



New Extension Agent

Self-Study Guide

Guidebook can be retrieved online at:
<http://extensionlearning.tamu.edu/NewEmployees.htm>

New Extension Agent Self Study Guide

Updated by Extension Education, September 2006
The Texas A&M University System

Welcome to the Extension Family. You have joined a group of dedicated professionals who enjoy helping people through educational programs in the areas of agriculture and natural resources, family consumer sciences, 4-H and community resource and economic development. This self study guide is designed to help the county Extension agent as a newly employed faculty member of Texas Cooperative Extension. It is an organized plan of observation and participation under the guidance of District Extension Administrator, County Extension Director, Regional Program Director, Mentor and/or Co-worker.

You will be expected to complete this assignment within six months of the time you are employed. As you complete an activity, fill in the guide. It is not necessary for you to follow the guide according to page order.

Experience has proven the value of this training activity. Other agents will work with you concerning reference material as well as other assistance you may need as you complete this assignment. When you have completed this self study guide, please submit it to your District Extension Administrator/County Extension Director for review and evaluation. Best wishes to you as you complete this self study guide and begin your career as a county Extension agent.

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Name _____	
Title _____	County _____
Address _____	
Date received _____	Date completed _____

County Background Information

It is necessary for you as a county Extension agent to have knowledge of the population, geography and economic situation in the county(ies) in which you serve. This is commonly referred to as background information. Information on available communication media is also needed. Complete this section by filling in the information for your county.

Suggested references

- Current U.S. agricultural and population census reports
- Office file on background information
- County TCFE Results and Regional Data Summit Planning Documents (2004-2008) at <http://futuresforum.tamu.edu>
- Agency Strategic Plan (2006-2010) at <http://tce-employees.tamu.edu>
- Texas Almanac
- County Agent Annual Program Plan at <http://texas.tamu.edu>

People who can help you

- Other Extension personnel
- Farm Services office manager
- School superintendents
- Manager of local Chamber of Commerce
- Officers and members of the Leadership Advisory Board, its program area committees and youth board
- Key leaders

A. Population information

Number of towns	_____
Number < 99,999 population	_____
Number > 100,000 population	_____
Number of farms and ranches	_____
Number of farm or ranch owners	_____
Number of farm or ranch tenants	_____
Number of farmers working away from home	_____
Average size of farm or ranch	_____
Total population	_____
Farm population	_____
Number of farm or ranch families	_____
Rural non-farm population	_____
Percent of population over 65 years of age	_____
Percent of population under 18 years of age	_____
Number of school age boys and girls in grades 3 - 12	_____

B. Geographic information *(To be completed by agents with primary responsibility for Agriculture and Natural Resources)*

Land area of county (square miles) _____

Acres in:

Forests _____

Pasture or improved range, native grassland _____

Cultivation _____

Topography _____

Types of soil _____

Elevation _____

Average annual rainfall _____

Last frost date (spring) _____

First frost date (fall) _____

Length of growing season _____

C. Economic information

Annual total gross income in county from all sources \$ _____

Amount and percent of county annual income from:

	Amount	Percent
Oil and gas	\$ _____	_____
Business	_____	_____
Industry	_____	_____
Recreation/tourism	_____	_____
Government (except military)	_____	_____
Military	_____	_____
Agriculture (List major enterprises in the county)		
Name of enterprise	Amount	Percent
_____	\$ _____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
Total agricultural enterprises in county	_____	_____
Others (List)		
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____

D. General information

Number of households	_____
Trend (increase or decrease)	_____
Persons per household	_____
Trend (increase or decrease)	_____
Educational level (median school years completed)	_____
Median family income level	_____
Number of women employed outside the home	_____
Number of married women	_____
Infant mortality rate	_____
Number of families with children under 6 years of age	_____
Number of families with children under 18 years of age	_____
School dropout rate	_____
Unemployment rate	_____
4-H clubs	
1. Community	_____
2. Project	_____
3. School	_____
4. Community Partnerships	_____
Special interest projects	_____
Curriculum enrichment	_____
Total number of 4-H clubs	_____
Total number of 4-H members	_____
Number of 4-H adult leaders	_____
Number of Texas Extension Education Association (TEEA) members	_____
Number of Extension study groups	_____
Number of master volunteers	_____

E. Write a paragraph about the history and development of the county.

F. Press, radio and television facilities

1. Primary daily paper(s) circulated in the county

Name of paper	Name of reporter	Location	Have you met editor and reporters?
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____

2. Primary weekly paper(s) circulated in the county

Name of paper	Name of reporter	Location	Have you met editor and reporters?
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____

3. Primary radio station(s) in the county

Station	Program director	Location	Have you met director?
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____

4. Primary television station(s) serving the county

Station	Program director	Location	Have you met director?
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____

Organization and Personnel	An Extension agent needs to understand how Texas Cooperative Extension is organized at the state, county, and district levels and the responsibilities of his or her particular job. It is important to be acquainted with organizations in the county that assist with carrying out the county programs.
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Suggested references

- Organizational chart
http://tce-employees.tamu.edu/aboutextension.cfm
http://texasextension.tamu.edu/
- Local Extension agents (See your county web page)
- Job description
- Records on file
- Learn About Extension
http://tce-employees.tamu.edu/aboutextension.cfm
- Extension Personnel Directory
http://tce-employees.tamu.edu
http://perdir.tamu.edu

A. General information about Texas Cooperative Extension

1. Name the individuals who hold the following Texas Cooperative Extension administrative positions:

<i>Position</i>	<i>Name</i>
Director	_____
Executive Associate Director	_____
Associate Director-Agricultural, Natural Resources and Community Resource Economic Development	_____
Associate Director - County Programs	_____
Associate Director for 4-H and Youth	_____
Associate Director - Human Sciences	_____
Community Economic Development Program Director	_____
Urban Program Director	_____
Head, Information Technology	_____
Head, Agricultural Communications	_____

2. Complete the following:

- a. The state headquarters for Texas Cooperative Extension is located in _____
- b. For organizational management purposes Texas is divided into _____ Extension Regions.
- c. The headquarters for your region is located in _____.
- d. The name of your District Extension Administrator _____
or County Extension Director _____
- e. The names of your RPDs (FCS, AG & 4-H) are: _____

- f. The names and titles of Extension specialists located at your district headquarters are:

Name	Title
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

B. General information about your job

Become acquainted with the following:

	Date completed	Questions/ remarks
1. History, development, objectives and characteristics of Texas Cooperative Extension	_____	_____

References

Land-Grant Universities and Extension into the 21st Century, George R. McDowell
(Check with your District Office or local library)

Taking the University to the People, Wayne D. Rasmussen, Chapters 1 - 3
(Check with your District Office or local library)

<http://texasvolunteer.tamu.edu/TCEhistory-for-volunteers.pdf>

	Date completed	Questions/ remarks
2. Job description. Study your job description to learn your responsibilities		
References		
<i>County Extension Agents Current Job Description</i>	_____	_____
<i>County Job Responsibilities</i>	_____	_____
3. Career ladder. Study the promotion system for county Extension agents	_____	_____
Reference		
<i>Guidelines on Professional Career Ladder System for County Extension Agents</i> http://extensionlearning.tamu.edu/Recognition.htm	_____	_____
4. Professional development		
a. Read and become familiar with the following materials.		
References		
http://extensionlearning.tamu.edu/Agents.htm		
<i>Continuing Professional Education</i> fact sheet	_____	_____
Texas Cooperative Extension <i>Opportunities to Pursue Graduate Study</i> fact sheet http://extensionlearning.tamu.edu/Agents.htm	_____	_____
<i>Study and Training Request Form</i>	_____	_____
<i>Extension Professional Improvement Leave Application Form</i> <i>LeaveTraq</i> https://sso.tamu.edu/	_____	_____
Professional journals such as the <i>Journal of Extension</i> http://joe.org/joe/	_____	_____
b. Become familiar with various professional associations relevant to your work. http://extensionlearning.tamu.edu/Agents.htm	_____	_____
c. Work with your supervisor to complete an Individual Development Plan	_____	_____

	Date completed	Questions/ remarks
5. Civil rights. Gain knowledge of civil rights (Equal employment opportunity/affirmative action) policies, and regulations	_____	_____

References

Definitions of Civil Rights Laws and Terms Relative to Program Activities _____

Recruiting and Selection Guide for Hiring Managers and Supervisors
<http://aghr.tamu.edu/recruitment/recruiting-guide.pdf> _____

Affirmative Action Plan for Texas Cooperative Extension <http://aghr.tamu.edu/>
 – See “Statement of Purpose” _____

C. Information on county organizations and key leaders

Use the following outline to obtain information about organizations and individuals in the county. Write “does not apply” in blanks where condition does not exist.

1. Extension Agents

Name	Title	Major job responsibility
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____

2. Extension Secretaries

Name	Major job responsibility
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

3. County Leadership Advisory Board (LAB)

Number of members on LAB _____

Name _____ Address _____

Chair _____

Vice-chair _____

Secretary _____

4. Program committees/task forces /youth board

Committee/task force/youth board	Chair	Number of members
----------------------------------	-------	-------------------

_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____

5. Commissioners' Court

County judge _____

Commissioners

Name	Address
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

6. State legislators

Name	Title	Address
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____

7. U.S. Congressional Representatives and Senators

Name	Title	Address
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____

8. County 4-H Leaders' Association

	Name	Address
Chair	_____	_____
Vice-chair	_____	_____
Secretary	_____	_____
Treasurer	_____	_____

9. County 4-H Council

	Name	Address
Chair	_____	_____
Vice-chair	_____	_____
Secretary	_____	_____
Treasurer	_____	_____

10. County Texas Extension Education Association (TEEA)

	Name	Address
Chair	_____	_____
Vice-chair	_____	_____
Secretary	_____	_____
Treasurer	_____	_____

11. Farm Services Agency/County Executive Director

Name	Location of office
_____	_____

12. Farm Services Agency/Rural Development

Name	Address

13. First Ag Credit manager (serving the county)

Name	Location of office

14. Ag Texas Farm Credit Services manager (serving the county)

Name	Location of office

15. Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) employees

Name	Title	Location of Office

16. Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD) Board Members

Name	Address	Area represented

17. Public/Private schools

School	Superintendent	Principal
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____

18. School superintendents

Name	Location of office
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

19. Agricultural Science Teachers

Location	Teacher
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

20. Young Farmers chapter

President _____

21. Family, Career & Community Leaders of America (FCCLA) Teachers

Location	Teacher
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

22. Texas Young Homemakers Association

President _____

23. Major farmer cooperatives in the county

Name of cooperative	Manager
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

24. Key leaders of organized livestock or crop associations in the county

Organization	Name	Address
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____

25. Key leaders of major farm organizations in the county

Organization	Name	Address
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____

26. Executives or key leaders of major organizations and agencies in the county working with families

Organization	Name	Address
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____

27. Executives of major organizations in the county working with youth

Organization	Name	Address
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____

28. Executives of Chambers of Commerce in the county

Organization	Name	Address
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____

29. Mayors, city managers and members of city councils

Name	Title	City
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____

30. Officers or other key leaders in major civic organizations in the county

Organization	Name	Address
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____

Reports and Records

Schedule definite times to examine all types of reports and records for which Extension agents are responsible. You will participate in making reports, keeping records, and how to order materials and forms.

Suggested references

- Current reports and records on file

	Date observed	Questions/ remarks
A. Reports		
Meet with supervisor to discuss the computerized monthly reporting system <i>http://texas.tamu.edu</i>	_____	_____
<i>Monthly Certificate of Service</i> (Online in LeaveTraQ)	_____	_____
<i>Extension Activity Report to County Commissioners Court</i> (D-843)	_____	_____
<i>Report of County Office Conferences</i> (D-738)	_____	_____
<i>Weekly Crop and Weather Report</i> (Online) <i>Texas Ag Statistics Service</i> <i>http://cpcswb.nass.usda.gov</i>	_____	_____
B. Forms		
<i>http://texasextension.tamu.edu/</i>		
<i>http://tce-employees.tamu.edu/</i>		
Leave Request Online LeaveTraQ <i>https://sso.tamu.edu/</i>	_____	_____
Travel Request Form (Out of County/State) (AG-802) <i>http://agservices.tamu.edu/forms/fiscal_forms.htm#travel</i>	_____	_____
Online Study and Training Request Form (D-1023) <i>http://extensionlearning.tamu.edu/Degree.htm</i>	_____	_____
Professional Improvement Leave Application Form (D-833) <i>http://extensionlearning.tamu.edu/Degree.htm</i>	_____	_____
Request for Extension Service Publications - Online TCE Bookstore <i>http://tcebookstore.org</i>	_____	_____

C. Current records of membership

	Date observed	Questions/ remarks
4-H members, officers and leaders	_____	_____
4-H Council members and officers	_____	_____
4-H Adult Leader Association members and officers	_____	_____
Texas Extension Education Association (TEEA)	_____	_____
List of individuals conducting result demonstrations/applied research projects	_____	_____

Using Texas Cooperative Extension Program Development Process

This section deals with the program development process - the involvement of local citizens in planning, implementing and evaluating the Extension program. Texas Cooperative Extension program development model should be used by all agents in carrying out their job responsibilities.

You will be expected to observe and participate in certain program development activities. Following these experiences, you will write a brief report on what you observed and learned and what you think could be done to improve the program development process in your county.

Suggested references

• Program development & annual planning references

E-345, TCE Program Development Model: Keys to Education that Works
D-1446, Outcome-Directed Programs

Additional resources for these areas can be found at
<http://extensioneducation.tamu.edu>

• Volunteer management references

D-1451, *Volunteer Administration in the 21st Century: Roles Volunteers Plan in Extension*
D-1452, *Volunteer Administration in the 21st Century: Leadership Advisory Boards*
D-1453, *Volunteer Administration in the 21st Century: Program Area Committees and Youth Boards*
D-1454, *Volunteer Administration in the 21st Century: Volunteer Associations and Groups*
D-1455, *Volunteer Administration in the 21st Century: Understanding and Managing Direct and Episodic Volunteers*
D-1456, *Volunteer Administration in the 21st Century: Managing the Risk Associated with Volunteer Services*

Additional resources for Volunteer Management are found at
<http://texasvolunteer.tamu.edu>
<http://extensioneducation.tamu.edu>

• Program evaluation

E-227, *Questionnaire Design: Asking Questions with a Purpose*

Additional resources on evaluation can be found at
<http://extensioneducation.tamu.edu/evaluation.htm>

	Date completed	Questions/ remarks
Observe a meeting of the Leadership Advisory Board	_____	_____

Attend/participate in one or more area program committee or youth board meetings to accomplish the following activities:

- | | | |
|--|-------|-------|
| 1. Implement a scheduled educational activity. | _____ | _____ |
| 2. Develop annual plans for the year. | _____ | _____ |
| 3. Evaluate an educational program. | _____ | _____ |

As you take part in meetings, observe the following procedures:

- | | | |
|--|-------|-------|
| 1. Steps in setting up and preparing for the meeting | _____ | _____ |
| 2. How the meeting agenda is developed | _____ | _____ |
| 3. How members are contacted/involved in meetings | _____ | _____ |
| 4. How resource people (Extension and non-Extension) are identified and involved in committee meetings/ educational activities | _____ | _____ |

C. Annual planning

Work with county staff in writing a program plan based on priorities met by one or more program committees or task forces	_____	_____
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Observe how the plan and Extension program are used in planning, implementing, evaluating and interpreting educational programs.	_____	_____
--	-------	-------

Getting the Job Done

This section deals with things an employee must know and understand to accomplish the day-to-day job of being a county Extension agent. Observe, record date when completed and indicate questions/remarks if any.

A. Office management

	Date completed	Questions/remarks
1. Observe office equipment and arrangement.	_____	_____
2. Study organization of files and uniform filing guide.	_____	_____
3. Observe techniques used in answering and relaying telephone calls.	_____	_____
4. Observe co-worker's (Mentor's) techniques in talking to an office visitor. Participate in an office visit.	_____	_____
5. Develop a personal calendar for a year in advance.	_____	_____

B. Office conference

1. Participate in regular office conferences of county personnel.	_____	_____
2. Observe the use of a county calendar in office conference.	_____	_____

C. Farm and home visits or other personal contacts

1. Make several farm and home visits or other personal contacts with the co-worker (mentor) and observe procedures and techniques used. Be sure to visit result demonstrations.	_____	_____
2. Make some visits or contacts on your own.	_____	_____
3. Write a paragraph or outline the procedure for making effective farm and home visits or other personal contacts.		
	_____	_____
	_____	_____
	_____	_____

D. Letters

	Date completed	Questions/ remarks
1. Individual		
a. Observe agent's incoming mail/e-mail for one day, assist agent in answering.	_____	_____
b. Study correct business letter form.	_____	_____
2. Circular letter		
a. Read and analyze some recent circular letters written by agents in your county.	_____	_____
b. Write a circular letter for the co-worker (Mentor) critique.	_____	_____
3. Attach one copy of an individual and one copy of a circular letter written by you.		

E. Publications and visual aids

	Date completed	Questions/ remarks
1. Find out how state, USDA and commercial publications are obtained.	_____	_____
2. Determine how publications are distributed in the county.	_____	_____
3. Observe how current publications are displayed, kept current and how supply is maintained.	_____	_____
4. Become familiar with audio visual resources that are available to support the county program. obtained.	_____	_____
5. Outline the procedure for obtaining state, USDA and commercial publications. Include "for sale" bulletins.		
	_____	_____
	_____	_____
	_____	_____

References
<http://tcebookstore.org/>

F. Newspaper articles

	Date completed	Questions/ remarks
1. Read current news articles concerning Extension work in county paper(s).	_____	_____
2. Get acquainted with newspaper editor, farm editor, and women's editor. Find out what makes a good news article.	_____	_____
3. Read agricultural resources, community development and/or Family Consumer Science articles in professional journals or magazines.	_____	_____
4. Attach three different news articles which you wrote or helped write.	_____	_____
5. List resources available from Agricultural Communications on news writing and visual aids.		_____

References

Handouts provided by the Department of Agricultural Communications during New Employee Orientation.

Additional information can be found at:

<http://agcomwww.tamu.edu>

<http://texasextension.tamu.edu/identity.pdf>

I. Educational Presentations

	Date completed	Questions/ remarks
1. Review the “ 4-H Presentation Guide.” 4-H 3-5.012 Texas 4-H Public Presentation Guide– Method Demonstrations and Illustrated Talks	_____	_____
2. Learn the definition for public presentation.	_____	_____
3. Observe educational presentation . Include 4-H, family consumer sciences and agriculture.	_____	_____
4. Prepare and present an educational presentation before a group.	_____	_____

J. Result demonstrations

1. Learn the definition for result demonstration.	_____	_____
2. Visit result demonstrations. Include 4-H, agriculture, family and consumer areas.	_____	_____
3. Study <i>Suggested Plans for Developing Result Demonstrations.</i> Applied Research & Result Demonstrations http://goldmine.tamu.edu/	_____	_____
4. Prepare a proposal to develop and conduct a result demonstration.	_____	_____
5. Observe how result demonstrations become a part of program area committee educational programs.	_____	_____

K. Other teaching methods

1. Read definitions and descriptions of educational programs, methods, techniques and devices in E-345. Teaching Effectiveness <i>See L-2424, “Preparing a Presentation for Educational Programs.”</i>	_____	_____
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L. Write a paragraph or an outline giving an account of a educational presentation in which you participated or observed.

M. Write a paragraph or an outline giving an account of a result demonstration in which you participated or one that the agent is conducting.

Reference

D-639, *Extension Agent's Guide for Result Demonstrations*

<http://goldmine.tamu.edu/>

N. 4-H organization (All agents are to complete this section)

	Date completed	Questions/ remarks
Review the Texas 4-H Management Website "The 4-H Road to Success" found at http://texas4-h.tamu.edu		
1. Study the <i>Management Section</i> "Equipping for the Journey".	<hr/>	<hr/>
2. Study the <i>Membership Units Section</i> "Putting it in Drive"	<hr/>	<hr/>
3. Study the <i>Volunteer Development Section</i> "Driver's Education for Volunteers"	<hr/>	<hr/>
4. Study the section on Risk Management "Dips, Speed Bumps, and Detours"	<hr/>	<hr/>
5. Study the section on Resource Development. "Taking the Toll Road"	<hr/>	<hr/>
6. Review the section on Diversity "The Scenic Route"	<hr/>	<hr/>
7. Review the section on Collaboration "Taking the H.O.V. Lane"	<hr/>	<hr/>
8. Review the section on Program Development "Plotting the Course"	<hr/>	<hr/>
9. Participate in a 4-H council meeting.	<hr/>	<hr/>
10. Attend a 4-H meeting	<hr/>	<hr/>

P. 4-H projects (*All agents are to complete this section*)

Reference

4-H Publications Catalog (State 4-H office)

	Date completed	Questions/ remarks
1. Learn the various projects available for 4-H members.	_____	_____
2. Study and observe how volunteer leaders help select projects.	_____	_____
3. Learn how to deliver programs to short-term groups through curriculum enrichment and special interest projects.	_____	_____
4. Review the National 4-H Cooperative Curriculum System - Member Project Books linked on the publication page of the Texas 4-H website at http://texas4-h.tamu.edu	_____	_____

Q. 4-H award programs (*All agents are to complete this section*)

1. Become acquainted with the different 4-H award programs that are available and the requirements for participating in them.	_____	_____
2. Assist with county and district 4-H award programs.	_____	_____
3. Review the 4-H Management Section: Recognition: "Using the High Beams" http://texas4-h.tamu.edu	_____	_____

References

4-H 3-3, Texas 4-H Clover (Opportunities Handbook)

4-H 3-5.012, 4-H Presentation Guide

Write or attach any other information which you think would reflect the extent of training received. Include what further training you feel you need.

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