COMMUNICATIONS & MARKETING POLICIES & PROCEDURES

Urban Affairs and New Nontraditional Programs
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Extension Promotional Products and Services
The Alabama Cooperative Extension System (ACES) uses a number of tools or mediums to market or promote Alabama Extension programs, services, and activities. The Communications and Marketing (C&M) and Information Technology (IT) staff at Alabama Agricultural and Mechanical University (AAMU) and Auburn University will help you to produce the following:

- Brochures
- Flyers
- Websites
- Public service announcements
- Press releases
- Radio and television via live or recorded interviews
- Annual reports
- Publications (fact sheets, articles, manuals, etc.)
- DVDs
- Content for social media
- Free advertisements
- Displays
- Signage


Step #1: Submit Requests

Text
Go to [https://sites.aces.edu/intranet/comm/Resources/ProjectRequests.aspx](https://sites.aces.edu/intranet/comm/Resources/ProjectRequests.aspx) to submit requests for print or electronic products and services that include:

- Art/Photography (Photos or original artwork)
- News and Events (Press releases, success stories, etc.)
- Discontinued Publications (Publications no longer being used)
- Publishing (Numbered Publications/Merchandise)
- Video/Multimedia (Promotional or program videos)
- IT/Web (Websites)

You can also find this site by logging on to the ACES Intranet and then the Communications and Marketing page under Admin Units. If you are unfamiliar with Dashboard, a 5-minute tutorial is available on the site by clicking on HELP where it reads:

For instructions or help on using the Dashboard, please visit the HELP page.
The Dashboard replaces all project or publication request forms and it helps C&M and IT to monitor work flow in Extension. Dashboard allows you to include the date when the product is to be completed. You can also upload text and images; however, only the final draft of text for printed and electronic products such as publications, press releases, event programs, etcetera, should be uploaded to Dashboard.

**Note:** A final draft means that the publication or project has been reviewed and all necessary revisions have been made by the author(s), agents, review team, administrators, or project lead and/or partners. If necessary, the lead author is required to submit a copy of the copyright permission letter or another form of documentation for verification purposes.

If graphics (photos, figures, illustrations, etc.) are obtained from other sources, then the author is required to ensure that a release form is signed or that permission is obtained for use. A copy of the Photography Release Form can be found online at:

https://sites.aces.edu/intranet/comm/Resources/Forms.aspx

Please submit a completed copy of the Photography Release Form or a copy of the permission letter (e-mail) granted to Extension to the Communications Specialist for Electronic Design (CSED), and keep the original on file.

**Note:** To avoid having to submit a Project Submission request twice, text for print products that require formatting will be forwarded to the CSED by the Communications Specialist for Technical Editing (CSTE). A note will be posted on Dashboard when the text was sent to the CSED.

The last step in the Dashboard Project Submission process is to send the request to the Associate or Assistant Director for approval. You will be notified when the project is approved and the project will be sent to either IT or Communications and Marketing staff for editing, design, or further development. **In most cases, your request will be sent to the Associate Director for Urban Affairs and New Nontraditional Programs.**

The Dashboard is programmed to send you an e-mail notice when your request has been approved. A C&M staff member responsible for the project will also be notified to begin the process to create your product or service. If you have not had a response within two days, then check the Dashboard to see if your request has been processed. If not, then send an e-mail reminder to the appropriate IT or C&M staff for follow up.

**Note:** No new computer system is perfect and users will encounter “bugs” in the system that will be corrected in time. If you encounter any glitches or have suggestions on how to improve the Data Dashboard system, please send your suggestions to a communications specialist. The suggestions will be reviewed and sent to Auburn’s IT staff for further consideration and/or updating.
Step #2: Project Creation by C&M or IT Staff
A C&M or IT staff member will work with you to complete your project. If the project involves online or print publishing for example, then the project will be edited and formatted (designed) by communications specialists.

Note: For branding and other purposes, it is preferred that you do not design your own publications or products. Instead, please make an appointment to work with the CSED on publication design. The C&M staff at AAMU are sensitive to the suggestions of the author; however, the suggestions must be consistent with editorial policies, procedures, document design standards, and other current methodologies for both text and design within Extension. The overall goal is to produce a quality publication or product that effectively meets Extension standards and the needs of its intended audience. We are not just branding ACES, but Extension on a national level.

You will have an opportunity to review the final draft or proof of your project. Once your project is complete, it will be posted online in the ACES Store, Newsline, Facebook, or other media sources.

Publication Checklist
- Be sure you have obtained revisions from authors and Extension staff
- Obtain permission to use images if necessary
- Submit project requests to Dashboard at: https://sites.aces.edu/intranet/comm/Resources/ProjectRequests.aspx
- Upload electronic copy to Dashboard along with images
- Share design (formatting) ideas with communications specialist for electronic design

Website Development
Website development will require several steps. First, submit your request via Dashboard. Go to https://sites.aces.edu/intranet/comm/Resources/ProjectRequests.aspx to submit requests under the classification of IT/Web. Please upload your text to Dashboard along with images and other vital information. The CSED will forward Web content text to the CSTE. Once your text has been edited by the CSTE, the CSED will work with you to develop your website before your pages are uploaded to the Internet.

Minimum requirements for website development will include:

- Basic program information for the home page, including program logo.
- Provide an outline of the pages you want to include on the website such as contact information, goals, objectives, and program benefits, etc.
- Provide pertinent pictures that “tell a story” about the program for use throughout the site or perhaps a page of photos.
- Provide a page of internal or external resource links that provides additional information for users.
- Provide success stories with photos.

Note: A website needs to be maintained – please inform the CSED when events have passed or when information changes. Past information may be reformatted as a promotional resource for your program.
**Communications and Networking Center**

The Communications and Networking Center (CNC) staff are capable of producing e-learning products and services for distance learning, as well as CDs, DVDs, electronic billboards, and presentations. The CNC staff will also arrange and provide technical assistance for digital pictures, video recording and videoconferences, as well as oversee the security system and other computer and networking hardware/software capabilities of the Urban Affairs unit and its nine Urban Centers.

For CNC services please complete the Communications Resources Work Request Form that is available on the Urban Affairs home page under Resources.

**Requirements for video development include:**

- Develop a script complete with a shot list, sound, narrative for voiceovers, etc. Please consult the CSTE for video script development.
- Go to [https://sites.aces.edu/intranet/comm/Resources/ProjectRequests.aspx](https://sites.aces.edu/intranet/comm/Resources/ProjectRequests.aspx) to submit a request for Video/Multimedia.
- Allow at least 4 to 6 weeks for video development.

For equipment requests, please complete the Equipment Sign-Out Form that is available on the Urban Affairs home page under Resources.

**Step #3: In-house Printing**

Once the publication/product is approved by the author for reproduction, authors or the assigned staff should complete the Print Instruction Form and submit an electronic camera-ready copy to the print shop manager.

The print shop manager will reproduce the product according to specifications on the Print Instruction Form. **Multicolor copying should be submitted two weeks in advance.** The Print Shop will make up to 300 copies of multiple-page color copies. Additional copies will only be made for special events. **Single sheet copies such as a fact sheet are to be made on the office copier.**

**Note:** Four-color process printing is not an in-house capability; however, multicolor photocopying can be done. In either case, the (first) author should inform the CSED in advance so that color separation can be done.

Four color-press publications will be outsourced if funds are available. **It is a good idea to discuss printing options with the print manager in advance.**

In addition, the Print Shop can do off-set printing and fold, hole punch, and bind (spiral, saddle, and gummed) publications or other products.

The print shop manager will contact you when the job is completed.
Revised and Discontinued Publications at Urban Affairs

Extension’s numbered publications are to be revised at least every five years. Each year the Communications Specialist for Technical Editing (CSTE) will review the list of publications produced by programming staff of Urban Affairs to determine by date what publications are to be revised, reassigned, or possibly discontinued.

1. The CSTE will notify authors who need to update publications via e-mail. Authors will have 60 days to revise or discontinue a publication before the publication is removed online.

2. Go to https://sites.aces.edu/intranet/comm/Resources/ProjectRequests.aspx to submit requests to discontinue or to revise publications.

3. The Dashboard is programmed to send you an e-mail notice when your request has been approved. A C&M staff member responsible for the project will also be notified to begin the process to revise or discontinue the publication.

If publication is discontinued:

1. An Auburn editor sends notice to aces-cec, aces-district-directors, aces-office-admins, and appropriate PPTs asking that designated publications be discontinued and that old copies be destroyed.

2. The publication is then removed from the ACES Store, Office Max, and other online sources as indicated.
Metro News

Metro News is an online quarterly newsletter published by the Urban Affairs unit in October, January, April, and July of each calendar year. It features current information about Extension events, programs, and services, and it provides relevant research-based articles with an urban, global, and new and nontraditional focus.

Note: Only specified articles will be translated into Spanish. Please contact the CSED a month in advance and a translated copy will be provided for you.

Metro News is available in Hyper Text Markup Language (HTML) and as a portable disk format (PDF) file.

1. Articles are to be submitted by the second Monday of the preceding month of issue. For example, January articles are due no later than the second Monday in December; April articles are due the second Monday in March; July articles are due the second Monday in June; and October articles (anniversary issue) are due the second Monday in September. If these Mondays fall on a holiday, then articles are due on the second Tuesday following the holiday.

Although Metro News accepts articles on any topic pertinent to its audience, each issue will have a primary focus as follows:

January
Health & Wellness

April
Urban Gardening
Wildlife & the Environment
Disaster Management

July
Nontraditional Extension
Animal Management

October
Community, Youth, & Family Development
Consumer Education

2. The average length of articles should be 500-700 words.

3. Articles will be returned to the author for final review only if there are significant changes made to the text. Otherwise, it will be sent to the editorial staff for review only.

4. The CSTE formats the PDF copy of the newsletter and sends a Word and the PDF copy of the final newsletter to the CSED, along with an image of the cover page that is uploaded to the website.

5. The CSED formats Word docs into HTML format and uploads the HTML content and the PDF copy to the Metro News website: www.aces.edu/urban/metronews.

6. Users can also subscribe to Metro News by clicking on the Subscribe/Feedback button.

Program/Event Marketing for Urban Affairs
Communications and Marketing staff can assist you in developing promotional material for Extension programs and events. Consider making an appointment with a communications specialist to discuss your marketing needs.

The Communications and Marketing website at http://www.aces.edu/urban/CommMarket.php also contains vital information to assist you in marketing and promoting Extension and Urban Affairs.

Program specialists should consider developing a press kit for their programs that contains the following:

- Brochure
- Press releases on launch of program and any upcoming program activities or news
- PSAs about programs and consumer tips
- 3-minute or less promotional DVD
- Website

For product develop, please submit your requests online via Dashboard (Project Submission).

**Event Planning**

It is best to start promoting activities as early as possible. A good resource to use is UNP-0122: The Community Event Planning Guide. Also, consult with your Extension mentor or with other staff members who are experienced at planning activities.

Urban Extension employees are also advised to use the Marketing/PR Plan for Extension Events template to help you plan your activity. This template will help you to develop program objectives and complete a timeline for your event.

Be sure to post your event to Extension’s Calendar. For assistance, please see the procedures titled Posting an Upcoming Event to the ACES Calendar at:

www.aces.edu/urban/documents/Posting2ACESCalendarGeneral.pdf

Remember, Communications and Marketing staff will help you to develop products and services to reach your target audiences.