

Memorandum

Date: December 5, 2013

Subject: National Urban Leaders Network

Leaders in urban extension from 14 states gathered in Pittsburgh on December 2, 2013 for a three day meeting to discuss opportunities for urban extension and to formalize a network of urban extension leaders. The first step in this process was to identify a purpose of the group: *"The purpose of the National Urban Leaders Network is to advocate and advance the strategic importance and long term value of urban extension activities."* The second step was to assess our strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats. The final step was to develop an action plan on how to move forward. Penn State hosted the meeting and provided a facilitator to focus the group's efforts, ultimately resulting in the development of a list of actions that can help move urban extension forward on three fronts: locally, institutionally and nationally.

Throughout the meeting, colleagues shared examples of their urban extension efforts, the Penn State Center in Pittsburgh, the Urban Research and Outreach-Engagement Center in North Minneapolis, and the youth development programming in Baltimore are just a few that were discussed. The consensus of the group was that the Land Grant Universities have only begun to scratch the surface of the urban extension market, which includes not only the big cities but their surrounding suburbs as well. Our extension model is uniquely qualified to assess urban needs, develop science-based program to address these needs, and deliver these programs to a meaningful manner that will demonstrate impact. These efforts would greatly compliment our work in rural/agricultural extension and provide new audiences for extension as well as new funding sources for our universities.

The meeting resulted in the creation of an action plan. A plan that the National Urban Leaders Network will begin implementing when they arrive back at their land grant universities. Some of these actions include:

- Establishing a communication network to link urban extension professionals throughout the nation to share ideas and create new partnerships around common issues
- Working within the four regions to develop regional position papers and urban extension plans that foster collaboration on advancing urban extension activities among the land grant universities within the region
- Assembling examples of urban extension that can be used to advocate for funding at the national, state and local level
- Engaging more faculty and students in urban research and extension programming
- Improve professional development of urban extension staff