

EXTENSION SUPPORT FOR AGENT'S ASSOCIATIONS

The administration of University of Georgia Cooperative Extension strongly encourages membership and participation in professional agent associations. It is our belief that participation in these associations is vital to the professional improvement of our faculty.

Extension Administration gives moral support and to the extent possible, financial support to the activities of the five agent associations including Georgia Association of County Agricultural Agents (GACAA), Georgia Extension Association of Family and Consumer Sciences (GEAFCS), Georgia Association of Extension 4-H Agents (GAE4-HA), Association of Natural Resources Extension Professionals (ANREP) and Epsilon Sigma Phi (ESP). Guidelines for such support are attached.

State and Federal funds are involved in the support of agent associations, both in official time granted for meetings and in expenses reimbursed. Therefore, the associations and Extension Administration must act in a responsible manner in the utilization of these public funds. Normal channels of authorization and accounting procedures must be used. It is the responsibility of the associations' leadership to submit requests for travel authorization well ahead of scheduled meetings. In instances of lump sum allocations (as for national meetings), it is necessary to know the numbers and names of participants in order to authorize exact reimbursements. **Out-of-state trips require a minimum of four weeks notice and in-state requests require three weeks lead time. Out-of-state travel requests are required even if there is no cost to the University of Georgia Cooperative Extension.**

Association Presidents need to submit dates of meetings (including general meetings and board of director meetings) to Extension Administration as early as possible so that dates can be publicized in Extension's master calendar. This will help to eliminate conflicts in scheduling.

It should be noted that all Extension agents' first responsibility is to their county program of work. Association activities should not unduly interfere with this responsibility.

1. Official Time

Time off from regular duties may be granted for official delegates to attend the following:

- National convention (includes two days travel time)
- Southern Regional Officers workshops
- State Association annual meetings (limited to three days including travel time); all members
- Up to four meetings per year of the board of directors of the associations
- Public relations projects, as approved by the Office of the Associate Dean for Extension. Associations are requested to limit numbers of agents involved to the minimum required.

Authority to approve or disapprove official time for non-delegates to National conventions is delegated to District Extension Directors, Program leaders or Department Heads (for State staff). Official time for faculty to participate in other association activities must have prior approval from the Office of the Associate Dean for Extension.

2. Expenses*

Full or partial payment of travel expenses may be granted for the following:

- (a) Official delegates to the National convention
- Total amount granted to each Association to be based on membership (the total number of members should be reported by the President of the association to the office of the Associate Dean for Extension).

- Associations should consider including DSA recipients and national award winners as voting delegates.

(b) Southern Regional Officer's workshops (two participants per association)

(c) Up to four meetings per year of board of directors (committee chairs are not considered member of the board and expenses for their participation must have **prior** approval from the Office of the Associate Dean for Extension. Funds for board of directors meetings are limited and shall not include members serving in national or regional office.)** Where feasible, associations are encouraged to use video conferencing and other web based technologies for membership to participate in board of directors meetings. Board of Directors meetings held in conjunction with state association meetings will be authorized for official time only.

(d) Public relations activities with prior approval from the Office of the Associate Dean for Extension.

No expenses will be paid to agents for travel, meals or lodging associated with state association annual meetings. County Coordinators are encouraged to request a line item in their county budget for "professional development" to cover these expenses.

Requests for travel authorization for all attendees should be made by the Association president to Extension administration **at least three weeks prior to the meetings for in-state meetings, and **one month** for out-of-state meetings.*

***An alternative for 2C above is for the board of directors to reduce the number of their meetings to two and include committee chairs at one meeting.*

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