

Compliance and OSU Extension

OSU Extension has a history of excellence in research-based educational programming that improves the lives of the residents of the state of Ohio. In striving to continue this excellence, OSU Extension recognizes the importance of diversity, equity, inclusion, and pluralism.

OSU Extension defines diversity as:

differences among people with respect to age, class, ethnicity, gender, physical and mental ability, race, sexual orientation, spiritual practices, and other human differences.

As an organization that respects, values, and advocates for equity and inclusion, we must continue to respond to the question: “Does OSU Extension in this county reflect the diversity of the community in which we live and work?” Answering the question may prove challenging. Growth is often difficult. As the face of the nation changes, so does the face of the state of Ohio. We must be prepared for this change.

OSU Extension, like other Extension services across the country, has a federal partner, the National Institute of Food and Agriculture ([NIFA](#)), a department within the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA). NIFA is responsible for assuring that its Extension partners are meeting the specific obligations of nondiscrimination and equal opportunity associated with the [Title VI of the Civil Rights Act](#) and [Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964](#). Each state Extension institution is responsible for establishing internal policies and guidelines to ensure that Extension programs and operations do not discriminate and that research projects and activities are conducted without regard to race, color, national origin, sex, age, veteran status, gender identity or expression, sexual orientation, or disability. Land-grant and other institutions are expected to have available the appropriate documentation and records of compliance to the civil rights legislation listed above (*NIFA Civil Rights Compliance Review Guide*). To view the guide in its entirety, click [here](#).

In accordance with NIFA guidelines, OSU Extension requires that at least one-fourth of its county offices undergo a civil rights compliance review annually. The purpose of these reviews is to:

- To determine the extent to which Extension programs being carried out are in compliance with executive orders, Department of Justice regulations enforcing nondiscrimination requirements, and department and agency regulations to the end that no person shall, on the grounds of race, color, national origin, sex, disability, or age be excluded from participation, be denied the benefits of, or be subject to discrimination under any National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA) program or activity.
- Assist Extension personnel in enhancing program effectiveness and assessing how well Extension is reaching out to diverse audiences.
- Provide county staff an opportunity to share their successes with each other and administration.
- Discover approaches for strengthening diversity and managing compliance issues.
- Help county staff enhance their effectiveness in addressing the needs of diverse audiences.
- Assess level of compliance with civil rights requirements.



What is the Compliance Review?

- A process designed to help Extension personnel enhance program effectiveness.
- An in-depth examination of the scope, procedures, and impacts of programming efforts.
- An assessment of the level of compliance with executive orders, Department of Justice regulations enforcing nondiscrimination requirements, and department and agency regulations.
- A minimum of 22 (25 percent) of Ohio's counties participate in the review process annually.

As a result of each review:

- County staff will acquire a more complete understanding of and appreciation for all facets of the county program.
- County staff will enhance their effectiveness in addressing the needs of diverse audiences.
- County staff will enhance their effectiveness in complying with affirmative action/equal employment opportunity requirements.
- Extension administration will be provided with information useful to counsel county staff on programming efforts.

Each county develops an action plan based on recommendations made by the diversity review team and is responsible for sharing the plan with the county advisory committee.