me time to complete this task.

My family offered support and encouragement throughout the completion of this study. My wife, Patty, and three children were a source of inspiration and I am indeed grateful for their kind words and understanding.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Early in the 20 Century the United States Congress saw a need for a new and unique educational concept to aid in the growth and development of our nation. There was a need for an educational system which would deliver practical researched information from our universities into the hands of the working people of rural America.

Congress answered this obvious need by passing the Smith-Lever Act of 1914, thereby creating the Cooperative Extension Service. This organization was charged with the responsibility of translating and disseminating agricultural and home economics research from the land-grant university into a practical and useable form to our farmers and homemakers (22). It was called "Cooperative Education" as it was designed to be a cooperative educational effort among the United States Department of Agriculture, the state land-grant universities, and county governments.

Cooperative Education had humble beginnings, but it is now recognized as one of our nation's largest and most effective educational systems, especially in the area of adult education. Today, Cooperative Education is reaching every state and every county in our nation. Its structure, purpose, and methods are also being used by numerous foreign countries as a means of reaching and educating their citizens.

Cooperative Extension is basically the same in each state. However,

there are differences in each state's individualized system based upon how each state has designed their cooperative agreement with the federal and county governments. In Oklahoma, the state legislature has provided a legal basis whereby county governments can enter into a contract for cooperative extension services with the land-grant university, Oklahoma State University, to provide Cooperative Education services for the citizens of that county. By law, the land-grant university was designed as administrator for the total program in a state. Thus, Oklahoma State University is charged with the administrative responsibilitity associated with the Cooperative Extension Service in Oklahoma.

The success of the Cooperative Extension programs in Oklahoma, as in all the states, depends largely upon the competency and dedication of its professional staff. Oklahoma State University Policy and Procedures Handbook emphasizes, ". . . the importance of well qualified personnel with the capacity to grow and mature on the job and with the ability to be a vital force in meeting the educational needs of its clientele" (17, p. 2.19).

Entry-level requirements for employment by the Oklahoma Cooperative Extension Service included a minimum of a bachelor's degree in home economics or agriculture (17). Once employed, in-service training becomes a major thrust in the development of a competent staff member.

According to Lessly (11), "Training is one of the most critical factors which can influence the effectiveness of an organization's employees and thus the organization" (p. 26). The National Policy Guidelines for Staff Development for Cooperative Extension supported this idea and stated:

> The effectiveness of the educational programs of Extension depends upon the abilities and skills of its staff. Well qualified personnel with the capacity to grow and mature on the job and the ability to adjust to changing demands are imperative if the Cooperative Extension Service is to continue as a vital force in meeting the needs of people (17, p. 5).

In response to this need for a well trained and competent staff, each state has a comprehensive induction training program for new employees. Induction programs have been designed to acquaint the new employee with the organization, its goals and objectives, individual program responsibility, available resources and other orientation topics necessary to guide the individual into the job role he or she was hired to fill. Another type of training used frequently by Extension is subject matter updating or in-service training designed to keep all staff members technically competent in their assigned area of responsibility.

Extension agents with assignments in agriculture, home economics, 4-H and youth, and rural development find numerous opportunities to sharpen or update their skills through in-service training activities. But there is one area of responsibility in which there are few if any opportunities for in-service training. That overlooked area of responsibility is administration. Every county Extension unit has numerous administrative responsibilities which must be assigned to an administrator at some level. In Oklahoma, one agent in each county is assigned administrative responsibility for that county unit (15). These administrative responsibilities are in addition to and subordinate to the assigned program responsibility, such as agriculture or home economics. As in other states numerous opportunities are offered for in-service training in program areas, but only minimal in-service opportunities

are available to the county Extension administrator. Oklahoma fills all county positions according to program needs and then the county director duties are assigned to the most qualified staff person in that county (15).

Netherton (14) said that, hopefully, a county director responsibilities will be assigned to a staff member who has had successful Extension experience in a program area. Oklahoma Extension policy prefers agents with three years minimum experience in a program area as a prerequisite for assignment as county director. However, if a county happens to have only new employees in its county positions, or if an experienced agent does not want the county director duties, it could mean a newly hired individual may end up with administrative responsibilities in that particular county.

Basically, the inexperienced county Extension director in Oklahoma is faced with a new realm of responsibility when given the administrative assignment at the county level. All at once he/she is asked to approve and be responsible for developing and securing county budgets, following prescribed accounting and purchasing procedures for county and state funds, hiring and counseling staff if the need arises, handling problems associated with unhappy clientele, coordinating county Extension programs, communicating with district and state administrative staff and taking care of numerous reports and other matters that fall in the area of C.E.D. duties and responsibilities.

Oklahoma Extension provides an excellent in-service training program for agents in their program area, but very few opportunities are afforded to the new county director. It appears that Oklahoma Extension could relieve a lot of frustration and help to make the new

C.E.D. a much more productive staff member if a good, comprehensive administrative in-service training program was available for C.E.D. new to an administrative assignment.

Extension is recognized as a leader in the area of adult education and it recognizes the importance of having a well trained competent staff at all levels--county, district, and state. Why, then, is the county administrative duty not a major focus in the state and /or district in-service training thrust? Perhaps Lessly (11) had insight when he stated:

> Providing employees with an effective training program is not an easy task. The organization must first know: what are the training needs, who needs the training, what are the objectives of the training program, and why, where and by whom will be activity be conducted (p. 26).

This study will focus on training needs for first year C.E.D., so hopefully it will be a first step in the identification of a good in-service administrative program for new county directors.

Statement of the Problem

The role of the Oklahoma County Extension Director is multi-faceted. The person in this role must be technically competent in one or more subject fields and in addition he/she must possess the skills necessary to deal with budget procurement, staff counseling, public relations and communications, and many other administrative skills required for successful completion of the job role.

Oklahoma Extension has an excellent induction training program designed to acquaint new employees with their job role and an introduction to the total Extension organization. The in-service training program designed by state, district, and area subject-matter specialist

does an excellent job of keeping county agents updated and competent in their subject or program areas of responsibility. However, training opportunities in administrative areas for the C.E.D. would seem inadequate or at least minimal for maximum organizational efficiency.

It is not easy to provide administrative training for county directors. Lessly's (11) first question of what are the actual needs in regards to county director responsibilities is difficult to answer. Administrators at state and district levels do not always agree as to what should be included in a training program for first year county directors. County Extension directors have a wide range of experience and tenure, and the size of their county staff varies according to county budget support in their county. In addition, there are normally only a small number of county director positions filled each year making it hard to prepare a training program for only a few. Finally, county directors perceive the importance of their administrative duties differently.

These may be logical reasons for offering few, if any, in-service training opportunities for county directors, especially first-year county directors. However, as a leading educational organization Extension should realize the positive effects of a good in-service training program for their first-year county directors.

Briefly stated the problem is the lack of administrative in-service training opportunities designed to prepare newly-appointed county Extension directors for that role.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to identify priority administrative

in-service training needs for first-year county Extension directors as perceived by individuals who were serving in the role of county administrator at the time of the study.

Objectives of the Study

The specific objectives of the study were to:

1. Identify and rank in order of priority 40 selected administrative in-service training topics according to the importance placed upon each topic by individuals serving as C.E.D. at the time of the study.

2. Determine if relationships exist between the way in which individual respondents rank the 40 selected administrative topics and (a) years of service as county Extension director, and (b) size of county staff during that service as county Extension director.

Assumptions

The following assumptions were made regarding the study:

1. The items in the questionnaire could be grouped under four administrative categories.

2. The county Extension directors understood the inquiries of the questionnaire and indicated their honest perceptions of each item.

3. The responses to the questionnaire were given in the manner in which the researcher had intended.

4. The data from this study could be used to identify administrative in-service training needs for county Extension directors.

Scope of the Study

The population of the study included all Oklahoma County Extension Directors in the Cooperative Extension Service. There were 77 county director positions in Oklahoma at the time of the study, spring of 1985, but the questionnaire was mailed to only 75 county directors. One county was excluded due to vacancy of the C.E.D. position at the time the questionnaire was mailed. The researcher was serving as C.E.D. in another county, Washington, and did not complete a questionnaire in order to avoid any remote possibility of leading analysis toward the researcher's bias in the study.

Definition of Terms

To better understand the study the following terms were defined.

1. Cooperative Extension Service: the organization created by Congress in 1914 by passage of the Smith-Lever Act to translate and disseminate research in agriculture and home economics from the land-grant university to the people. It involved a cooperative effort of the U.S.D.A., land-grant universities, and county governments. The terms "Extension," "Cooperative Extension," and "Extension Service" are to be considered to be synonymous with the defined term.

2. In-Service Training: term which refers to the training received by Extension agents following and throughout their employment. Its general purpose is for updating and improving competencies in specific fields. College credit courses are not included.

3. County Extension Director: the title given to the individual with an administrative job role at the county level. The term "county

director" and the letters "C.E.D." also will be used to designate this term.

4. County Budget Procurement: refers to the skills required or task to be performed in order to accomplish budgetary responsibilities at the county level.

5. Extension Accounting Policies and Procedures: refers to the policies and procedures a county director must follow in order to complete transactions at the county level involving funds and personnel.

6. Personnel Management: refers to the skills or procedures required of county directors in guiding and counseling along with other matters dealing with employees in the county Extension office.

7. Office Management and Communications: refers to skills necessary for daily operation of an efficient county Extension office and all aspects of dealing with people through Extension programs and activities.

8. Administrative Training: training that will be concentrated in the four major categories as defined above.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to present a summary of literature related to training needs of county Extension directors. Involved in this review were research studies, books, professional magazines, periodicals, reports, personal interviews, journals, bulletins, and Extension directives pertinent to the study. ERIC (Educational Resources Information Center) was used to locate related research and literature for this study.

The researcher was able to locate numerous research studies, documents, articles, and so forth, in the areas of administration, training and organizational structures for Cooperative Extension. Most of the information related to training of new employees, induction training, and/or subject matter training. Very little information was found in the area of administrative training for county Extension administrators.

The review of literature was organized into three different sections which were as follows:

1. Need for in-service training
2. Need for administrative training
3. Role of the Oklahoma County Extension Director

Need for In-Service Training

It is well recognized that the effectiveness of Cooperative Extension depends largely upon the abilities, motivation, and competency of its professional staff. The National Policy Statement on Staff Training and Development stated that well qualified personnel with the capacity to grow and mature on the job and with the ability to adjust to changing demands are imperative if Extension is to continue to successfully meet the needs of the people (6). The Oklahoma State University Extension Service Policy and Procedures Handbook agreed as it emphasized the importance of a professional staff with the abilities, skills, and dedication required to meet the educational needs of its clientele and to accomplish its mission (17). Fenley (7, p. 9) emphasized that, "the competency of individual staff members is the single most important factor for success of Extension organizations."

The National Policy Guidelines for Staff Development listed four specific reasons for conducting in-service training programs:

1. To develop technical subject matter competencies to keep personnel updated with research and technology.

2. To explore educational and technological content and processes to extend and expand competencies of Extension staff.

3. To gain a broader view and focus more sharply on specific Extension job responsibilities.

4. To become aware of a need for social, economic, and political change and to acquire the ability to deal with these situtations (6).

Extension's National Policy Guidelines for Staff Development listed nine reasons why the organization should provide staff development

programs:

1. Orientation to new or reassigned job responsibilities
2. To improve performance and development skills
3. Because of new technology
4. Because of change in mission or program thrust
5. To serve apprenticeship--preservice or in-service
6. For upward mobility (inlcuding promotion and transfer training
7. For management/supervisory development
8. To develop skills for future staffing needs
9. For preretirement education (6, p. 10).

The National Policy Guideline for Staff Development continued by pointing out that training needs of staff members will vary according to their experience and tenure, but that all new employees, regardless of previous experience, education or background will need induction type training during their first year of employment (6).

Adequate and proper training of newly employed personnel then becomes a key to the development of a viable professional staff. Fenley (7) pointed out that proper training will eliminate many of the feelings of frustration and failure in every day work. Carter (2) emphasized how a beginning worker seeks an opportunity to become engaged in productive activities to prove himself and to his colleagues that he is competent and can contribute to the mission of the organization. Maslow (cited in Durfee, 4) proposed that man has some basic or fundamental needs which are the source of his motivation. Most professional Extension employees have satisfied their basic needs such as food, shelter, and so forth, and are striving to fulfill needs for self-esteem and self-actualization.

In order for the employee to satisfy higher order needs, the Extension organization must present a training program to guide the employee. Richardson and Eckard (5) pointed out that a new employee's desire for

knowledge and receptivity to training are greatest when he first begins a new job.

Johi and Newcomb (9) stated that orientation is an early part of an employee's development designed to provide a transition period for the newly hired agent to help him adjust to working and living conditions in their new place of employment. Johi and Newcomb (9) also pointed out that:

> Orientation training takes place from the first day on the job and continues throughout the first year of employment. Organized activities acquaint the agent with the organization, their place in it, the role they're expected to perform, and also how to measure up the standard or performance that is considered necessary for building the agents commitment to the organization. It also provides a period during which the new agent acquires further knowledge, skills, and judgment they will need to become effective Extension professionals (p. 23).

Harris (8) believed that training is more than gaining skills; it is also cultivation of understandings, attitudes, and skills necessary to learn how to achieve. Fenley (7) continues by outlining the phases through which an Extension worker may receive training at precollege, college, induction, in-service, and graduate. Fenley et al. further divides these three main areas into preservice (college and precollege), organizational (induction and in-service), and graduate. He further states that preservice training does not provide training necessary to fulfill an Extension role responsibility because the trainee must be given organizational or induction training designed to meet the needs of the individual and the organization.

The National Policy Guidelines for Staff Development (6) summarizes the importance of training programs with the following:

> The employee becomes an effective productive individual more rapidly and the new employee learns more quickly to measure

> up to the standards of performance and job expectations, thus increasing the employee's value to the organization and satisfying human needs for personal growth on the job (p. 11).

Need for Administrative Training

The need for training, especially induction training is well documented in all references. However, Extension agents have varied role responsibilities all of which require training for maximum effectiveness. Normally, one agent in each county must assume some form of administrative responsibilities. Most references agree with the importance of these administrative roles, but they offer very little in the form of in-service opportunities.

Harris (8) pointed out that training programs should be concerned with areas related to performance, basic knowledge and understanding, cultivation of right attitudes and skill development. Leagans (10) added more clarity to training by listing professional competencies needed by Extension workers:

> Understanding the role of Extension and how it functions
> Skill in human relations
> Knowledge and skill in technical subject matter
> Ability to plan
> Ability to clarify objectives
> Ability to organize people and things
> Skill at communication
> Skill at inquiry
> Ability to teach
> Ability to evaluate (p. 6)

Administrative abilities may not be listed, but the competencies mentioned tie in directly with administrative abilities. For the purpose of this study this source will be part of the justification for the need for administrative training in Extension staff development programs. Price (21), in a research study of educational needs of

Arkansas Extension Agents, was more specific in clarifying the need for administrative training by listing organization and administration within the top ten training areas needed by Arkansas agents. A similar study by McCormick (12), having tested areas of competency for Ohio Extension agents, also listed organization and administration within the ten most urgent training areas.

Research indicated that there are administrative functions which must be accomplished at the county level. Clark (3) amplified this fact by pointing out:

> Significant and recent development in Cooperative Extension throughout the U.S. has been the naming of a member of the county staff to assume administrative responsibilities to serve as chairman, director, coordinator, or by some similar designation (p. 153).

Clark helped to clarify the need for administrative training by pointing out that the person designated for administrative duties in a county normally had little or no previous training or experience to help him prepare for these duties. An Arkansas study by Plafcan (20) drew similar conclusions, as Arkansas county staff chairmen were chosen for administrative roles based upon successful program responsibilities without benefit of administrative training.

Extension's National Policy Guidelines for Staff Development (6, p. 10) listed "management and supervisory development" as one of the organizations primary reasons for conducting staff development programs. Bufford (1) addressed this point by stating, "obviously more thought must be given to the development and training of managers. County chairmen and project leaders are selected with slight regard to their management potential" (p. 54). Bufford (1) points out that there is a common misconception that exposure to practical experience is sufficient

training for an individual to suddenly acquire skills necessary when they are placed in a managerial or administrative position.

Dufree (4) relates that supervision is a part of and not to be separated from management or administration. Dufree (4, p. 2) continues by stating "supervisors are not born with certain traits or characteristics that make the good supervisors; there are skills to be learned, understandings and knowledge to be acquired and insights to be gained." Supervisory or administrative skills can be improved with proper training.

In his Arkansas study Plafcan (20) said he believed if the perceived level of importance that county staff chairmen place on their administrative skills and the level at which they perceived their performance could be identified then, an in-service training program could be developed based upon the differences or needs expressed by the respondents. Results of the study indicated Arkansas chairmen had above average regard for administrative skills as related to the importance in thier job role. Plafcan concluded that there was a need for in-service training in administrative skills, that academic degrees alone will not improve the administrative performance of chairmen, and that staff chairmen with staff size of two or above could benefit from administrative training.

Role of County Extension Director in Oklahoma

Since this study dealt with training needs of county directors in Oklahoma, the researcher felt it was imperative to develop a good understanding of the role of the Oklahoma County Extension Director. The available resources for review were limited to policies, directives,

and memorandums from state administrative staff for Oklahoma Cooperative Extension Service.

The job description for county director current at the time of this study made special note that the person occupying the C.E.D. position will also have program responsibility in one or more of the major programs of agriculture, home economics, 4-H and youth, and/or rural development (19). It continues by stating that the purpose of the C.E.D. is to provide administrative leadership to guide in the development, implementation, and evaluation of Extension programs at the county level (19).

Major responsibilities of the C.E.D. were listed as program planning, program implementation, program evaluation, administrative management, and personnel management (19). For the purpose of this study attention was focused on administrative management and personnel management.

Administrative management covered the following areas according to the job description:

1. Responsible for all administrative aspects of the county program operations
2. Plan and coordinate the budgetary and fiscal operations by preparing annual budgets; supervising fiscal operations and expenditures; and submitting required financial reports
3. Communicate with and keep all county staff informed on policies and other relevant information which affects them
4. Supervise development and implementation of County Extension annual Plan of Work
5. Responsible for the timely preparation and submission of required reports (19, p. 2)

For the area of personnel management the job description listed the following list of responsibilities:

1. Coordinate the work of all county staff members; hold weekly staff conferences; keep county staff informed on official Extension communications
2. Assist staff in determining their training needs and provide opportunities for professional improvement activities to meet these needs
3. Responsible for making an annual performance appraisal of all county personnel; counsels with staff on program matters and professional development; communicate with district team regarding assignment and performance of staff members
4. Provide leadership in the development and implementation of an Equal Employment Plan for assigned county Extension office; prepare and submit reports required by the Equal Employment Opportunity program plan of the Oklahoma Cooperative Extension Service
5. Establish and maintain positive personnel relationships and effective office management procedures (19, p. 1-2)

In June of 1984, Oklahoma Cooperative Extension policy was changed to delete the responsibility of the C.E.D. for performance appraisal of all county staff, except secretaries (15).

At the time of the study the list of preferred qualifications for the Oklahoma C.E.D. were:

1. Minimum of three years of experience or equivalency

2. Minimum of merit rating on past two performance appraisals

3. M.S. degree preferred at at least working toward degree completion

4. Successful experience or evidence of preparation in administration and supervision

5. Knowledge of procedures and strategies for budget procurement

6. Ability to delegate responsibility

7. Good communications skills

8. Commitment to Extension, highly motivated, enthusiastic, and innovative

9. Possesses leadership ability

10. Positive attitude
11. Commitment to learning
12. Ability to work with people
13. Knowledge of all program areas
14. Evidence of administrative leadership (18)

Oklahoma State University (O.S.U.) Extension policy also stated that the title of C.E.D. would be subordinate to the program title of the individual, and that when a C.E.D. role was vacant it would be bestowed upon the most qualified Extension agent in that county staff (15).

The Policy and Procedures Handbook (17) also stated that when a C.E.D. position is vacant the district director shall name an acting C.E.D. to fill that role until a permanent county director is named.

The county Extension director is in the district administrative chain as diagramed by Baker (16) in the Extension organizational chart for Oklahoma. In fact, the only county staff member with administrative responsibility was the C.E.D. The C.E.D. was responsible to a district director, who was in turn responsible to the associate director and the associate director is responsible to the dean and director of the Division of Agriculture.

Summary

The literature reviewed in this chapter stressed the importance of in-service training as an effective method of improving staff performance. All Extension literature reviewed strongly indicated that in-service training was necessary in order to keep a competent staff. In fact, most writers and researchers thought that the secret for future

success of Extension relied upon maintaining a dedicated, competent staff that is kept updated and current in all areas of responsibility.

There was general agreement in the literature reviewed that administrative work is necessary at the county level and that the staff member assigned that responsibility did need and would definitely benefit from a well rounded in-service training program designed to teach administrative skills. Research has shown that experience as a program agent in roles such as agriculture and home economics does not adequately equip a person for administrative responsibility. In fact, advanced degrees in program areas do not adequately provide agents with administrative skills. However, administrative skills can be taught and acquired by a learner, and should be a large part of Extension in-service training to improve the efficiency of the organization.

CHAPTER III

DESIGN AND CONDUCT OF THE STUDY

The methods and procedures used in conducting the study were dictated by its primary purpose which was to identify administrative in-service training needs of first year Oklahoma county Extension directors. The specific objectives of the study were:

1. Identify and rank in order of priority 40 selected administrative in-service training topics according to the importance placed upon each topic by individuals serving as C.E.D. at the time of the study.

2. Determine if relationships exist between the way in which individual respondents rank the 40 selected administrative topics and (a) years of service as county Extension director, and (b) size of county staff during that service as county Extension director.

In order to collect and analyze necessary data to accomplish objectives of the study the following had to be accomplished:

1. Determine the population of the study
2. Develop the data collection instrument
3. Develop the data collection procedure
4. Select the methods for data analysis

The Study Population

The population of this study consisted of County Extension Directors in Oklahoma Cooperative Extension Service. There were 77 C.E.D.

in Oklahoma at the time of the study, spring 1985, but one directorship was vacant. In addition, the writer of this research held the C.E.D. position in Washington County and did not complete a questionnaire. Therefore, the total population for the study was 75 C.E.D.

Development of the Instrument

The information needed for the study was obtained through the use of a questionnaire. Items to be included on the questionnaire were developed with the aid of county Extension directors, district directors, and state specialists.

A preliminary questionnaire consisting of 46 selected topics on skills associated with the responsibilities of county director was mailed to five county directors, two district directors, the state staff development specialist, and the assistant to dean for personnel (Appendix A). Each was asked to rank each item as to its level of importance as a responsibility of C.E.D. In addition they were asked to list any important items not included in the questionnaire, and to make any changes necessary to add to the clarity of the questionnaire.

A five-point Likert-type scale was used for each response. Respondents were asked to circle a response from "one" to "five" with "one" being low importance and "five" being critical importance. All nine preliminary questionnaires were returned, results tabulated and the 40 high scoring topics were included in the final questionnaire. Very few corrections were needed, but the researcher did add biographical data on respondents to the questionnaire. Thus, the final questionnaire was developed and mailed.

Data Collection

The questionnaire was mailed to each of the 75 Oklahoma County Extension Directors on January 19, 1985 (Appendix B). A transmittal letter from the researcher, plus a self-addressed, stamped envelope were included in the mailing (Appendix C). The first mailing resulted in 70 (94 percent) returns from the county Extension directors. On February 6, 1985 the second mailing was sent to the four nonrespondents. All four responded to the second letter giving a 100 percent return on the survey.

Analysis of Data

Analysis of data were completed using the mean for each response. The mean score response for each topic was calculated, and the each topic was ranked by mean within each of the four major administrative categories and also according to the total 40 selected topics listed on the questionnaire.

Similar calculations were made according to years of experience as C.E.D. and size of county.

To permit a more accurate description and analysis of the data, numerical values were assigned and real limits established for levels of importance for training.

Numerical Value Value	Range of Real Limits	Importance for Training
5	4.50 - 5.00	Critical
4	3.50 - 4.49	High
3	2.50 - 3.49	Average
2	1.50 - 2.49	Low
1	1.00 - 1.49	None

CHAPTER IV

PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS OF DATA

Introduction

The major purpose of this study was to identify administrative in-service training needs of first year Oklahoma County Extension Directors as perceived by individuals serving in the county director position at the time of the study. In addition the study was to determine if relationsips exist between the way in which individual respondents rank the 40 selected administrative topics and by years of service as county director and by size of the county staff during that service.

Data collection involved responses of 75 Oklahoma County Extension Directors serving in this position at the time of the study. The objective of this chapter was to present reliable information revealed by the analysis of data compiled.

Population

The study population included 75 county Extension directors employed by Cooperative Extension in Oklahoma as of January 19, 1985. At the time of the study one county was vacant and the researcher held the position of C.E.D. in Washington County. All 75 questionnaires were completed and returned representing a 100 percent response.

Selected Characteristics of Respondents

Data presented in Table I provide a breakdown of respondents by years of experience in the position of C.E.D. The largest number of respondents were in the four to ten years of experience group with 36 agents or 48.0 percent of the population. The 11 years and above experience group had 22 respondents or 29.3 percent of the population, while the smallest number of respondents were in the zero to three years experience group with 17 respondents or 22.9 percent of the population.

Data in Table II reveal the distribution of respondents by size of the Extension staff in which they were serving at the time of the study. The number of staff was based upon number of professional Extension Agents in the staff--secretaries and para-professionals were not considered in this study. A total of 36 or 48 percent of the respondents were serving in a county with a staff of one to two agents. The three agent staff group had 24 respondents or 32 percent of the population while 15 or 20 percent of the respondents were serving in a county staff with four or more agents.

Findings of the Study

The purpose of this section is to present and analyze data collected relative to the perceptions of Oklahoma County Extension Directors at the time of the study regarding training needs for first year county Extension directors. The findings of the study are presented under four major administrative categories. A response mean was calculated for each of the 40 selected administrative topics, and each topic was then ranked according to its calculated mean. This

TABLE I

DISTRIBUTION OF RESPONDENTS BY YEARS OF EXPERIENCE AS COUNTY EXTENSION DIRECTOR

Years as C.E.D.	Number of Respondents	Percent of Population
0 - 3	17	22.7
4 - 10	36	48.0
11 +	22	29.3
	75	100.0

TABLE II

DISTRIBUTION OF RESPONDENTS BY SIZE OF COUNTY STAFF

Number of Agents in Staff	Number of Respondents	Percent of Population
1 - 2	36	48.0
3	24	32.0
4 +	15	20.0
	75	100.0

procedure resulted in the topics being ranked according to the relative importance the 75 respondents placed on them.

To permit a more accurate descritption and analysis of the data, numerical values were assigned and real limits established for levels of importance for training.

Numerical Value	Rank of Real Limits	Importance for Training
5	4.50 - 5.00	Critical
4	3.50 - 4.49	High
3	2.50 - 3.49	Average
2	1.50 - 2.49	Low
1	1.00 - 1.49	None

Comparison of Training Needs for First Year C.E.D. According to Tenure of Respondents

Data in Table III summarize county Extension directors' responses by years of experience as C.E.D. and by administrative in-service training categories. In the Category I--Budget Procurement, respondents with zero to three years of experience had the highest mean of 4.36. Those with four to ten years of experience had a mean of 4.0. A lower mean, 3.93, was calculated for those with more than ten years experience.

The highest mean in Extension accounting policies and procedures, 4.20, was found in responses of agents with zero to three years of experience. Eleven years plus experience following with a mean of 4.01 and 3.99, for four to ten year experience.

Responses of those with zero to three years tenure also had the high mean in personnel management at 4.11. The four to ten year tenure group was second at 3.87 and it was 3.86 for the group with 11 years of experience and above.

TABLE III

COMPARISON OF TRAINING NEEDS BY CATEGORY FOR FIRST-YEAR COUNTY EXTENSION DIRECTORS ACCORDING TO YEARS OF EXPERIENCE AT C.E.D.

Category	Years of Experience		
	0 - 3	4 - 10	11+
I. Budget Procurement	4.36	4.10	3.93
II. Extension Accounting Policies and Procedures	4.20	3.99	4.01
III. Personnel Management	4.11	3.87	3.86
IV. Office Management and Communications	3.94	3.88	4.09
	4.15	3.96	3.97

The alignment changed in office management and communications with high mean in the 11 plus experience group of respondents. Second was the zero to three years of experience group with a mean of 3.94, followed by 3.88 for the four to ten year tenure group of respondents.

It should be noted that the zero to three years of experience group of respondents had the highest total mean response as related to the total for all 40 selected administrative in-service training topics.

Data in Table IV compare the mean and numerical ranking respondents placed upon their perceived importance for ten training topics in Category I--Budget Procurement. Comparisons are made according to tenure of the agents in the role of C.E.D. There were considerable differences in importance respondents perceived for each of the topics listed as a part of the budget procurement. The zero to three year tenure group of agents assigned all ten topics a mean of 4.00 or above. The low mean by this group was 4.11, for "use of advisory committees in budget procurement", while "ability to develop and justify annual estimate of needs" was high mean response at 4.58 for the low experience group.

Agents in the four to ten year group rated six of the ten topics under budget procurement with a mean of 4.00 or above. This group of respondents agreed with the zero to three tenure group on the most critical training need in this category by ranking "ability to develop and justify annual estimate of needs" number one with a mean response of 4.61. This tenure group perceived "how to calcualte social security, medicare, retirement, and other employee deducations in the county dugets" as the topic of least importance for training with an average mean of 3.66

TABLE IV

COMPARISON OF RESPONDENTS' PERCEPTIONS OF TRAINING NEEDS ACCORDING TO TENURE AS C.E.D. IN CATEGORY I-- COUNTY BUDGET PROCUREMENT

0-3 Yrs.		4-10 Yrs.		11 Yrs. +		
Rank	Mean	Rank	Mean	Rank	Mean	Topics for Training
5,6	4.35	9	3.83	5	3.95	Ability to explain state formula for determining county share of funding for the County Extension Program.
1	4.58	1	4.61	1	4.59	Ability to develop and justify annual county estimate of needs.
5,6	4.35	4,5	4.16	3	4.22	Working knowledge of how the county general fund budget is developed at the county level.
3,4	4.47	3	4.30	4	4.13	Understanding of total funds available to a county - where they come from and where they can be spent.
7,8	4.29	2	4.40	2	4.27	Ability to explain the annual Contract Between Oklahoma State University Acting for and on Behalf of it's Cooperative Extension Service and the Board of County Commissioners.
2	4.52	10	3.66	10	3.45	How to calculate and allow for social security, medicare, retirement and other employee deductions in the county budget.
10	4.11	7	3.97	8,9	3.59	How to use advisory committees in the budget procurement process.
3,4	4.47	8	3.94	6	3.86	Understanding of how to complete the county Extension budget forms correctly -A,B,C,D.
7,8	4.29	4,5	4.16	8,9	3.59	Procedures to follow to amend the county budget.
9	4.23	6	4.02	7	3.68	Procedures to justify and request county supplemental funds.

The agents with the most tenure, 11 years and more, assigned the same ranking as the middle tenure group, four to ten years experience, for top and low priority administrative in-service training need in the Category I--Budget Procurement.

All three tenure groups ranked "ability to develop and justify annual estimate of needs" as the most critical need for training.

Data in Table V compare respondents' perceptions of training need according to tenure of the respondent in the administrative in-service training Category II--Extension Accounting Policies and Procedures. Numerous differences were found among the tenure groupings when comparing the perceived importance assigned to each of the ten topics in this category. In the zero to three tenure group of agents a critical mean response of 4.52 was determined for "necessary authorization before spending funds from restricted ledger accounts." The topic perceived to be the least importance in this experience group was the topic entitled "sale of publications" with mean response of 3.94.

The tenure groups four to ten years and 11 years plus were relatively close in designating importance to topics in Category II--Extension Accounting Policies and Procedures. The four to ten year experience group rated "county purchasing procedures" first in importance with a mean response of 4.38. The most experienced group of agents perceived "procedures to follow when receiving funds into the county Extension office" as high importance with a mean response of 4.31. Both of the groups with greater experience perceived "development of noncredit Extension courses" the lowest in importance in Category II--Extension Accounting Policies and Procedures.

The three tenure groups did not agree on perceived importance of

TABLE V

COMPARISON OF RESPONDENTS' PERCEPTIONS OF TRAINING NEEDS ACCORDING TO TENURE AS C.E.D. IN CATEGORY II--EXTENSION ACCOUNTING POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

0-3 Yrs.		4-10 Yrs.		11 Yrs. +		
Rank	Mean	Rank	Mean	Rank	Mean	Topics for Training
5,6	4.23	1	4.38	2,3	4.22	County purchasing procedures.
5,6	4.23	6,7	4.05	2,3	4.22	Establishing and updating ledger accounts.
3,4	4.35	2	4.33	1	4.31	Procedures to follow when receiving funds into the county Extension office.
9,10	3.94	8	3.97	6	4.04	Completion of deposit register and bank reconciliation statement.
8	4.00	10	3.30	10	3.63	Development of non-credit Extension course budget and processing of funds received.
7	4.05	6,7	4.05	8,9	3.95	Completion, approval, and processing of salary & travel claims.
2	4.41	4,5	4.08	4,5	4.09	Agency funds expenditures and transfers.
3,4	4.35	4,5	4.08	7	4.00	Extension Audit procedures.
1	4.52	3	4.13	4,5	4.09	Necessary authorization before spending funds from restricted ledger accounts.
9,10	3.94	9	3.55	8,9	3.54	Sale of publications in the Extension office.

any training topic except "sale of publications in the Extension office" which was ranked ninth of the ten topics.

Data in Table VI provide a comparison of respondents' perceptions of training needs according to tenure of the respondents in the administrative in-service training Category III--Personnel Management. This category had similar importance in perceived value of its ten topics. The zero to three year tenure group of agents and the most experienced group of agents, 11 years plus, both perceived the topic "effective staff counseling methods and procedures" as their number one training need by assigning it mean responses of 4.35 and 4.27. The four to ten year experience group almost agreed, but perceived "resolving conflicts" as their number one ranking with a mean response of 4.25. The zero to three tenure agents ranked "orienting new county staff members" as number three with a mean response of 4.23. "Effective staff counseling methods and procedures was ranked third in the four to ten year experience group.

The training topics in personnel management category perceived to be of least importance by respondents were: "leave policies--types and procedures for filing" for the least experienced group of agents; and "identifying and managing stress" by the other two tenure groups. Two training topics perceived to be of first or second ranking in this category by all three tenure groups were "effective staff counseling methods and procedures" and "resolving conflicts at the county level."

Data in Table VII provide a comparison of respondents' perceptions of training needs according to tenure of the respondent in administrative in-service training Category IV--Office Management and Communications. The first, second, and third ranked topics in this category were

TABLE VI

COMPARISON OF RESPONDENTS' PERCEPTIONS OF TRAINING NEEDS ACCORDING TO TENURE AS C.E.D. IN CATEGORY III--PERSONNEL MANAGEMENT

0-3 Yrs.		4-10 Yrs.		11 Yrs. +		
Rank	Mean	Rank	Mean	Rank	Mean	Topics for Training
4,5	4.17	2,3	4.10	3-5	3.95	Equal Employment Opportunities and Civil Rights requirements as related to interviewing and filling vacant positions.
4,5	4.17	5	3.88	6,7	3.90	Effective interviewing methods and techniques.
1,2	4.35	2,3	4.10	1	4.27	Effective staff counseling methods and procedures.
6	4.05	7	3.80	6,7	3.90	Performance appraisal procedures for secretarial staff.
7,8	4.00	10	3.55	10	3.31	Identifying and managing stress.
1,2	4.35	1	4.25	2	4.09	Resolving conflicts at the county level.
10	3.88	8	3.66	9	3.59	Leave policies - types and procedures for filing.
7,8	4.00	9	3.58	8	3.72	Problem solving methods and techniques.
3	4.23	6	3.83	3-5	3.95	Orienting new county staff members.
9	3.94	4	4.20	3-5	3.95	Effective time management.

TABLE VII

COMPARISON OF RESPONDENTS' PERCEPTIONS OF TRAINING NEEDS ACCORDING TO TENURE AS C.E.D. IN CATEGORY IV--OFFICE MANAGEMENT AND COMMUNICATIONS

0-3 Yrs.		4-10 Yrs.		11 Yrs. +		
Rank	Mean	Rank	Mean	Rank	Mean	Topics for Training
4	4.00	6	3.86	4,5	4.09	How to conduct effective county staff conferences.
5-7	3.88	5	3.91	6	4.04	Developing and implementing effective office policies.
10	3.35	8,9	3.55	8	3.86	Distributing clerical staff load.
5-7	3.88	4	4.00	10	3.59	Communications with district and state administrative staff.
1	4.47	1	4.47	1	4.77	Communications with county commissioners, excise board, and key elected officials.
5-7	3.88	10	3.44	9	3.72	Maintaining office equipment and supplies necessary for effective programs.
2	4.29	2	4.25	2	4.54	Maintaining effective working relations with mass media.
3	4.23	3	4.19	3	4.27	Maintaining effective working relations with civic organizations, fairboards, chamber of commerce, etc.
9	3.64	8,9	3.55	7	3.95	Maintaining efficient and attractive office.
8	3.82	7	3.58	4,5	4.09	Maintaining office filing system and literature orders.

identical for all three tenure groups. Leading the topics in perceived need for training was "communications with county commissioners, excise board, and key elected officials" followed by "maintaining effective working relations with mass media" for second ranking with "maintaining effective working relations with civic organizations, fairboards, chamber of commerce, and so forth" taking the third place ranking by all respondents.

Training topics perceived to be least in importance in this category were "distributing clerical staff load" for the zero to three tenure group; maintaining office equipment and supplies necessary for effective programs" for the four to ten tenure group of agents and "communications with district and state administrative staff" for the agents with the most experience." It is interesting to note that the zero to three tenure group ranked this topic as fifth and the four to ten tenure group ranked it as fourth in perceived priority for training.

Comparison of Responses to Training Needs of First-Year County Extension Directors According to Respondents Size of Staff

Since this study dealt with administrative in-service training needs for first-year Oklahoma County Extension Directors, it was important and it also proved interesting to compare responses from agents according to the size of their county staff at the time the questionnaires were completed. A good comparison was achieved by comparing responses from agents serving in one to two agent staff with agents serving with a staff size of four or more. It should be noted that agents in larger staffed counties normally had more tenure.

Responses of perceived importance were compared according to the size of staff for in-service training topics in administrative categories of county budget procurement, Extension accounting policies and procedures, personnel management, and office management, and communications.

Category I--Budget Procurement is summarized in Table VIII according to staff size of respondents. The size of staff was not a factor in perceived importance levels as the two groups of respondents agreed on their first, second, third, and fourth rankings as related to priority training topics. The number one ranking was "ability to develop and justify annual estimate of needs." Both groups of agents also agreed on the low ranking training topic in this category "how to calculate and allow for social security, mdeicare, retirement, and other employee deductions."

Data in Table IX describe respondents' perceptions of training needs according to staff size in Category II--Extension Accounting Policies and Procedures. This category shows a moderate degree of difference in perceived importance between the two groups of respondents. Agents with the smaller size staff ranked "necessary authorization before spending funds from restricted ledget accounts" highest with a mean response of 4.30. A close second with a mean response of 4.27, was "procedures to follow when receiving funds into the county Extension office." In comparison, the agents with four or more staff members perceived "county purchasing procedures" to be the highest training priority for first year county extension directors with a mean response of 4.46. Both groups of respondents agreed on their second ranking.

There was continued agreement between the respondents with

TABLE VIII

COMPARISON OF RESPONDENTS' PERCENPTIONS OF TRAINING NEEDS ACCORDING TO STAFF SIZE IN CATEGORY I--COUNTY BUDGET PROCUREMENT

1&2 Size Staff		4+ Size Staff		
Rank	Mean	Rank	Mean	Topics for Training
5,6	4.27	9	3.80	Ability to explain state formula for determining county share of funding for the County Extension Program.
1	4.55	1	4.60	Ability to develop and justify annual county estimate of needs.
3	4.36	3	4.26	Working knowledge of how the county general fund budget is developed at the county level.
4	4.33	4,5	4.20	Understanding of total funds available to a county - where they come from and where they can be spent.
2	4.38	2	4.33	Ability to explain the annual Contract Between Oklahoma State University Acting for and on behalf of it's Cooperative Extension Service and the Board of County Commissioners.
10	3.94	10	3.46	How to calculate and allow for social security, medicare, retirement and other employee deductions in the county budget.
8,9	3.97	6,7	3.93	How to use advisory committees in the budget procurement process.
8,9	3.97	4,5	4.20	Understanding of how to complete the county Extension budget forms correctly -A,B,C,D.
7	4.19	6,7	3.93	Procedures to follow to amend the county budget.
5,6	4.27	8	3.86	Procedures to justify and request county supplemental funds.

TABLE IX

COMPARISON OF RESPONDENTS' PERCEPTIONS OF TRAINING NEEDS ACCORDING TO STAFF SIZE IN CATEGORY II--EXTENSION ACCOUNTING POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

1&2 Size Staff		4+ Size Staff		
Rank	Mean	Rank	Mean	Topics for Training
4	4.19	1	4.46	County purchasing procedures.
6	4.05	3	4.26	Establishing and updating ledger accounts.
2	4.27	2	4.33	Procedures to follow when receiving funds into the county Extension office.
7	3.97	6	4.06	Completion of deposit register and bank reconciliation statement.
9	3.63	9	3.60	Development of non-credit Extension course budget and processing of funds received.
8	3.94	7	4.00	Completion, approval, and processing of salary & travel claims.
5	4.11	4,5	4.20	Agency funds expenditures and transfers.
3	4.22	4,5	4.20	Extension Audit procedures.
1	4.30	8	3.93	Necessary authorization before spending funds from restricted ledger accounts.
10	3.72	10	2.93	Sale of publications in the Extension office.

different size staff in the area of low priority training topics for the first-year county Extension director as both groups ranked "sale of publications in the Extension office" number ten.

Data in Table X compare perceptions of training needs of respondents according to staff size in the administrative in-service training Category III--Personnel Management. The ranking of the high importance in-service training topics in this category are similar. The one and two size staff respondents perceived "resolving conflicts at the county level" to be the most urgent training need for first year county Extension directors with a mean response of 4.11. In comparison the agents with the larger size staff perceived "effective staff counseling methods and procedures" as the most urgent training need in this category with a mean response of 4.40. The mean difference between the two high ranking topics is interesting. Evidently, the agents with the larger staff had stronger feelings about what they considered to be the number one training topic for first year county directors. In fact, the agents with larger staff perceived a higher mean response for each of their ten rankings than did the agents with the smaller size staff.

The topic of least perceived importance for the one and two size staff was "problem solving methods and techniques" with a mean response of 3.66. This compares to a mean response of 3.70, for the larger staff respondents who felt that "leave policies--types and procedures for filing" should be ranked last in importance.

A comparison of respondents' perceptions of training needs according to staff size in administrative training Category IV--Office Management and Communications is found in Table XI. In this category both groups of respondents agree on the number one training need

TABLE X

COMPARISON OF RESPONDENTS' PERCEPTIONS OF TRAINING NEEDS ACCORDING TO STAFF SIZE IN CATEGORY III--PERSONNEL MANAGEMENT

1&2 Size Staff		4+ Size Staff		
Rank	Mean	Rank	Mean	**Topics for Training**
3	4.05	6,7	4.06	Equal Employment Opportunities and Civil Rights requirements as related to interviewing and filling vacant positions.
7	3.86	4	4.13	Effective interviewing methods and techniques.
2	4.08	1	4.40	Effective staff counseling methods and procedures.
4	3.97	3	4.20	Performance appraisal procedures for secretarial staff.
9	3.69	8,9	3.80	Identifying and managing stress.
1	4.11	2	4.26	Resolving conflicts at the county level.
8	3.72	10	3.70	Leave policies - types and procedures for filing.
10	3.66	8,9	3.80	Problem solving methods and techniques.
6	3.88	6,7	4.06	Orienting new county staff members.
5	3.91	5	4.13	Effective time management.

TABLE XI

COMPARISON OF RESPONDENTS' PERCEPTIONS OF TRAINING NEEDS ACCORDING TO STAFF SIZE IN CATEGORY IV--OFFICE MANAGEMENT AND COMMUNICATIONS

1&2 Size Staff		4+ Size Staff		
Rank	Mean	Rank	Mean	Topics for Training
5	3.77	3,4	4.26	How to conduct effective county staff conferences.
7	3.63	5,6	4.13	Developing and implementing effective office policies.
10	3.16	5,6	4.13	Distributing clerical staff load.
4	3.86	9,10	3.80	Communications with district and state administrative staff.
1	4.52	1	4.73	Communications with county commissioners, excise board, and key elected officials.
8,9	3.50	8	3.86	Maintaining office equipment and supplies necessary for effective programs.
2	4.19	3,4	4.26	Maintaining effective working relations with mass media.
3	4.11	2	4.33	Maintaining effective working relations with civic organizations, fairboards, chamber of commerce, etc.
8,9	3.50	9,10	3.80	Maintaining efficient and attractive office.
6	3.69	7	4.06	Maintaining office filing system and literature orders.

"Communications with county commissioners, excise board, and key elected officials." The respondents with one to two staff gave this topic a mean response of 4.52 while the respondents with four or more staff members felt it was important enough to assign a mean response of 4.73, the highest mean response of the entire study. The larger size staff ranked "maintaining effective working relations with civic organizations, fairboards, chamber of commerce, and so forth" as their number two training need in this category. The agents with a smaller staff ranked this topic number three, but felt "maintaining effective working relations with mass media was of greater need in the training of first-year county directors.

There was no continuity in the topics with lower rankings in this category when comparing responses of the two groups. It points out a difference in opinion of perceived importance of several of the training topics listed in this category. Generally, there was agreement with the top four training topics, but very little agreement on the remaining six topics as to where each ranked in order of priority.

CHAPTER V

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Summary

Purpose

The purpose of this study was to identify priority administrative in-service training needs of first-year county Extension directors as perceived by individuals who were serving in the role of C.E.D. at the time of the study.

Specific Objectives

The following specific objectives were established to accomplish the primary purpose of the study:

1. Identify and rank in order of priority 40 selected administrative in-service training topics according to the importance placed upon each topic by individuals serving as C.E.D. at the time of the study.

2. Determine if relationships exist between the way in which individual respondents rank the 40 selected administrative topics and by (a) years of service as county Extension director, and (b) size of county staff during that service as county Extension director.

Procedures

A review of related literature and research was made and the

following task were involved in the collection and analysis of data to satisfy the purpose and objectives of the study:

1. Determine the population of the study
2. Develop the data collection instrument
3. Collect the data
4. Analyze the findings

Mailed questionnaires were sent to 75 Oklahoma County Extension Directors at the time of the study, January 1985. All 75 C.E.D. completed and returned the questionnaire for 100 percent return of the population.

Selected Characteristics of Agents Participating in the Study

The study population was 75 C.E.D. in Oklahoma Cooperative Extension Service. Forty-eight percent of the agents had four to ten years experience as C.E.D., 22.7 percent had zero to three years of experience as C.E.D., and 29.3 percent had 11 or more years of experience in the county director position.

Forty-eight percent of the respondents were serving with a staff size of one to two professional agents, 32 percent had a three member staff, and 20 percent of the population had a staff of four or more extension agents in their staff.

Findings

The major focus of the research study was to identify high priority administrative in-service training needs of first-year Oklahoma County Extension Directors. In order to clarify and rank in order each

of the selected 40 administrative in-service training topics, the researcher completed a summary which listed the following information: mean of each training topic, overall ranking of each of the 40 training topics, and a ranking of each of the ten training topics included under each of the four training categories. Tables XII, XIII, XIV, and XV are used to summarize and analyze perceptions of the population by training categories.

Data in Table XII summarize responses from the total study population according to Category I--County Budget Procurement. Each of the ten training topics listed under this category was perceived as being in the "high" or "critical" need for training. The population perceived these training topics to be very important in the development and training of the first year county Extension director. The two highest ranked training needs were classified as "critical". They were "working knowledge of how the county general fund budget is developed at the county level" with a mean response of 4.62, followed by "ability to develop and justify annual county estimate of needs" with a mean response of 4.60. The third ranked training topic "ability to explain the annual Contract Between Oklahoma State University Acting for and on Behalf of its Cooperative Extension Service and the Board of County Commissioners" was ranked fourth as a perceived training need by the overall study with a mean of 4.36.

Data in Table XIII summarize all agent responses to training needs of the first-year county directors in Category I--Extension Accounting Policies and Procedures. Again the most obvious finding of this summary is that all ten of the training topics were ranked in the "high" need for training as related to the role of the first-year county director.

TABLE XII

SUMMARY OF ALL AGENT RESPONSES TO TRAINING NEEDS OF FIRST-YEAR COUNTY EXTENSION DIRECTORS IN CATEGORY I--COUNTY BUDGET PROCUREMENT

Ranking By Category	Mean	Topics for Training
8,9	3.89	Ability to explain state formula for determining county share of funding for the County Extension Program.
2	4.60	Ability to develop and justify annual county estimate of needs.
1	4.62	Working knowledge of how the county general fund budget is developed at the county level
4	4.29	Understanding of total funds available to a county--where they come from and where they can be spent
3	4.36	Ability to explain the annual Contract Between Oklahoma State University Acting for and on Behalf of its Cooperative Extension Service and the Board of County Commissioners.
10	3.73	How to calculate and allow for social security, medicare, retirement, and other employee deductions in the county budget.
8,9	3.89	How to use advisory committees in the budget procurement process.
5	4.04	Understanding of how to complete the County Extension budget forms correctly, A, B, C, D.
7	3.96	Procedures to follow to amend the county budget.
6	3.97	Procedures to justify and request county supplemental funds.

TABLE XIII

SUMMARY OF ALL AGENT RESPONSES TO TRAINING NEEDS OF FIRST-YEAR COUNTY EXTENSION DIRECTORS IN CATEGORY II--EXTENSION ACCOUNTING POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

Ranking by Category	Mean	Topics for Training
1,2	4.30	County purchasing procedures.
4,5	4.16	Establishing and updating ledger accounts.
1,2	4.30	Procedures to follow when receiving funds into the county Extension office.
8	3.97	Completion of deposit register and bank reconciliation statement.
9,10	3.64	Development of noncredit Extension course budget and processing of funds received.
7	4.01	Completion, approval, and processing of salary and travel claims.
4,5	4.16	Agency funds expenditures and transfers.
6	4.12	Extension audit procedures.
3	4.21	Necessary authorization before spending funds from restricted ledger accounts.
9,10	3.64	Sale of publications in the Extension office.

The two topics perceived of most importance in this category by respondents were "county purchasing procedures" and "procedures to follow when receiving funds into the county Extension office." "Sale of publications in the Extension office" and "development of noncredit Extension course budget and processing of funds received" were perceived to be of least importance in this category, but respondents still believed they should be included as a "high" need for training priority.

Data in Table XIV show a summary of perceived importance of the training topics in Category II--Personnel Management. Once again the 75 respondents gave each of the ten training topics in this category a "high" priority for training for first-year county directors. The two topics respondents perceived as most important were "effective staff counseling methods and procedures" and "resolving conflicts at the county level." "Identifying and managing stress" was perceived to be of least importance in this category, but it still had a mean of 3.57 which would place it in the "high" priority area.

Data in Table XV give the results of the analysis of responses to training needs in Category IV--Office Management and Communications. Just as with the other three categories all training topics listed in this table were perceived to be of "high" priority for training first-year county directors. One of the topics in this category, "Communications with county commissioners, excise board, and key elected officials" was rated first in this category with a mean response of 4.49. It is interesting to note that even though this is listed in the area of office management and communications it still deals directly with budget procurement.

TABLE XIV

SUMMARY OF ALL AGENT RESPONSES TO TRAINING NEEDS OF FIRST-YEAR COUNTY EXTENSION DIRECTORS IN CATEGORY III--PERSONNEL MANAGEMENT

Ranking by Category	Mean	Topics for Training
3	4.02	Equal employment opportunities and civil rights requirements as related to interviewing and filling vacant positions.
5	3.97	Effective interviewing methods and techniques.
1	4.22	Effective staff counseling methods and procedures.
7	3.90	Performance appraisal procedures for secretarial staff.
10	3.57	Identifying and managing stress.
2	4.16	Resolving conflicts at the county level.
9	3.69	Leave policies--types and procedures for filing.
8	3.73	Problem solving methods and techniques.
6	3.96	Orienting new county staff members.
4	3.98	Effective time management.

TABLE XV

SUMMARY OF ALL AGENT RESPONSES TO TRAINING NEEDS OF FIRST-YEAR COUNTY EXTENSION DIRECTORS IN CATEGORY IV-- OFFICE MANAGEMENT AND COMMUNICATIONS

Ranking by Category	Mean	Topics for Training
4	3.96	How to conduct effective county staff conferences.
5	3.94	Developing and implementing effective office policies.
8	3.70	Distributing clerical staff load.
6	3.86	Communications with district and state administrative staff.
1	4.49	Communications with county commissioners, excise board, and key elected officials.
10	3.57	Maintaining office equipment and supplies necessary for effective programs.
2	4.29	Maintaining effective working relations with mass media.
3	4.22	Maintaining effective working relations with civic organizations, fair-boards, chamber of commerce, etc.
9	3.69	Maintaining efficient and attractive office.
7	3.78	Maintaining office filing system and literature orders.

Data in Table XVI summarize the overall ranking of training topics as perceived by the total study population. Each topic is ranked in order of perceived importance along with the mean category of each training topic. Two of the topics were perceived to be in the "critical" area of importance, "working knowledge of how the county general fund is developed at the county level," and "ability to develop and justify annual county estimate of needs." Both of these two "critical" training needs were in Category I--Budget Procurement. In fact, four of the top ten training needs were from Category I.

The remaining 38 training topics ranged in average mean response of 4.49 to 3.57. All were perceived to be in the "high" training need area by the respondents.

After tabulating all responses on training needs of first-year county directors the researcher believed the following to be of extreme importance.

1. The study population perceived each of the 40 administrative training topics to be of at least "high" priority when designing a training program for the first-year county Extension director.

2. The respondents perceived the training topics that involved funds procurement, documentation, budgeting, and spending to be of a very high priority.

3. Respondents indicated that a new county Extension director definitely needed early training in developing and securing a county budget.

4. Tenure of respondents in the C.E.D. position was not a factor in assigning "ability to develop and justify annual county estimate of needs" the highest perceived need for training.

TABLE XVI

OVERALL RANKING OF TRAINING TOPICS AS PERCEIVED BY THE TOTAL STUDY POPULATION

Overall Rank	Mean	Category	Topic
1	4.62	I	Working knowledge of how the county general fund is developed at the county level.
2	4.60	I	Ability to develop and justify annual county estimate of needs.
3	4.49	IV	Communications with county commissioners, excise board, and key elected officials.
4	4.36	I	Ability to explain the annual Contract Between Oklahoma State University Acting for and on Behalf of its Cooperative Extension Service and the Board of County Commissioners.
5,6	4.30	II	County purchasing procedures.
5,6	4.30	II	Procedures to follow when receiving funds into the county Extension office.
7,8	4.29	IV	Maintaining effective working relations with mass media.
7,8	4.29	I	Understanding of total funds available to a county--where they come from and where they can be spent.
9,10	4.22	III	Effective staff counseling methods and procedures.
9,10	4.22	IV	Maintaining effective working relations with civic organizations, fairboards, chamber of commerce, etc.
11	41.21	II	Necessary authorization before spending funds from restricted ledger accounts.
12-14	4.16	II	Establishing and updating ledger accounts.
12-14	4.16	II	Agency funds expenditures and transfers.
12-14	4.16	III	Resolving conflicts at the county level.

TABLE XVI (Continued)

Overall Rank	Mean	Category	Topic
15	4.12	II	Extension audit procedures.
16	4.04	I	Understanding of how to complete the county Extension budget forms correctly--A,B,C,D.
17	4.02	III	Equal employment opportunities and civil rights requirements as related to interviewing and filling vacant positions.
18	4.01	II	Completion, approval, and processing of salary and travel claims.
19	3.98	III	Effective time management.
20-22	3.97	I	Procedures to justify and request county supplemental funds.
20-22	3.97	II	Completion of deposit register and bank reconciliation statement.
23-25	3.96	III	Orienting new county staff members.
23-25	3.96	IV	How to conduct effective county staff conferences.
23-25	3.96	I	Procedures to follow to amend the county budget.
26	3.94	IV	Developing and implementing effective office policies.
27	3.90	III	Performance appraisal procedures for secretarial staff.
28,29	3.89	I	Ability to explain state formula for determining county share of funding for the county Extension program.
28,29	3.89	I	How to use advisory committees in the budget procurement process.
30	3.86	IV	Communications with state and district administrative staff.

TABLE XVI (Continued)

Overall Rank	Mean	Category	Topic
31	3.78	IV	Maintaining office filing system and literature orders.
32,33	3.73	III	Problem solving methods and techniques.
34	3.70	IV	Distributing clerical staff load.
35,36	3.69	IV	Maintaining efficient and attractive office.
37,38	3.64	II	Development of noncredit Extension course budget and processing of funds received.
37,38	3.64	II	Sale of publications in the Extension office.
39,40	3.57	III	Identifying and managing stress.
39,40	3.58	IV	Maintaining office equipment and supplied necessary for effective programs.

5. Agents' tenure in the position of C.E.D. did have an impact on their perceived need for taining as the agents with zero to three years of experience consistently assigned higher importance to topics when compared to the more experienced tenure group.

6. All agents perceive relationships with commissioners, excise boards, elected officials, fairboards, chamber of commerce, and etcetera to be a vital part of training needs of the first-year county director.

7. Size of staff was not a factor when determining priority administrative training needs of first-year county directors in the category of budget procurement. In fact, the most noteable perceived differences in importance placed upon training topics according to size of staff was found in the category of Extension accounting policies and procedures.

8. Respondents with staff size of four or more agents placed more importance in training in the areas of personnel management and office management than did the respondents with smaller size staff.

9. Seven of the top ten administrative training topics were found to be in the categories of budget procurement and Extension accounting policies and procedures when considering responses from the total study population.

Conclusions

Based on the findings of the study the following conclusions were made.

1. Newly appointed county Extension directors should have access to an administrative in-service training program.

2. The 40 selected administrative in-service training topics listed in this study are of great importance and should be included in administrative training for county Extension directors during their first year in this position.

3. An effective administrative in-service training program for first-year county Extension directors should stress budgets and procedures for handling funds received or disbursed in the Extension office.

4. Newly appointed county directors perceive administrative training to be an integral and vital part of their professional development.

5. An effective administrative in-service training program can be designed and taught to county directors during their first year of tenure in the directorship. Providing such a program would help ensure a competent staff of directors and upgrade the efficiency of the Oklahoma Cooperative Extension Service.

6. An administrative in-service training program should include skill development in the area of public and human relations, especially with public officials such as commissioners and excise boards.

7. Size of staff in which first-year county Extension directors are working is really not a serious consideration when designing an administrative in-service training program for new C.E.D.

8. Seventy-six percent of the county directors in Oklahoma have ten years or less of experience as county administrator. Having a relatively inexperienced staff, it is extremely important that the organization provide administrative training for all county directors, but especially for the first-year county director.

9. Agents in the zero to three years experience group consistently assigned higher importance to topics as compared to the other tenure groups thus indicating that they perceive a need for and would be receptive to administrative training.

Recommendations

As a result of analysis of data and findings of the research the following recommendations are made.

1. Findings of this study be communicated to appropriate administrators for Oklahoma Cooperative Extension Service so that the information might be used to strengthen the in-service training program for the first-year county director.

2. An administrative in-service training program for first-year county directors be implemented immediately. Of special importance is need for training in budget procurement before an inexperienced C.E.D. has to file a county estimate of needs.

3. That the administrative in-service training program not be limited to only county directors. Agents who are not in the C.E.D. role, but desire to assume this role, could improve their qualifications by participating in a good administrative training program.

4. All newly appointed C.E.D. should have an orientation to Extension accounting policies and procedures within their first month of directorship. This could be handled by either the district or state.

5. That an administrative in-service training program be developed for experienced C.E.D. This program could stress topics such as staff counseling, resolving conflicts, etcetera.

Recommendations for Additional Research

The following recommendations are made by the author in regard to additional research. The recommendations are judgments based on the findings and suggestions resulting from the study. It is recommended that:

1. Research be conducted to find out when would be the most effective time to offer administrative in-service training for first-year C.E.D. as related to calendar months or to months of tenure as C.E.D.

2. Research be conducted to determine how well C.E.D.s understand their role as county administrator after two, three, and five years of tenure as C.E.D.

3. Research be conducted to determine how well all C.E.D. would accept administrative in-service training regardless of years of tenure as C.E.D.

4. Research be conducted to determine need for administrative in-service training for agents in counties with three or more Extension agents in the area of personnel management, especially staff counseling.

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APPENDIXES

APPENDIX A

SAMPLE OF PRELIMINARY QUESTIONNAIRE

Please rank the importance of each item listed below as it relates to the responsibilities of a County Extension Director.

IMPORTANCE (CIRCLE ONE)	SKILL OR TASK
Low High	I. County budget procurement.
1 2 3 4 5	1. Ability to explain state formula for determining county share of funding for the County Extension Program.
1 2 3 4 5	2. Ability to develop and justify annual county estimate of needs.
1 2 3 4 5	3. Working knowledge of how the county general fund budget is developed at the county level.
1 2 3 4 5	4. Understanding of total funds available to a county - where they come from and where they can be spent.
1 2 3 4 5	5. Ability to explain the annual Contract Between Oklahoma State University Acting for and on Behalf of it's Cooperative Extension Service and the Board of County Commissioners.
1 2 3 4 5	6. How to calculate and allow for social security, medicare, retirement and other employee deductions in the county budget.
1 2 3 4 5	7. How to use advisory committees in the budget procurement process.
1 2 3 4 5	8. Understanding of how to complete the county Extension budget forms correctly - A, B, C, D.
1 2 3 4 5	9. Procedures to follow to amend the county budget.
1 2 3 4 5	10. Procedures to justify and request county supplemental funds.
1 2 3 4 5	11. Revenue sharing funds - availability and use.
1 2 3 4 5	12. Other - List: _____
1 2 3 4 5	13. _____
1 2 3 4 5	14. _____
	II. Extension accounting policies and procedures.
1 2 3 4 5	1. State purchasing procedures.
1 2 3 4 5	2. County purchasing procedures.
1 2 3 4 5	3. Establishing and updating ledger accounts.
1 2 3 4 5	4. Procedures to follow when receiving funds into the county Extension office.
1 2 3 4 5	5. Completion of deposit register and bank reconciliation statement.
1 2 3 4 5	6. Development of non-credit Extension course budget and processing of funds received.
1 2 3 4 5	7. Completion, approval, and processing of salary and travel claims.
1 2 3 4 5	8. Agency funds expenditures and transfers.
1 2 3 4 5	9. Extension audit procedures.
1 2 3 4 5	10. Authorization necessary to spend funds from restricted accounts.
1 2 3 4 5	11. Sale of publications in the Extension office.
1 2 3 4 5	12. Other - List: _____
1 2 3 4 5	13. _____

III. Personnel management.

1 2 3 4 5	1. Equal Employment Opportunities and Civil Rights requirements as related to interviewing and filling vacant positions.
1 2 3 4 5	2. Effective interviewing methods and techniques.
1 2 3 4 5	3. Effective staff counseling methods and procedures.
1 2 3 4 5	4. Ability to explain staff benefit programs.
1 2 3 4 5	5. Performance appraisal procedures for secretarial staff.
1 2 3 4 5	6. Identifying and managing stress.
1 2 3 4 5	7. Resolving conflicts at the county level.
1 2 3 4 5	8. Leave policies - types and procedures for filing.
1 2 3 4 5	9. Workers compensation - policy and procedures for filing.
1 2 3 4 5	10. Problem solving methods and techniques.
1 2 3 4 5	11. Orienting new county staff members.
1 2 3 4 5	12. Effective time management.
1 2 3 4 5	13. Other - List:_____
1 2 3 4 5	14. _____

IV. Office management and communications.

1 2 3 4 5	1. How to conduct effective county staff conferences.
1 2 3 4 5	2. Developing and implementing effective office policies.
1 2 3 4 5	3. Distributing clerical staff work load.
1 2 3 4 5	4. Communications with district and state administrative staff.
1 2 3 4 5	5. Communications with county commissioners, excise board, and key elected officials.
1 2 3 4 5	6. Maintaining office equipment and supplies necessary for effective programs.
1 2 3 4 5	7. Maintaining effective working relations with mass media.
1 2 3 4 5	8. Maintaining effective working relations with civic organizations, fairboards, chamber of commerce, etc.
1 2 3 4 5	9. Maintaining efficient and attractive office.
1 2 3 4 5	10. Maintaining office filing system and literature orders.
1 2 3 4 5	11. Other - List:_____
1 2 3 4 5	12. _____

APPENDIX B

SAMPLE OF AGENT QUESTIONNAIRE

No._____

STUDY TO DETERMINE IN-SERVICE TRAINING NEEDS
OF FIRST YEAR COUNTY EXTENSION DIRECTORS

How many years have you served as a County Extension Director?
(Check one)

_____ Less than one year.
_____ One to three years.
_____ Four to ten years.
_____ Eleven to Fifteen years.
_____ Sixteen years and above.

Please list the size of your county staff.
(Number)

_____ Professional Extension Agents
_____ Secretaries
_____ Other

Please rank the importance of each item listed below according to your preceived importance as each relates to training for first year County Extension Directors according to the following rating: 5-critical; 4-high; 3-average; 2-low; 1-none.

IMPORTANCE (Circle one) None				Critical	SKILL OR TASK
					I. County budget procurement.
1	2	3	4	5	1. Ability to explain state formula for determining county share of funding for the County Extension Program.
1	2	3	4	5	2. Ability to develop and justify annual county estimate of needs.
1	2	3	4	5	3. Working knowledge of how the county general fund budget is developed at the county level.
1	2	3	4	5	4. Understanding of total funds available to a county - where they come from and where they can be spent.
1	2	3	4	5	5. Ability to explain the annual Contract Between Oklahoma State University Acting for and on Behalf of it's Cooperative Extension Service and the Board of County Commissioners.
1	2	3	4	5	6. How to calculate and allow for social security, medicare, retirement and other employee deductions in the county budget.
1	2	3	4	5	7. How to use advisory committees in the budget procurement process.
1	2	3	4	5	8. Understanding of how to complete the county Extension budget forms correctly - A, B, C, D.
1	2	3	4	5	9. Procedures to follow to amend the county budget.
1	2	3	4	5	10. Procedures to justify and request county supplemental funds.
					II. Extension Accounting policies and procedures.
1	2	3	4	5	1. County purchasing procedures.
1	2	3	4	5	2. Establishing and updating ledger accounts.
1	2	3	4	5	3. Procedures to follow when receiving funds into the county Extension office.
1	2	3	4	5	4. Completion of deposit register and bank reconciliation statement.
1	2	3	4	5	5. Development of non-credit Extension course budget and processing of funds received.
1	2	3	4	5	6. Completion, approval, and processing of salary and travel claims.

1 2 3 4 5	7. Agency funds expenditures and transfers.
1 2 3 4 5	8. Extension audit procedures.
1 2 3 4 5	9 Necessary authorization before spending funds from restricted ledger accounts.
1 2 3 4 5	10. Sale of publications in the Extension office.

III. Personnel management.

1 2 3 4 5	1. Equal Employment Opportunities and Civil Rights requirements as related to interviewing and filling vacant positions.
1 2 3 4 5	2. Effective interviewing methods and techniques.
1 2 3 4 5	3. Effective staff counseling methods and procedures.
1 2 3 4 5	4. Performance appraisal procedures for secretarial staff.
1 2 3 4 5	5. Identifying and managing stress.
1 2 3 4 5	6. Resolving conflicts at the county level.
1 2 3 4 5	7. Leave policies - types and procedures for filing.
1 2 3 4 5	8. Problem solving methods and techniques.
1 2 3 4 5	9. Orienting new county staff members.
1 2 3 4 5	10. Effective time management.

IV. Office management and communications.

1 2 3 4 5	1. How to conduct effective county staff conferences.
1 2 3 4 5	2. Developing and implementing effective office policies.
1 2 3 4 5	3. Distributing clerical staff work load.
1 2 3 4 5	4. Communications with district and state administrative staff.
1 2 3 4 5	5. Communications with county commissioners, excise board, and key elected officials.
1 2 3 4 5	6. Maintaining office equipment and supplies necessary for effective programs.
1 2 3 4 5	7. Maintaining effective working relations with mass media.
1 2 3 4 5	8. Maintaining effective working relations with civic organizations, fairboards, chamber of commerce, etc.
1 2 3 4 5	9. Maintaining efficient and attractive office.
1 2 3 4 5	10. Maintaining office filing system and literature orders.

APPENDIX C

CORRESPONDENCE

Dear Co-worker:

I am in the process of trying to complete a thesis and I need your help! I would be most grateful if you would take a few minutes of your time to complete the enclosed questionnaire. As usual, I am behind schedule so please return it to me in the enclosed envelope just as soon as possible.

The purpose of the study is to identify training needs of County Extension Directors during their first year of tenure in this position. So please respond to each item on the questionnaire in terms of the importance you preceive for each proposed training area.

In order to add validity to the study we are surveying more than just first year County Extension Directors. Your assistance is greatly appreciated.

Sincerely,

Ronald H. George
County Extension Agri. Agent, C.E.D.
Washington County

COOPERATIVE EXTENSION SERVICE

OKLAHOMA STATE UNIVERSITY — DIVISION OF AGRICULTURE

January 19, 1985

Dear Co-Worker:

I need your help! I'm in the process of trying to complete a thesis on training needs of newly appointed County Extension Directors. If you would please look at the enclosed questionnaire and complete it according to how important you perceive each item as it relates to training for first year County Extension Directors.

As a County Extension Director you have had to learn many of the duties and responsibilities by experience or by searching for information from experienced C.E.D. In-Service training cannot eleminate this method of learning, but it could be most useful in teaching basic skills and knowledge for the county directorship.

This questionnaire is being mailed to all County Extension Directors as well as acting County Extension Directors throughout Oklahoma. We are trying to identify topics or skills all of you perceive to be most important for the first year director. I sincerely appreciate your help and I have enclosed a self-addressed, stamped envelope for use in returning the questionnaire.

I am behind schedule so if you could return it to me this week I would be most appreciative. Dr. Roy Lessly, Extension Staff Development Specialist, is interested in the results of this study so your reply could also help to shape in-service training for new C.E.D. in the near future.

Again thank you for your help.

Sincerely,

Ronnie George

Ronald H. George
County Extension Agriculture
Agent, C.E.D.

WORK IN AGRICULTURE, 4-H, HOME ECONOMICS AND RELATED FIELDS
USDA - OSU AND COUNTY COMMISSIONERS COOPERATING

VITA 2

Ronald H. George

Candidate for the Degree of

Master of Science

Thesis: FIRST-YEAR ADMINISTRATIVE IN-SERVICE TRAINING NEEDS AS PERCEIVED BY COUNTY EXTENSION DIRECTORS IN OKLAHOMA

Major Field: Agricultural Education

Biographical:

Personal Data: Born in Lamesa, Texas, February 6, 1942, the son of Marvin and Readeece George.

Education: Graduated from Stanton High School, Stanton, Texas, May, 1960; received the Bachelor of Science degree from Texas A&M University, College Station, Texas in May, 1965, with a major in Agricultural Education; completed requirements for the Master of Science degree at Oklahoma State University with a major in Agricultural Education in July, 1985.

Professional Experience: Assistant County Agent, Bell County, Texas, 1965 to 1966; Army, 1966 to 1968; Allied Chemical Corporation, 1968 to 1969; 4-H Agent, Muskogee County, Oklahoma, July, 1969 to January, 1973; Area 4-H Agent in Northeast Extension District, February, 1973 to March, 1975; County Extension Director, Ottawa County, Oklahoma, April, 1975 to July, 1984; County Extension Director, Washington County, Oklahoma to present.

Organizations: Oklahoma Association of County Extension Agents and National Association of County Extension Agents; Epsilon Sigma Phi, Oklahoma Higher Education Alumni Association.