

Cornell Cooperative Extension Shared Business Networks

Shared Business Networks (SBN's) provide an updated infrastructure for Cornell Cooperative Extension associations statewide. Associations participating in the SBNs will have access to competent, knowledgeable "leads" in the areas of finance, HR, and IT. The SBN leads will have access to training, trouble shooting, and business practice development with on-campus administrators. CCE Administration will work through the local SBN functional leads. The functional leads will work directly with association staff to address needs as they arise. The vision is to create a structure that will provide increased effectiveness at reduced transaction costs, both locally and at Cornell. Another desired outcome of this vision is to better position CCE in ways that will enhance sustainability of programming in difficult economic times.

Regular mechanisms are in place for each statewide group of functional leads to communicate via conference call or other electronic means one or two times per month. These connections provide a forum for a statewide team approach to addressing issues and problem solving and assure SBN leads are kept current on matters that will affect local CCE association business. "Lead" Executive Directors (ED'S) of SBNs also meet monthly via conference calls. CCE Administration functional leads and staff facilitate these meetings.

When significant business practices change across the system, those changes will be implemented through the SBN functional leads instead of the former practice of dealing with all 57 counties individually and simultaneously. The SBN infrastructure allows for a communication pathway between CCE Administration and the SBN leads and then between the SBN leads and Associations. This feedback mechanism provides CCE administration with information from the field on topics such as which options will work best, how to deploy a change, how to fix a problem, etc. When an association experiences a business related problem or question, the appropriate SBN functional lead is the first contact and serves in the role of relaying information to CCE Administration when needed.

Associations are expected to incorporate consistent business practices across the SBN and in some cases, across the state to a higher degree than in the past.

Routine finance, HR, and IT work are still handled locally (unless the SBN has set up a means of handling those tasks).

Our CCE mission continues, as does our focus on business operations being done to support programs.

Core responsibilities and authorities of local Boards of Directors and Executive Directors within a CCE association per laws, regulations, agreements, and policies have not changed.

Cornell University statutory, regulatory and policy responsibilities for oversight, standard setting, and operating within agreements is unchanged.