Rapid Response Team Regarding

Civil Discourse on Race Relations

Final Report

April 2017

Submitted by:
Rachel Welborn, Chair
On behalf of the
Rapid Response Team

Rapid Response Team Regarding Civil Discourse on Race Relations
Executive Summary
April 2017

Background

In September, 2016, the Extension Committee on Organization and Policy (ECOP) approved the establishment of a Rapid Response Team (RRT) on Civil Discourse on Race Relations. Concerns around racial tensions resulting in civil unrest evidenced by riots, arrests, and shootings underscored the need for this important emphasis. Also, this was the first piloting of the RRT model, a process approved by ECOP and designed to take a prompt look at Cooperative Extension Services' (CES) capacity to address an emerging issue. This report chronicles both the learnings of this first RRT from a process standpoint as well as specific findings and recommendations on the identified topic. By sharing insights from both aspects, the RRT hopes to strengthen the CES system's ability to respond to emerging issues and also encourage capacity building specific to the timely concerns of promoting civil discourse in our nation.

With ECOP's approval, the ECOP Program Committee (ECOP PC) established the core team including members of the ECOP PC, representatives of Regional Rural Development Centers (RRDC), National Urban Extension Leaders (NUEL), NIFA, eXtension, and four Extension specialists as well as other individuals who have expertise and who might be effective partners, e.g., Everyday Democracy, Kettering Foundation, etc. Rachel Welborn, Program Manager for the Southern Region Rural Development Center (one of the RRDCs), was appointed as chair with staff support from Dr. Ron Brown. This initial group was considered the core team that would guide the work. However, a larger group of contributors allowed for additional input.

The following six tasks encompass the RRT's assignment with an anticipated completion in a six month period, culminating in a report to ECOP in April 2017:
- Make a public invitation to additional Extension staff and others who may want to be involved in the RRT (consider the ECOP Monday Minute as well as national Extension professional associations as communication mediums); Identify other groups/organizations that might be worthy partners.
- Identify existing competency frameworks.
- Organize and add to the civil discourse information and resources already collected through the Directors/Administrators survey.
- Work with eXtension and provide a nationally accessible website and populate it with information (curricula, programs, models, examples, expertise, etc.) related to civil discourse.
- Organize and conduct a national webinar for Extension Directors/Administrators and other personnel that summarizes the need for civil discourse, provides an overview of resources available, and demonstrates a few examples of successful programming.
- Identify other needed strategies – for example, if a funding opportunity arises for a longer-term effort, provide a recommendation of next steps or recommendations for training at a future urban or other conferences.

Over a six month span of time, the RRT has surveyed Extension professionals across multiple disciplines to inform the work. This input provided the backbone for much of the team's final products which are posted to a website hosted by eXtension https://publish.extension.org/civildialogue/) and include a

competency framework, resource list with 40 posts, listing of organizations both within and outside the Land-Grant University System, and recommendations for future development of this work

Lessons Learned
As the first RRT, a number of lessons were learned that may inform this process for future RRTs. These include the value of developing a relatively small team with a broad mix of relevant perspectives, developing an aggressive timeline to keep the work focused, selecting a chair whose professional interests and experience closely match the subject matter, identifying ways to share documents through the process, and the potential for providing funding for face-to-face meetings for future RRTS to expedite work.

Lessons learned about civil discourse work span the entire spectrum of the scope of work given the RRT. For instance, using a survey to gain insights from a broad mix of people quickly to help shape the content for the tasks was a valuable approach. For this particular task, having support from the JCEP organizations quickly is important as they have the reach to CES professionals across a wide spectrum of disciplines. Also, having a clear strategy for connecting interested professionals to the process beyond the survey would streamline the effort. The survey also produces a long list of potential partners both within and outside of the land-grant system which could be explored to help build capacity within CES.

The competency exploration generated a lengthy list of skills which could benefit from breaking into levels (such as beginner, intermediate, experienced) to help provide a logical progression of skills. Also, among the competency areas identified are a broad set of skills that will require an interactive (i.e. face to face) training process to master.

The resource exploration revealed a number of potentially valuable assets. However, work is needed to document existing efforts as well as impact to help measure and communicate public value. For instance, encouraging CES professionals to document work being done in this realm could add strength to the existing repository, given that a number of survey respondents noted using materials not formally documented. Likewise, a need to identify and/or document impacts from civil discourse exists in order to increase understanding of the value of this work. This may require dedicated efforts in identifying common measures and tools that could aid documentation of impacts. For the resources identified, matching these to competencies to help interested CES professionals find relevant training opportunities could be a great benefit.

Overarching Observations:
While responses to the survey and emails to the team indicate high interest in strengthening the work of civil discourse within the Cooperative Extension System, few states appear to be investing significant effort to respond to needs in promoting civil discourse. Additionally, while the focus on race relations was considered valuable, the RRT often received comments about expanding the scope of the work to a broader base of inclusion/diversity that also encompassed gender, religion, political orientation, sexual identity, age, or any other social/cultural divide that seems present in today's society. While the focus of this RRT's work stayed clearly on race relations, many of the tools and resources identified can have broader applications to these other areas of concern.

Recommendations:

Given the high interest in this topic, and the intense need demonstrated for enhancing civil discourse practices, the RRT is recommending the following actions to help build capacity for this work within CES:

- Clarify roles CES could or should take in civil discourse around racial issues could advance CES professional engagement in the work.
- Explore potential linkages with possible partners for funding and/or training assistance
- Increase understanding of the value of the work and CES' ability to communicate public value by:
  - Developing common measures and accessible measurement tools
  - Documenting impacts from existing work
  - Integrating research to strengthen the evidence base
- Build capacity within CES needs to focus on both local program implementation and also building the skills of Extension professionals.   The following strategies could help facilitate that process:
  - Develop a tiered rubric that allows individuals to find a place to begin, but provides a pipeline to grow skills to the next level.
  - Tie identified training materials to competencies to allow CES professionals to find relevant on-line resources to meet some of their training needs.
  - Examine training opportunities that may exist with both internal and potential external partners that have been identified.
- Design a supporting infrastructure to:
  - Better link professionals that have proficiency nationally to others with expertise as well as to those that desire to build these skills
  - Provide essential face-to-face training for those needing to build capacity on competencies, much of which is skill-based, thus not easily mastered through on-line training resources alone.
  - Provide support for work both within states (how to build strong state level capacity) and across states (how to link expertise across state lines to draw from and support efforts nationally). Models may include:
    - Developing regional teams (e.g., Robert Wood Johnson Foundation Culture of Health)
    - Developing teams based on subject matter expertise (e.g., 4-H Common Measures)
    - Developing project teams with key informants (e.g., eXtension Issue Corps)

In order to achieve the strategies above, the RRT recommends civil discourse around race relations become a priority for ECOP in 2018 and each state be encouraged to consider it as a priority in development of state plans of work. Additionally, the RRT recognizes that to build capacity within the LGU system will require funding to support developing individual and team skills. Thus, with the broad interest demonstrated in this initiative and a desire to continue the work of this RRT, we request ECOP's assistance in identifying potential funding sources to help this work progress nationally.

The Civil Discourse RRT is convinced that the time is right for
Cooperative Extension to step into this vital space to help promote
*peace, resilience and healing within and among the communities we serve*

Rapid Response Team Regarding Civil Discourse on Race Relations
Final Report
April 2017

Background

In September, 2016, the Extension Committee on Organization and Policy (ECOP) approved the establishment of a Rapid Response Team on Civil Discourse on Race Relations. Concerns around racial tensions resulting in civil unrest evidenced by riots, arrests, and shootings underscored the need for this important emphasis. Also, this was the first piloting of the Rapid Response Team (RRT) model, a process also approved by ECOP and designed to take a prompt look at Cooperative Extension Services' (CES) capacity to address an emerging issue. This report chronicles both the learnings of this first RRT from a process standpoint as well as specific findings and recommendations on the identified topic. By sharing insights from both aspects, the RRT hopes to strengthen the CES system's ability to respond rapidly to emerging issues and also encourage capacity building specific to the timely concerns of promoting civil discourse in our nation.

The Rapid Response Process

A portion of the Rapid Response process preceded the establishment of the RRT itself as can be seen by the diagram below. Specifically, the issue of civil discourse was identified, the issue was framed, and the CES Directors/Administrators were surveyed. From the results of the survey, ECOP determined on September 22, 2016 to establish a RRT.

ECOP RAPID RESPONSE DECISION TREE DRAFT 9-14-2016
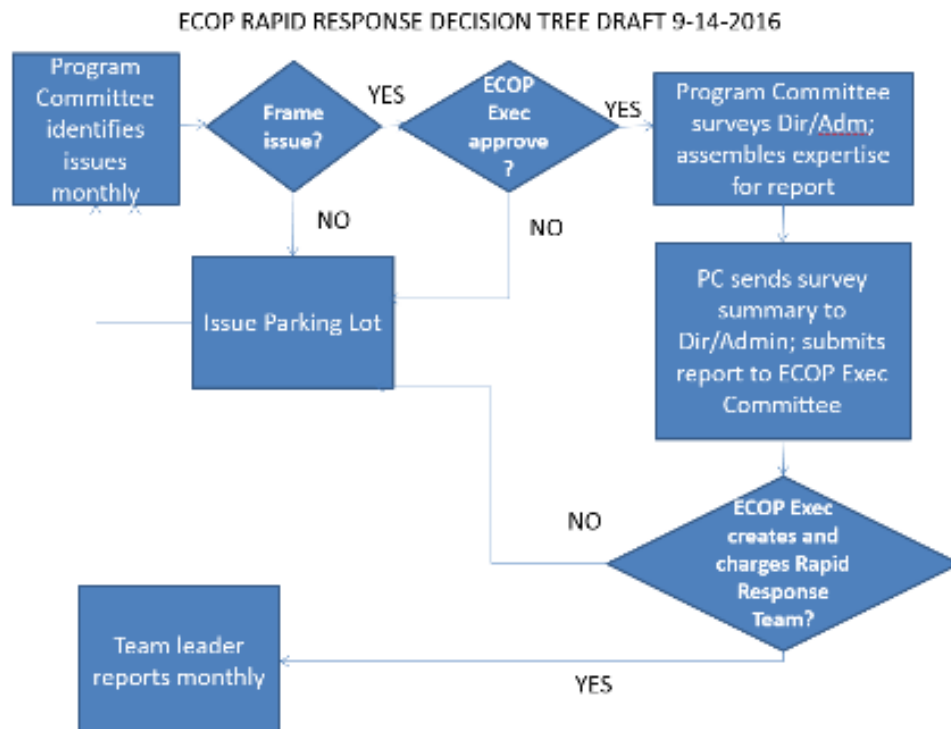
The RRT Team

With ECOP's approval, the ECOP Program Committee (ECOP PC) established the core team including members of the ECOP PC, representatives of Regional Rural Development Centers (RRDC), National Urban Extension Leaders (NUEL), NIFA, eXtension, and four Extension specialists (ideally one from each major subject area: 4H, Family & Consumer Science, Agriculture & Natural Resources, and Community Development) as well as other individuals who have expertise/interest and who might be effective partners, e.g., Everyday Democracy, Kettering Foundation, etc. Rachel Welborn, Program Manager for the Southern Region Rural Development Center (one of the RRDCs), was appointed as chair with staff support from Dr. Ron Brown. This initial group was considered the core team that would guide the work. However, a larger group of contributors allowed for additional input.

Chair, Rachel Welborn, and Dr. Ron Brown worked together to finalize the team within a week of the final RRT charge. Dr. Brown communicated with the ECOP PC to confirm representation from that group while Welborn made requests of Extension Specialists and non-land-grant participants. In order to remain agile through the short six month time period, the RRT remained small. However, this does not indicate rigidity, as one person, Dr. Tim Shaffer, was identified as a key expert in competencies in this arena and, thus, was invited to assist with the sub-team that was working on this task about half way through the six month process. His unique perspectives significantly contributed to the RRT work.

The following members were selected as the original Core Team:
ECOP Program Committee (ECOP PC)
- Bill Hare (whare@udc.edu); (official liaison from ECOP PC to the RRT)
- Ron Brown rab2@msstate.edu
- Copy communications to other ECOP PC members so they may participate as available and interested:
  - Chris Boerboom (chris.boerboom@ndsu.edu);
  - Tim Cross (tlcross@utk.edu);
  - Mark Latimore (latimorm@fvsu.edu);
  - Scott Reed (scott.reed@oregonstate.edu);
  - Susan Crowell (CARET rep) (scrowell@farmanddairy.com)

Other National and Extension representation:
- Regional Rural Development Center (South): Rachel Welborn (rachel.welborn@msstate.edu)
- National Urban Extension Leaders (NUEL): Manami Brown (mbrown4@umd.edu)
- NIFA: Bill Hoffman whoffman@nifa.usda.gov; Replaced on 10/17/16 with Brent Elrod belrod@nifa.usda.gov
- eXtension: Chris Geith (christinegeith@extension.org)
- 4H Council: Sally Miske (smiske@fourhcouncil.edu)

Non Land Grant Representation:
- Alice Diebel, Kettering Foundation, diebel@kettering.org

- Carolyne Abdullah, Everyday Democracy cabdullah@everyday-democracy.org

Extension Specialists
- Laura Downey, Mississippi State University, Program and Staff Development, researcher on Turning the Tide on Poverty special issue of the Community Development Society Journal, laura.downey@msstate.edu
- Michelle Eley, North Carolina A&T University, Community Development Specialist, work on structural racism. mleley@ncat.edu
- Paul Lachapelle, Montana State University, Community Development specialist, civic engagement.
- Richard Pirog, Center for Regional Food Systems, Michigan State University, Work on structural racism in foods. rspirog@anr.msu.edu
- Timothy Shaffer, Kansas State University, civil discourse and democracy. tjshaffer@ksu.edu (Added to the Core Team in November, 2016 as noted above)

Lessons Learned:
- Keeping the team relatively small was valuable in maintaining momentum over the short time period. However, the team should not be so rigid as to exclude essential perspectives.
- Having a mix of CES administration, national representation, CES specialists and non-land grant members helped ensure well-rounded input and decision-making.
- Involving a range of specialists/expertise that touched the issue from a variety of perspectives was important as it helped ensure connections to a broad range of CES and external potential contributions.
- Having an RRT member with a Director/Administrator/ECOP perspective (such as Dr. Ron Brown provided) and that will be actively engaged is essential support to the team.
- Selecting a chair whose professional interests and experience match the subject is vital given the time commitment.

The RRT Charge

The following six tasks encompass the RRT's assignment with an anticipated completion in a six month period, culminating in a report to ECOP in April 2017 (see Appendix for full charge):
- Make a public invitation to additional Extension staff and others who may want to be involved in the RRT (consider the ECOP Monday Minute as well as national Extension professional associations as communication mediums); Identify other groups/organizations that might be worthy partners.
- Identify existing competency frameworks.
- Organize and add to the civil discourse information and resources already collected through the Directors/Administrators survey.
- Work with eXtension and provide a nationally accessible website and populate it with information (curricula, programs, models, examples, expertise, etc.) related to civil discourse.
- Organize and conduct a national webinar for Extension Directors/Administrators and other personnel that summarizes the need for civil discourse, provides an overview of resources available, and demonstrates a few examples of successful programming.

- Identify other needed strategies – for example, if a funding opportunity arises for a longer-term effort, provide a recommendation of next steps or recommendations for training at a future urban or other conferences.

Organizing the Team

Welborn (chair) drafted a timeline and began communicating to the team through email and phone calls regarding the charge. The report from the survey sent to CES Directors and Administrators was shared with the team prior to the first call on October 27th. During that call, the RRT charge and draft timeline was discussed, the timeline revised, and members self-selected into working groups to begin. One team centered on survey development while a second team began searching for competency frameworks. The chair served on both teams to ensure connections.

One of the early challenges was establishing a way to communicate and share documents quickly. After briefly considering the options at hand, the chair worked with eXtension to establish a landing page (https://people.extension.org/communities/1788) for the work and set up a listserv that included all the members. Also through this avenue, a Google Drive was established. This seemed to work adequately, but did require an extra step to orient those not already active on eXtension, especially those not in the land-grant system.

A call schedule was also established early and coordinated through Zoom so that sharing documents and having a "face-to-face" presence was possible. Ideally, the team would have liked to have had a real in person meeting as the survey results were being analyzed and other tasks were being accomplished. However, a lack of funding prohibited that option. Instead, a series of two hour Zoom meetings was established to help move the work forward. This approach was reasonably effective, though perhaps not quite as efficient as a 1-2 day intense in-person meeting may have been.

Lessons learned:
- Developing and communicating an aggressive timeline helped keep the team on task even though adjustments were made as needed.
- Working in sub-teams with the chair serving as a connector made good use of the time and expertise available.
- Identifying ways to share documents is important. eXtension's tools worked well, but did require some time orienting all RRT members.
- Having funding for a face-to-face meeting may have expedited important work and possibly allowed for value-added deliverables. Without funding, it is not likely that other RRT efforts can be accomplished with the quality and within the timelines of this one.

Accomplishing the Charge

At each step, meaningful progress was made toward learning about both how to move a RRT along as well as about the issue at hand: civil discourse. The following section describes actions taken toward each task as well as lessons learned that may aid future RRTs. Returning

to the charge noted above, the process used for each step is described as well as insights gained in the process.

Make a public invitation to additional Extension staff and others who may want to be involved in the RRT (consider the ECOP Monday Minute as well as national Extension professional associations as communication mediums); Identify other groups/organizations that might be worthy partners.

Given the short timeline, the Core Team determined that a survey was the most effective way to gain insights from the larger group of CES professionals with proficiency on the topic. Beginning with the original survey sent to the Directors/Administrators, the RRT also considered other information that would be needed to accomplish the RRT charge effectively. Questions related to expertise, resources, competencies, and partners were added. The survey was designed in Qualtrics to allow for electronic dissemination.

The survey was distributed through a range of avenues including:
- ECOP Monday Minute
- Regional Rural Development Center listservs
- JCEP organizations

The survey was launched on November 16th and closed on December 9th, 2016. This time period allowed for 154 completed responses representing 40 states. These responses greatly contributed to the remaining steps in the RRT's charge. Also in response to the survey, nearly half (79) of the respondents indicated they would like to be involved in a multi-state effort to promote civil discourse on race relations through CES.

Responses by Region

Not Identified 1%
1890 7%
West 22%
North Central 32%
South 27%
Northeast 11%
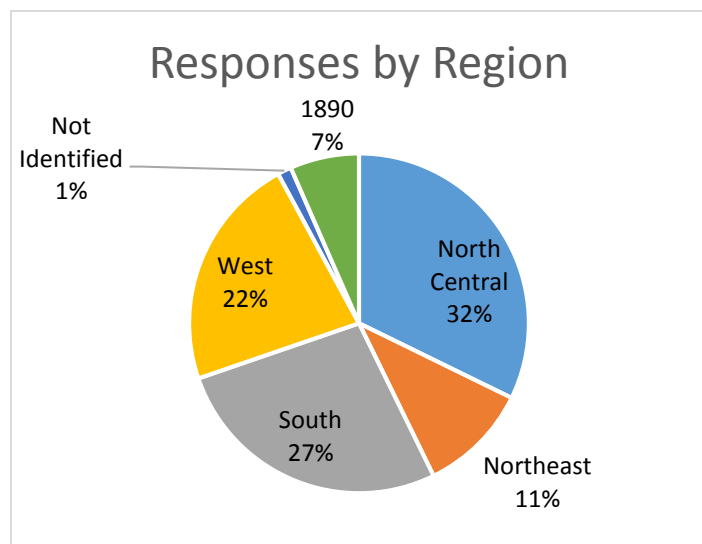
In addition to the survey responses, a large number of people contacted the RRT chair directly asking how to engage with the RRT effort once the initial announcement of the survey went public. The RRT had not finalized the plan for how to continue engaging with this larger pool of professionals before inviting survey participation. Thus, considerable time was spent explaining that this was a new process and the RRT was learning how to operate along the way. While most were understanding and were content to wait until the process progressed, some expressed frustration at not knowing how they would have an opportunity to contribute in the future. Currently, the RRT is inviting people who express interest to join the eXtension Community of Practice (CoP) page (https://people.extension.org/communities/1788) begun to keep the RRT connected through the charge: Fostering Civil Discourse. This step was not taken initially for two reasons: (1) The RRT was exploring other potential interactive options with eXtension and anticipated using these mechanisms to engage; and (2) The CoP page was set up as a working space for the RRT and in order to remain nimble (as noted earlier), keeping the

working group relatively small was a priority. Additionally, in keeping with the purpose of a CoP, which is to connect professionals working on a specific set of objectives, some concern was expressed that a CoP was premature until a clear roll-out plan was developed. However, once critical steps were complete, the RRT chair began accepting members that had found the group on their own and requested to join. As the process progressed, having these additional members to the CoP provided a new avenue of engagement. Pending favorable responses to this work from ECOP in April 2017, a more broad appeal could be made to recruit participants to the CoP beginning with those who either responded to the survey or reached out to the RRT expressing interest in future efforts.

In response to the last portion of this first task, identifying other groups/organizations that might be worthy partners, a potential listing of entities, spanning four single spaced pages, has been assembled (see appendix). More than one page lists national entities with references to The Kettering Foundation and Everyday Democracy topping the list in number of times mentioned. An additional page listed state or local level entities, some of which were specific organizations while some were more generic (such as county commissioners, school districts, and faith-based organizations). The remaining two pages list entities specific to the Land-Grant System, which noted national groups such as those formed through eXtension, national Extension professional associations, and formalized multi-state efforts. Others identify specific centers, institutes, departments, and individuals within the LGU system that focus on this work in some way. Taken together, the list represents a significant potential for national engagement both within the LGU system and with partners outside the system.

Lessons learned:
- Overall, the survey was an invaluable tool that helped inform all of the remaining steps in a relatively short time.
- Working through permission to share among the JCEP organizations took longer than anticipated. Thus, approaching the leadership of the various organizations earlier would perhaps have expedited the survey dissemination to their respective memberships.
- Having a clear strategy for connecting additional interested professionals to the process beyond the survey without slowing the work of the RRT would have streamlined the effort. However, asking the question on the survey about interest in future involvement provided an important link to these interested professionals.
- The RRT chair has recently learned that some individuals experienced a glitch in the survey that did not allow them to get to the point of entering their name and affiliation (near the end of the survey). While the issue was not identified during the beta testing period, this likely means additional CES professionals may be willing to participate. Thus, if this work continues, a call to participate should extend beyond only those who completed the survey.
- Given that the ECOP charge was a part of the public announcement, rewording the first bullet in that charge may help alleviate some frustration or misunderstandings. A suggested rewording might be: *Make a public invitation to additional Extension staff and others who may want to* ~~be involved in the RRT~~ *assist the RRT in addressing its tasks (consider the ECOP Monday Minute as well as national Extension professional associations as a communication medium); Identify other groups/organizations that might be worthy partners.*

- Additional work to explore potential linkages with partners both within and outside of the land-grant system is needed. These entities may provide new opportunities to expand capacity within the system to expand civil discourse efforts.

Identify existing competency frameworks.

The biggest challenge in this task was identifying the existing competencies quickly. Fortunately, having key expertise on the RRT helped address this challenge. Several of the RRT members had served as trainers or researchers relative to this task. That provided a boost in identifying several sources of competency frameworks. However, what proved interesting is that the identified competencies tended to either address civil discourse capabilities or cultural competencies which help inform race relations. The RRT did not identify any single source that addressed both. Thus, the framework developed is based on an understanding that two distinct, yet complementary skill sets are needed to address this work as depicted by the diagram below.

Two Spheres of Civil Discourse around Race Relations
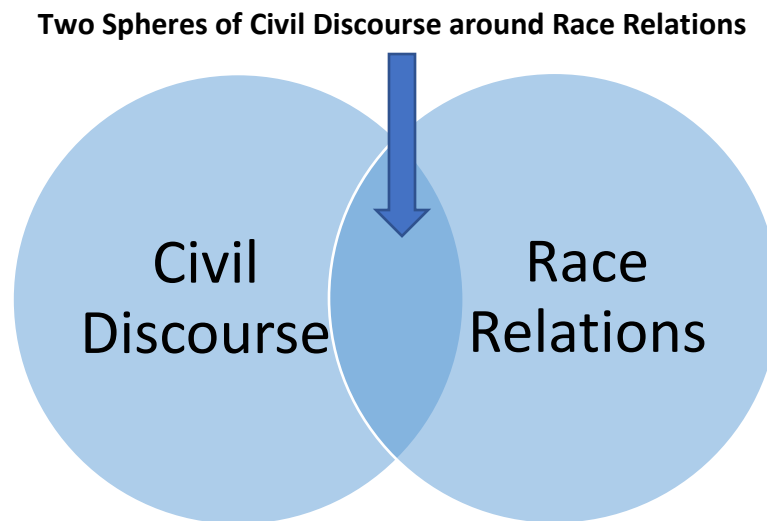
So beginning with the pieces of each realm that were identified, the RRT began organizing competencies along a continuum that essentially followed the progression of discourse from issue identification, through planning, and on to discourse and action. Simultaneously, the competencies relating to issues around race relations were compiled and organized to add to the draft framework for the whole body of work. The survey noted above included questions around competencies, which served to both validate the existing draft frame, but also expand the needed knowledge and skill set.

Given the unrest following the Presidential election in November, the RRT received a number of comments, both through the survey as well as through other communication, recommending that the team focus on the larger realm of civil discourse that might add to the emphasis on race relations by expanding to discord around issues such as political values, gender, sexual orientation, religion, and immigration status. While the RRT could readily identify with these

concerns, having the clear framework from ECOP to focus on race relations helped keep this initial work from becoming too overwhelming to manage, given the short time proposed.

However, a paragraph was added to the final competency framework (see appendix) noting how many, if not all, of the competencies around civil discourse could be transferred to other issues. It would, though, be important for the CES professional working to foster civil discourse within another realm to be sufficiently versed in issues related specifically to the topic being addressed.

From the onset, the RRT planned to have additional Extension professionals react to the draft competency framework once compiled. Working with eXtension, several new technologies were explored as potential avenues. The final process employed a simple use of Google Forms to provide input. The process involved labeling the various aspects of the framework in such a way that reviewers could quickly identify the section on which they wished to comment and offer suggestions. The submissions were automatically compiled in a database that could be sorted by section. Once this process was in place, those individuals who had organically signed up on the eXtension site CoP, were asked to review the document. At that point, there were 34 members and seven of them provided feedback. After incorporating those suggestions, the RRT chair brought copies of the revised document to the eXtension I-Corp Diversity and Inclusion Designathon in February and invited additional comments. Through both of these vetting opportunities, comments were relatively minor and reviewers were complimentary of the work. Thus, the RRT feels confident in the content of this initial competency framework, recognizing that the opportunity for refinement continues to exist.

Lessons learned:
- Having a clearinghouse for existing competencies within the LGU system on various topics might have helped increase efficiency in establishing the initial framework.
- The survey provided a rich resource of competency content.
- The Google Form approach was useful in allowing individuals to respond asynchronously in a short period of time. Although the form divided the document into very small sections, some comments were too vague to clearly identify the reviewer's concern.
- The competency list is lengthy and benefit may be gained from breaking it into levels (such as beginner, intermediate, experienced) to help provide a logical progression of skills.
- Among the competency areas identified are a broad set of skills that will require an interactive (i.e. face to face) training process to master.

Organize and add to the Civil Discourse information and resources already collected.

Similar to the competency task discussed above, the survey was of tremendous value in identifying relevant resources. Each respondent was given opportunity to add multiple resources to the survey. For each resource, individuals were asked to supply type of resource (i.e. curriculum, website, data sources, research), title, key contact, brief description, citation if available, URL if available, keywords and target audience. Through this source alone nearly 150 resources were identified. However, many of the survey entries lacked the full set of data requested. Thus, SRDC's graduate student was paired with Dr. Laura Downey (Mississippi State

University Program & Staff Development Specialist) to fill in the missing details and eliminate duplication. Finally, the recommendations were filtered using the following criteria:

- Materials were highly relevant to the topic: civil dialogue on race relations
- Extension and/or other Land-Grant University professionals were authors or essential partners
- Materials were easily accessible in some type of online format

Through that process, entries that were not usable because of insufficient information or that did not meet the criteria were removed leading to a final resource count of 40. An interesting note from the survey surfaced when the RRT gave respondents the opportunity to describe "processes or practices not formally documented."   While not usable in the resource repository, this option resulted in 39 entries, indicating the presence of a body of resources that could potentially add breadth to the identified resources if CES professionals were encouraged to document this work in a sharable format.

Lessons learned:

- The survey yielded a significant number of resources in a short time.
- Identifying missing data was time-consuming and may have resulted in missed opportunities to share existing resources. Thus, identifying a support team willing and able to provide this level of work early was essential.
- Having a way for CES professionals to contribute additional resources in the future will be valuable, but may require some type of peer review process to ensure only high quality materials are posted. This may require an infrastructure that currently does not exist.
- Encouraging CES professionals to document work being done in this realm could add strength to the existing repository. Note that survey respondents specifically mentioned 39 resources they considered to be not formally documented.
- Some of the resources identified could be matched to competencies to help interested CES professionals find relevant training opportunities. To be effective, a uniformed system of tagging resources to competencies is needed.

Work with eXtension and provide a nationally accessible website and populate it with information (curricula, programs, models, examples, expertise, etc.) related to Civil Discourse.

The process for assembling resources was described above. However, two specific types of resources noted in the charge generated additional discussion among the RRT. First, one type of resource with limited contribution within the current set is examples or case studies of work with documented positive impact. While the materials that exist and the number of respondents stating active work in this arena seem to indicate potential, the RRT was unable to identify many stories of impact. This is an area where additional time to identify and/or generate these impacts could greatly increase the value of the resources. Additionally, this area of civil discourse is notoriously difficult to measure. Thus, having a team that could help develop common measures and, perhaps, customizable tools could be of future value in documenting successes. Ripple Effect Mapping, for instance, is one promising approach.

Second, identifying persons with expertise that could be posted to the site generated some concern among the RRT. While the survey asked respondents about the areas in which they

had expertise, the RRT had no real way of knowing the level of proficiency of these individuals. Thus, the team felt reluctant to post those names as skilled professionals without having any type of mechanism to evaluate strength. The team determined instead to post centers, institutes or program websites from among the LGU where civil discourse and/or race relations was clearly an emphasis, along with national/regional/multi-state working groups that have been formally established. The RRT felt this type of posting would provide linkages to expertise for someone seeking assistance without over-burdening the team with a potentially complex vetting process. These resource groups were identified through the survey and are listed in the Partner List as noted earlier in the Appendix.

Given the audience for this work is at least at this point targeting CES professionals, thinking through the best mechanism for posting materials through eXtension took some creative thought. After considering multiple options, the site was placed on the arm of eXtension called "publish." With a focus more on professional development, this location seemed best for organizing the RRT's work. A future opportunity may be to expand the work to a more public focused site. The work is posted here: https://publish.extension.org/civildialogue/

Lessons learned:
- A need to identify and/or document impacts from civil discourse exists in order to increase understanding of the value of this work.
- Common measures and tools could aid documentation of impacts
- Determining the placement of any web-based products early would help the team populate findings along the way.

Organize and conduct a national webinar for Extension Directors/Administrators and other personnel that summarizes the need for Civil Discourse, provides an overview of resources available, and demonstrates a few examples of successful programming.

The RRT chair was invited to participate in monthly ECOP Program Committee calls to provide updates on the process. These calls have aided the team in fine-tuning the process as well as keeping the ECOP PC aware of progress. On February 15th, the RRT chair made a preliminary report to the ECOP Executive Committee as a preview of the final report and recommendations. This time allowed for input into the final report (this document), delivered to ECOP in April, 2017. As the culminating step of the charge, a webinar is scheduled for May 17, 2017 to inform all CES Directors, Administrators and other Extension professionals of the RRT's work.

Lessons learned:
- Monthly conversations with the ECOP PC helped ensure timely communications and allowed for refinement of steps along the way.
- Previewing the preliminary report with ECOP PC and EC gave its members an opportunity to ask initial questions that could help guide the final report as well as to inform them of potential recommendations that may require further discussion at the April meeting.

Overarching Observations:

- Responses to the survey and emails to the team indicate high interest in strengthening the work of civil discourse within the Cooperative Extension System.
- Few states appear to be investing significant effort to respond to needs in promoting civil discourse.
- While the focus on race relations was considered valuable, the RRT often received comments about expanding the scope of the work to a broader base of inclusion/diversity that also encompassed gender, religion, political orientation, sexual identity, age, or any other social/cultural divide that seems present in today's society. While the focus of this RRT's work stayed clearly on race relations, many of the tools and resources identified can have broader applications to these other areas of concern.
- To accomplish the scope of work outlined by ECOP to the RRT involved an estimated 200+ investment of time on the part of the team, some of which was group time and some individual working time.
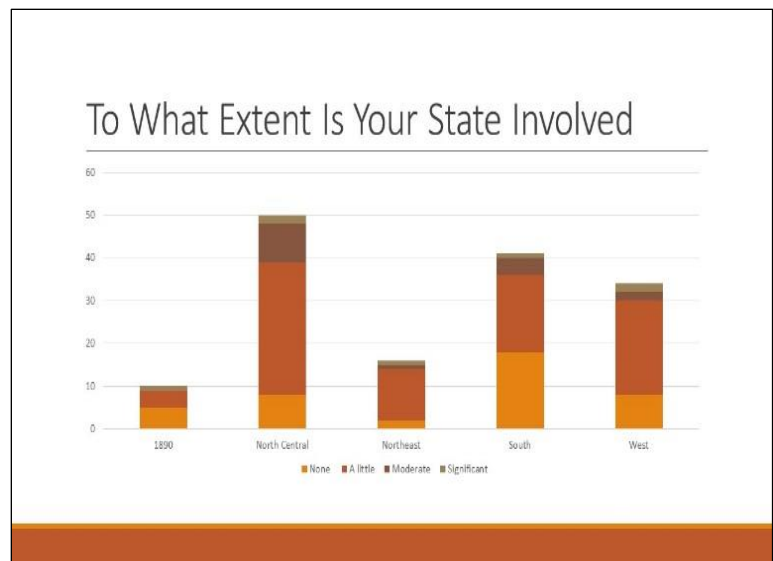
Recommendations

Although the RRT's timeline was relatively short, a number of recommendations seemed to consistently surface that could help advance CES' capacity to respond effectively to community needs for civil discourse around race relations.

1. Clarifying roles CES could or should take in civil discourse around racial issues could advance CES professional engagement in the work.
2. Becoming skilled at civil discourse competencies will make every Extension agent more effective in and more motivated about their work, regardless of the job title, and is consistent with the Skills and Attributes of 21st Century Extension Professionals (Hibberd)[1]. Potential ways to facilitate mastery include:
   a. Developing a tiered rubric that allows individuals to find a place to begin that is manageable, but provides a pipeline to grow skills to the next level.

b. Tying identified training materials to competencies to allow CES professionals to find relevant on-line resources to meet some of their training needs.

c. Examining training opportunities that may exist with both internal and potential external partners that have been identified.

d. Developing a train-the-trainer model, starting with a small pilot initiative, but expanding to a national model.

3. In order to build capacity within CES, a supporting infrastructure is needed to:

a. Better link professionals that have proficiency nationally to others with expertise as well as to those that desire to build these skills

b. Provide essential face-to-face training for those needing to build capacity on competencies, much of which is skill-based, thus not easily mastered through on-line training resources alone.

c. Provide support for work both within states (how to build strong state level capacity) and across states (how to link expertise across state lines to draw from and support efforts nationally).

4. Developing a stronger unified evaluation strategy for this effort that can be used nationally would strengthen CES' ability to document impacts.

5. Integrating research into the work would strengthen the evidence base.

6. Building capacity within CES needs to focus on both local program implementation and also building the skills of Extension professionals. Models may include developing regional teams (e.g., Robert Wood Johnson Foundation Culture of Health), developing teams based on subject matter expertise (e.g., 4-H Common Measures), and developing project teams with key informants (e.g., eXtension Issue Corps). Whatever model is used, the intent should be to build on existing strengths and current energy to increase capacity across the nation.

In order to achieve the strategies above, the RRT recommends civil discourse around race relations become a priority for ECOP in 2018 and each state be encouraged to consider it as a priority in development of state plans of work. Additionally, the RRT recognizes that to build capacity within the LGU system will require funding to support developing individual and team skills. Thus, with the broad interest demonstrated in this initiative and a desire to continue the work of this RRT, we request ECOP's assistance in identifying potential funding sources to help this work progress nationally.

The Civil Discourse RRT is convinced that the time is right for
Cooperative Extension to step into this vital space to help promote
peace, resilience and healing within and among the communities we serve.

---

[1] Hibberd, C., Blomeke, C., & Lillard, A. (2013). The skills and attributes of 21st century extension professionals. Retrieved from: https://docs.google.com/file/d/0ByoN6X1gktFkVl8tNG14ZGVZMms/edit.

Appendices:

Logic Model: What Might Be Possible

Rapid Response Team ECOP Charge

Partner List

Competency Framework

CIVIL DIALOGUE ON RACE RELATIONS: WHAT MIGHT BE POSSIBLE

INPUT	OUTPUT		OUTCOMES		
Assets	Strategies	Target Audience	Attitudes/Knowledge/Skills	Behaviors	Conditions
LGU professionals with strong skills on civil dialogue and race relations **eXtension** **Regional Rural Development Centers** **USDA-NIFA** **National Urban Extension Leadership (NUEL)**	Form a national network of skilled professionals on civil dialogue and race relations Design a national training process which all states and CES professionals can access. Incorporate competency framework into eXtension platform and integrate with resources and training identified by the RRT. Partner with eXtension on relevant Issue Corp work Fully catalog existing resources, including linkages to competency framework	Land-Grant Professionals	Extension professionals: • Understands when and how to organize and facilitate a civil dialogue on race or issues pertaining to race • Knows how to coach a community through a dialogue from start into implementation	Extension Effectively… • Recruits and trains volunteers for the various aspects • Organizes community members to convene diverse dialogues • Convenes the community (with other partners when appropriate) for civic dialogue • Coaches communities through the dialogue to action process	Extension professionals: • Increase confidence • Reach new audiences • Align with new partners • Increase programmatic relevance • Contribute to meaningful, relevant community impacts • Increase job satisfaction (job retention) • Increase capacity to proactively respond to diverse issues
			Communities: • Understand why and how dialogues work • Understand how to organize • Understand terminology, history, and culture matters	Communities: • Use dialogue to address conflicts concerning race as appropriate • Jointly implement mutually selected actions • Adopt a more civil manner for discussing differences	Communities: Experience fewer race related: • Unresolved conflicts • Civil disturbances • Incidents of negative interactions Communities see Extension as a relevant, valued partner in positive community change

Background/Situation

The nation has experienced many recent tragedies, including fatal civilian and police shootings, riots, arrests, and civil unrest. The root causes of these events are complex, with racial, equity, diversity, socio-economic, behavioral and historical underpinnings. Any criminal findings and consequences related to these events are the responsibility of the judicial system. For individuals that have directly experienced violence, death or trauma, counseling services may be available through local providers to help cope with the trauma. However, these individual services will not address the underlying tension where education, coordination and communication may be needed to build healthier community relationships. Extension can be a catalyst for many possible positive actions that can be taken to make a positive difference in skills, knowledge and emotions that contribute to quality of life in our communities.

Scope of Issue to CES

Based on a survey of Extension Directors and Administrators, this is an issue of above average relevance to all 5 Extension regions, with Directors/Administrators in the 1890 and Southern regions expressing a higher degree of relevance. Situations in various parts of the country have indicated a need for Civil Discourse.

What is CES Now Doing?

CES in several states and all regions is involved in different programming efforts that relate directly or indirectly to Civil Discourse focused on racism and violence. Several names were provided of Extension and other individuals with expertise in Civil Discourse. For example, Ms. Rachel Welborn, Southern Rural Development Center (SRDC), is a certified facilitator w/International Association of Public Participation and a Trainer/facilitator of Turning the Tide on Poverty and Facing Racism in a Diverse Nation. Examples of activities currently underway, recently completed or being planned include:

- Launching a comprehensive legal education program, LegalEASE, in partnership with Cumberland Law School to develop a Youth & The Law Curriculum
- Diversity training
- Offering seminars, workshops, and events such as Conversation on Race and the Legal System, Reflections on Diversity, Recognizing and Addressing Micro-aggressions in the Workplace, 4-H Youth FuturesCollege
- Exploring possible collaboration with College of Law to work with divided communities
- 4-H projects on diversity/racism
- Blackboard Jungle, trainings, active diversity committees
- Civil discourse professional development plans for staff and 4H volunteer training
- Regional 4-H conversations on civil discourse
- Establishment of a Diversity Catalyst Team
- Facilitating meetings and conversations between public and law enforcement
- Turning the Tide on Poverty (Tide) – a five week community circles discussion guide from SRDC. Especially for communities that do not feel ready to tackle race relations discussions head-on, Tide provides a framework for discussions that will lead to concerns around racial divide in a more organic way. Conversations on race relations

are interwoven into the topic of poverty. http://srdc.msstate.edu/tide/ Note that seven states in the Northwest United States have a similar program called Horizons.

- Lemons to Lemonade – a train-the-trainers manual designed to be taught and used primarily by extension educators, community officials, and citizen leaders. It gives workshop participants the applicable knowledge and skills to help teach others how to identify, understand, manage, and when possible and desirable, to resolve conflicts within their own communities (http://srdc.msstate.edu/trainings/educurricula/lemons/).
- Race relations dialogue training – As a part of the Turning the Tide on Poverty initiative, SRDC trained Extension coaches and their volunteer facilitators on race relations discussions using Everyday Democracy's *Facing Racism in a Diverse Nation* https://www.everyday-democracy.org/resources/facing-racism-diverse-nation.

Action Requested – ECOP Executive Committee is asked to appoint and charge an *ad hoc* Rapid Response Team (RRT) to focus on Civil Discourse. (ECOP approved this September 22, 2016)

Team Leadership and Membership – The RRT will include members of the ECOP Program Committee (ECOP PC), representatives of Regional Rural Development Centers (RRDC), National Urban Extension Leaders (NUEL), NIFA (Bill Hoffman), eXtension, and four Extension specialists (ideally one from each subject matter: 4H, Family & Consumer Science, Ag. & Natural Resources, and Community Development) as well as other individuals who have expertise/interest and who might be effective partners, e.g., Everyday Democracy, Kettering Foundation, etc. The RRT will be chaired by Rachel Welborn, Southern Region Rural Development Center, with staff support from Ron Brown. This will be considered the core team. There will be a larger Contributing Team that accommodates wider interest and additional participants. An open call for interest will be made.

Charge/Anticipated Outcomes – The RRT is asked to develop a strategy to encourage Civil Discourse in Cooperative Extension and to better equip state Extension Services in implementing Civil Discourse activities in their states. Consideration should be given to the following:

- Make a public invitation to additional Extension staff and others who may want to be involved in the RRT (consider the ECOP Monday Minute as well as national Extension professional associations as a communication mediums); Identify other groups/organizations that might be worthy partners.
- Organize and add to the Civil Discourse information and resources already collected.
- Identify existing competency frameworks.
- Work with eXtension and provide a nationally accessible website and populate it with information (curricula, programs, models, examples, expertise, etc.) related to Civil Discourse.
- Organize and conduct a national webinar for Extension Directors/Administrators and other personnel that summarizes the need for Civil Discourse, provides an overview of resources available, and demonstrates a few examples of successful programming.
- Identify other needed strategies – for example, if a funding opportunity arises for a longer-term effort, provide a recommendation of next steps or recommendations for training at a future Urban or other conferences.

Timeline and Reporting – It is expected that the ECOP PC will participate in and monitor this activity and will provide interim reports to ECOP. A final report is requested from the RRT to ECOP at the end of six months. The April 2017 ECOP meeting will serve as a target date.

Rapid Response Team on Civil Discourse

The RRT will include members of the ECOP Program Committee (ECOP PC)
- Bill Hare (whare@udc.edu); (official liaison from ECOP PC to the RRT)
- Ron Brown rab2@msstate.edu
- Copy communications to other ECOP PC members so they may participate as available and interested:
  - Chris Boerboom (chris.boerboom@ndsu.edu);
  - Tim Cross (tlcross@utk.edu);
  - Mark Latimore (latimorm@fvsu.edu);
  - Scott Reed (scott.reed@oregonstate.edu);
  - Susan Crowell (CARET rep) (scrowell@farmanddairy.com)

Other National and Extension representation:
- RRDC Rep: Rachel Welborn
- National Urban Extension Leaders (NUEL), Manami Brown (mbrown4@umd.edu)
- NIFA (Bill Hoffman) whoffman@nifa.usda.gov 202-401-1112; REPLACED 10/17/16 with Brent Elrod belrod@nifa.usda.gov
- eXtension (Chris Geith) christinegeith@extension.org
- 4H Council - Sally Miske (smiske@fourhcouncil.edu)

Non Land Grant Representation:
- Alice Diebel, Kettering Foundation, diebel@kettering.org
- Carolyne Abdullah, Everyday Democracy cabdullah@everyday-democracy.org

Extension Specialists (see below)
- Laura Downey, Mississippi State University, Program and Staff Development, researcher on Turning the Tide on Poverty special issue of the Community Development Society Journal, laura.downey@msstate.edu
- Michelle Eley, North Carolina A&T University, Community Development Specialist, work on structural racism. mleley@ncat.edu
- Paul Lachapelle, Montana State University, Community Development specialist, civic engagement.
- Richard Pirog, MI State University, Ag. & Natural Resources, Work on structural racism in foods. rspirog@anr.msu.edu

Email block:
whare@udc.edu; rab2@msstate.edu; mbrown4@umd.edu; belrod@nifa.usda.gov; christinegeith@extension.org; smiske@fourhcouncil.edu; diebel@kettering.org; cabdullah@everyday-democracy.org; paul.lachapelle@montana.edu; mleley@ncat.edu; rspirog@anr.msu.edu; laura.downey@msstate.edu;

CC: chris.boerboom@ndsu.edu; tlcross@utk.edu; latimorm@fvsu.edu; scott.reed@oregonstate.edu; scrowell@farmanddairy.com;

Draft action steps for comments/suggestions: Below is a very tentative action plan just to start a conversation with the RRT. All comments/suggestions are welcome. This would be discussed on the initial call.

Action	Key responsibility	Deadline
Send note to team to set a call with RRT planning group as soon as members are finalized	Rachel Welborn	October 11, 2016
Review the survey sent to directors/administrators and recommend changes for broader distribution	Chris Geith/ Rachel to send All to review	October 21, 2016
Determine survey dissemination strategy. Identify a contact for each relevant target group to help disseminate (JCEP orgs, Monday Minute, others)	Rachel to coordinate; others as identified	October 21, 2016
Draft a cover note for survey	Rachel/ Dr. Brown?/Dr. Latimore?	October 17, 2016
Launch survey – target through JCEP orgs, Monday Minute, others?	Chris/Rachel (need to identify others to assist in disseminating to different channels)	October 24, 2016
Survey deadline	Rachel to close survey	December 9, 2016
Survey responses organized on website	Rachel/Chris/others	December 23, 2016
Collect/synthesize existing competency models/input	Rachel/ others?	January 20, 2016
Team meeting face-to-face to examine what we have and where we need to go from here. (Identify needs/gaps, i.e., what do agents/specialists need,	Rachel to coordinate; all to attend	January 3, 1:00 – 3:00 Central January 19, 10:00 – noon Central February 7, 1:00 – 3:00 Central March 6, 1:00 – 3:00 Central
Review/comment period – (virtual) invite all identified expertise to review products (website resource area, competency synthesis, ideas for action/next steps)	Rachel to coordinate	Mid-February
Refine based on review/comment input	Rachel to coordinate; small team to assist	February 28
Final team review	All review together on a virtual call	March 15
Prepare presentation for Extension Directors/Administrators	Rachel with small team; all review content	Late March
Map a plan to pursue any follow-up strategies	All	Early April
Final report to ECOP		April 17, 2017

Organizations Identified as Current or Potential Partners

for Civil Dialogue on Race Relations

Partners/Networks Outside of LGU System

National Entities
- America Speaks: www.americaspeaks.org
- Association of Leadership Educators, http://leadershipeducators.org/
- Bridge Alliance www.BridgeAlliance.US
- Build the Field of Community Engagement: http://www.buildthefield.org/
- Bush Foundation - www.bushfoundation.org
- Character Counts https://charactercounts.org/
- Circle Forward www.circleforward.us
- Civic Ensemble http://civicensemble.org
- Clinton School of Public Service http://clintonschool.uasys.edu/
- Cultural Intelligence Center https://culturalq.com
- David Matthews Center for Civic Life http://mathewscenter.org/
- Deliberative Democracy Consortium: www.deliberative-democracy.net/
- Don Dunoon, The Obreau Tripod: http://www.dondunoon.com/the-obreau-tripod
- Dismantling Racism Works www.dismantlingracism.org
- EcoWorks: http://www.ecoworksdetroit.org/
- EarthForce: https://earthforce.org/
- Engaged Mindfulness Institute: http://engagedmindfulness.org/
- Essential Partners www.whatisessential.org
- Everyday Democracy https://www.everyday-democracy.org/
- Fierce Conversations www.fierceinc.com
- Fit Oshkosh https://sites.google.com/site/fitoshkoshinc/
- GlossRags: (Randi) http://www.glossrags.com/
- Intercultural Development Inventory https://idiinventory.com
- International Association of Public Participation - IAP2   www.iap2.org
- International Conflict Style Inventory (ICS) http://www.icsinventory.com/
- International Leadership Association, http://ila-net.org/
- The Jefferson Center http://jefferson-center.org/
- Kettering Foundation/ National Issues Forum www.kettering.org
- Latino Health for All Coalition https://www.myctb.org/wst/latinohealth/default.aspx?source=hakalcmhb
- My Brother's Keeper http://www.mbkalliance.org/
- National Coalition for Dialogue and Deliberation www.ncdd.org
- National Latino Network www.nationallatinonetwork.org
- Opening Doors Diversity Project, The State University of New York http://diversity-project.org/opening-doors-a-personal-and-professional-journey/
- OUCH! That Stereotype Hurts http://www.diversityinclusioncenter.com/downloads/Ouch_Stereotypes_LeadersGuide.pdf
- People's Institute for Survival and Beyond – Undoing Racism http://www.pisab.org/

- Public Agenda: www.publicagenda.org
- Public Conversations Project: www.publicconversations.org
- RESULTS (a poverty advocacy network with great skill on respectful dialog) www.results.org
- Rural Development Initiatives www.rdiinc.org
- Showing Up for Racial Justice www.showingupforracialjustice.org
- Social Justice Toolbox http://www.socialjusticetoolbox.com
- Southern Poverty Law Center https://www.splcenter.org/
- Sustained Dialogue Institute http://sustaineddialogue.org/about-us/
- Take On Hate: (Asha) http://www.takeonhate.org/
- Teaching Tolerance http://www.tolerance.org
- United Migrant Opportunity Services, Aida Bise, adelaida.bise@umos.org
- Urban Arts Partnership (Armando Somoza) - armando.somoza@gmail.com https://www.urbanarts.org/history/
- Vital Smarts www.vitalsmarts.com
- WK Kellogg Foundation, https://www.wkkf.org/
- Working in Indian Country http://www.workinginindiancountry.com/
- ZINN Education Project https://zinnedproject.org

Partners/Networks in the LGU System

---

eXtension Communities of Practice:
- eXtension Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (http://articles.extension.org/diversity)
- eXtension Network Literacy CoP, http://articles.extension.org/network_literacy
- eXtension CoP: Community, Local, and Regional Food Systems. https://people.extension.org/communities/319
- Qualitative Analysis Community of Practice, Christian Schmieder, christian.schmieder@ces.uwex.edu
- Enhancing Rural Community Capacity eXtension Community of Practice https://people.extension.org/communities/1241

Formal Multi-State Groups:
- National 4-H Council Hispanic Advisory Council (http://4-h.org/professionals/marketing-resources/latinooutreach/) 2
- CYFAR https://cyfar.org/home
- SERA-37: Latinos in the New South http://srdc.msstate.edu/sera37new/index.html

Regional Rural Development Centers: www.rrdc.info

University of Arizona: National Institute for Civil Discourse, http://nicd.arizona.edu/news/building-trust-through-civil-discourse
- Research Network: http://nicd.arizona.edu/research-network

Colorado State University
- Diversity Catalyst Team http://extension.colostate.edu/staff-resources/diversity-resources/diversity-about-us/
- Widen the Circle Wednesday Project http://extension.colostate.edu/staff-resources/diversity-resources/diversity-widen-the-circle/
- Family Leadership Training Institute Work Team, Kyle Christensen kyle.christensen@colestate.edu

Fort Valley State University: Vulnerable Populations Working Group - Woodie Hughes - hughesw@fvsu.edu

University of Georgia:
- Carl Vinson Institute for Government http://cviog.uga.edu/
- J W Fanning Institute for Leadership Development http://www.fanning.uga.edu/

Purdue University: Office for Intergroup Dialogue and Civil Community https://igd.iupui.edu/about.asp

Kansas State University:
- Center for Engagement and Community Development at KSU https://www.k-state.edu/cecd/
- Staley School of Leadership Studies http://www.k-state.edu/leadership/
- Institute for Civic Discourse and Democracy https://www.k-state.edu/icdd/
- Center for Engagement and Community Development https://www.k-state.edu/cecd/

University of Kentucky: Department of Community & Leadership Development www.cedik.ca.uky.edu

University of Maryland: Social and Moral Development Laboratory www.education.umd.edu/HDQM/Killen-lab/

Michigan State University:
- Academic Advancement Network http://aan.msu.edu/opportunities/resources-difficult-dialogues
- The Toolbox Dialogue Initiative http://toolbox-project.org

University of Minnesota: The Office of Equity and Diversity. Check out their certificate! https://diversity.umn.edu/

University of Missouri: Missouri 4-H Youth Development Academy Training team http://4h.missouri.edu/YDA/main

University of New Hampshire: The Democracy Imperative: www.unh.edu/democracy

Cornell University: The Community and Regional Development Institute dlk2@cornell.edu

North Carolina State University: Committee on Racial Equity in the Food System
https://cefs.ncsu.edu/food-system-initiatives/food-system-committee-on-racial-equity/

University of Rhode Island: Center for Nonviolence and Peace Studies http://web.uri.edu/nonviolence/

Ohio State University:
- Kirwan Institute for the Study of Race and Ethnicity http://kirwaninstitute.osu.edu/
- Divided Community Project http://moritzlaw.osu.edu/dividedcommunityproject/

Oregon State University:
- Diversity Catalyst Team http://outreach.oregonstate.edu/about/diversity-initiative
- State 4-H Team - Expanding Access http://advance.oregonstate.edu/

University of Tennessee: Institute for Sport, Peace, and Society http://sportandpeace.utk.edu/

Virginia Tech University: VCE Leadership, Volunteerism, and Civic Engagement Program Team,
http://www.intra.ext.vt.edu/reports/LVCEEvaluationResources.html

Washington State University:
- Division of Governmental Studies and Services https://dgss.wsu.edu
- William D. Ruckelshaus Center www.RuckelshausCenter.wsu.edu

University of Wisconsin:
- Creating Healthy Communities, Paula Tran-Inzeo, paula.inzeo@ces.uwex.edu
- Ignite Coalition Building Workgroup, Kathy Staats, kathryn.staats@ces.uwex.edu
- Safe & Healthy Food Pantries Project, Amber Canto, amber.canto@ces.uwex.edu
- Waking Up White, Paula Hella, paula.hella@ces.uwex.edu
- Outreach & Programming with Diverse Audiences, Sandy Liang, sandy.liang@ces.uwex.edu
- Connecting to Coverage and Care, Jeni Appleby, jappleby@wisc.edu
- Engaging Young People in Sustaining Communities, Families and Farm, Matthew Calvert, matthew.calvert@ces.uwex.edu
- Multicultural Awareness Program, Matt Evensen, matt.evensen@uwex.edu
- Latino Employee Resource Group, Maria Yolanda Pena, yolanda.pena@ces.uwex.edu
- UW School for Workers, Armando Ibarra, armando.ibarra@uwex.edu
- WSU Division of Governmental Studies and Services https://dgss.wsu.edu/

Civil Dialogue around Race Relations

Competencies Framework

February 2017

Background:

The Rapid Response Team (RRT) on Civil Discourse [hyperlink] was given as part of a charge from the Extension Committee on Operations and Policy (ECOP) to identify or assemble a set of competencies that help promote civil dialogue on race relations. The RRT gratefully acknowledges contributions of Extension specialists and others with proficiency on this topic for their contributions in assembling and vetting the competency framework that follows.

Civil dialogue involves creating a safe place for community members to assemble to discuss a challenging question. The process of dialogue typically involves some level of facilitation, agreement to a set of guidelines, and has a central focus on increasing understanding among participants on the topic. The process may or may not lead to consensus or action. Yet civil dialogue will always seek to foster listening and understanding.

This particular framework focuses the dialogue efforts on race relations given the intense discord that has been evident over the past year. Many of the competencies identified throughout this document, though, have a much broader application to other issues that cause divide in society including other challenges around diversity, inclusion, and equity, as well as other types of challenges that occur in communities.

Introduction:

Becoming competent in facilitating civil dialogue around race relations requires a broad skillset. Within that set are two partially overlapping subsets of skills from which the professional must draw to be effective. One set of skills relates directly to the ability to organize, convene, and lead an effort to bring people together around any challenging issue. The other skillset is directly related to competencies around multi-cultural communication and interaction. While a person could be competent within one of these spheres and not the other, to effectively facilitate civil dialogue around the unique challenges of race relations involves the intersection of both sets of skills. Mastery of the combined competencies will equip the professional to analyze a situation, determine an appropriate approach, engage others in organizing for a longer term program or event, prepare for the process, foster participation, and facilitate resulting action. Through the lens of race relations, the professional will also be keenly aware of how culture and context may impact a given situation, and will carefully lead the process in such a way as to promote understanding and healing.
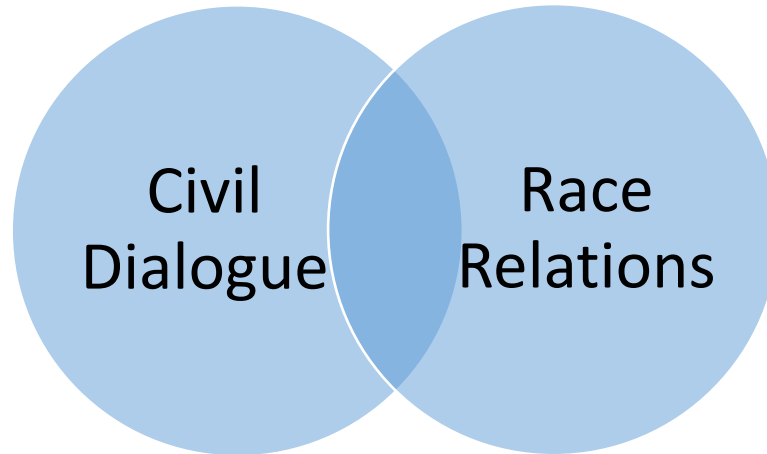
The Rapid Response Team recognizes that building competencies around civil dialogue to address race relations is but one aspect of preparing CES professionals to support communities. Our country is grappling with how to engage in civil dialogue across a range of social and policy issues such as employment, housing, immigration, religion, sexual orientation, political values, poverty, and others. Race and issues of structural racism can often be the underbelly beneath many of these issues. While this document focuses primarily on competencies to engage on the issue of race relations, we recognize that many competencies are transferrable, but additional expertise may be warranted to prepare the professional to address a wider range of issues. Thus, given the original charge to the team, this document focuses primarily on issues around race relations.

I.   Civil Dialogue Overview

Before a dialogue process can effectively take shape, community organizers/facilitators need some basic understanding of what dialogue is and when and how it can successfully move a community forward in addressing a challenging issue or at least better understanding it.

A.   Understand the importance of dialogue in addressing challenging issues.

B.   Recognize multiple ways of knowing that influence the way people think about issues.

C.   Understand and can explain the realms impacting community decision-making (diagram).

D.   Identify factors influencing the type of public input that may be appropriate in a given situation.

E.   Recognize situations in which dialogue may be appropriate and when it may not.
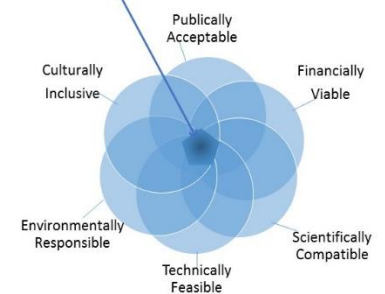
II.   Civil Dialogue and the Land Grant University (LGU)

Aligning civil dialogue efforts with the Land Grant mission sometimes leads to puzzling questions. In order to successfully integrate civil dialogue into the LGU work, an understanding of how the two fit together—or are challenged to do so—will help pave the way to successful university-community collaboration (see Wright, 2012).

A. Understand the history of Extension as a grassroots knowledge-sharing and relationship-building institution, particularly the role that group discussion and civil dialogue has played in its history (Shaffer, 2016).

B. Recognize how dialogue can strengthen Extension work with communities (Hustedde, 1996)

C. Articulate the value of civil dialogue to both the LGU as well as to communities

D. Balance "deliver science based knowledge" with community engagement to work alongside communities for solutions (Peters, 2014).

E. Recognize community building as one of everyone in Extension's tasks.

F. Address common misperceptions of Extension's involvement in civil dialogue such as Extension's mission and potential roles in conflict.

G. Understand Extension's own unique challenges in reaching all audiences within a given community.

III. Background Analysis

Before engaging the community in civil dialogue, a good understanding of the situation is needed. This foundation should identify major stakeholders/viewpoints, provide baseline data related to the scope of the issue, and articulate the issue clearly to those that might be interested in engaging in conversation.

A. Understand and acknowledge how issues become controversial

B. Identify key elements of the situation including why the issue is contentious, scale and trends locally, historical background, stakeholders, power-brokers, and assets/resources available.

C. Know where to find and how to analyze relevant data

D. Determine if a dialogue project should be undertaken based on analysis

E. Frame an issue in a neutral, inclusive, non-threatening manner in order to promote a productive, civil deliberative discussion.

F. Quickly adapt the analysis and associated framing as new information is identified or as the situation changes.

IV. Community Organizing

Once a determination is made to hold a dialogue session, organizing the community to ensure a diverse, broad-base of participants relative to the situation is essential to success.

A. Understand the elements of creating a safe space for dialogue relative to organization (geographic location, timing, selecting moderators and facilitators, etc.)

B. Identify, recruit, and lead a planning team that is representative of the voices within the issue and of the community itself and including those already active on the issue and also youth. Fully engage them in the planning process.

C. Garner needed resources for successful dialogue.

D. Understand the different approaches to engagement and dialogue and properly identify the best approach for the situation.

E. Craft community invitations that clearly articulate the purpose and that reach all relevant stakeholder groups effectively, using multiple sources and mediums that are appropriate to the situation. Invite involvement rather than mandating participation.

F. Identify and train volunteers for facilitating civil dialogue.

G. Understand the various leadership roles that may be present in a dialogue planning and implementation process (facilitator/coordinator/coach/teacher/co-creator/convener/trainer); determine the appropriate role for yourself in the situation, weighing both professional and personal aspects.

V. Processes and Skills in Dialogue

Effectively facilitating a dialogue process involves watchful attention to how people are interacting together throughout the effort. Attention to key areas are vital to success.

A. Design a process appropriate to the situation and available time. State as clearly as possible the approach, timeframe, and goals of the dialogue process.

B. Manage the facilitator role appropriately (neutral, interjecting questions or comments appropriately).

C. Foster a safe and inviting environment for dialogue.

D. Assist the group in developing a shared vision.

E. Support the group in setting norms or group agreements

F. Maintain a positive conversation flow, shepherding dialogue progression through appropriate questions, reflective silence, and natural dialogue among participants.

G. Foster respectful, balanced, and authentic discussion among all dialogue participants.

H. Understand the principles of group dynamics (group think, group polarization, influence, and power) and adapt processes as needed.

I. Employ conflict resolution/management/mediation skills appropriately.

J. Use summarization and synthesis methods to check group and individual understanding.

K. Guide the group toward brainstorming solutions.

L. Help the group consider tensions, trade-offs, and priorities among potential solutions.

M. Employ a variety of decision-making process as needed to fit the group and issue.

N. Recognize when and how to transition the group from dialogue to action, if/when appropriate.

O. Recognize and plan for on-going dialogue in the face of change.

VI. Dialogue to Action

In some instances, dialogue that results in common and shared understanding may be an end goal by itself. However, often dialogue on challenging issues will lead toward collective community action to address or respond to an issue. During this time, maintaining the open, connected, and exploratory atmosphere created during the dialogue phase is vital to community progress and trust-building.

A. Guide the group through the process of identifying community assets that may support efforts moving forward.

B. Help the group set and work toward reasonable goals.

C. Guide groups in developing and implementing action plans.

D. Encourage community members to embrace leadership opportunities to take action and support their work.

E. Track, report, and celebrate progress.

VII. <u>Cultural Competencies</u>

Creating space for civil dialogue within our diverse and complex society requires acknowledgement and understanding of cultural differences as well as a sensitivity for how to bring diverse individuals and groups together so that productive dialogue can occur.

A. Understand foundational issues that are sometimes present in multi-cultural dialogue and the need to address these, either in planning or directly with participants.
   Examples of these foundational issues are:

1. Assimilation	8.	Integration
2. Bias	9.	Micro aggressions
3. Discrimination	10.	Oppression
4. Equality	11.	Power
5. Equity	12.	Social identity
6. Implicit bias	13.	Social justice
7. Institutional racism	14.	White privilege

B. Acknowledge history of and current state of oppression of various cultural and ethnic groups (racial trauma, violence, etc.) and how those differ from familiar dominant narratives.

C. Demonstrate understanding of how to work with diverse audiences (relate to, understand, adapt programming, and promote partnering, etc.)

D. Present information in a non-judgmental way to help people grow and mature through dialogue process.

E. Recognize elements of culture dynamics such as development, values, beliefs, etc.

F. Identify myths, stereotypes, perceptions, and biases and work to effectively understand and overcome them.

G. Facilitate meaningful discussions that differentiate between tolerance, acceptance, appreciation and celebration.

H. Understand the needs of groups/voices that are marginalized and underrepresented (identifying, recruiting to the table, and creating a safe/trusting space for participation).

I. Identify common values or interests among groups.

J. Understand and communicate multiple perspectives on challenging issues.

K. Create a process that is inclusive and values differences

   Other kinds of diversity

L. Understand how to work with different personality types in group settings.

M. Adapt processes to allow for participation of those with differing learning styles.

N. Manage groups that may involve different skill levels in dialogue.

O. Understand and adapt efforts to meet the needs of communities at risk.

VIII. <u>Emotional Intelligence and Management</u>

Topics and issues well suited to civil dialogue are often emotionally charged with strongly held views from multiple perspectives. Facilitators must be able to manage emotional responses as well as coach participants in productive management of emotion.
   A. Demonstrate ability to regulate one's own emotion as well as assist others, especially in moments of high tension
   B. Recognize that feelings/emotions are an important way of knowing and experiencing the world alongside factually-based information and expert knowledge.
   C. Create processes that encourage and invite all emotions into the space as a source of healing and transformation

IX. <u>Facilitator Attitude and Disposition</u>

To facilitate civil dialogue, especially on race relations, one must have certain attitudes and dispositions in order to convene diverse publics for civil dialogue.
   A. Approach facilitation with open-mindedness and humility that allows one to serve as a neutral and objective facilitator of dialogue.
   B. Maintain respect for diverse individuals and positions by having patience for how dialogue participants might engage in civil dialogue while striving for credibility and trustworthiness in how issues are discussed.
   C. Demonstrate a willingness and ability to listen to understand.
   D. Exercising care to ensure that one's own conversation promotes positive interactions such as avoiding trigger words or concepts that may hinder conversations.
   E. Have flexibility to modify processes and/or approach as necessary. Also recognize your own limits. Strive to create an environment in which individuals are comfortable and desire to understand one another and the issues discussed.
   F. Have self-awareness about one's own culture, values, and biases and how they influence facilitation.
   G. Maintain a willingness to see the community as having valid knowledge and/or more knowledge than expertise from the university.
   H. Be aware of one's own triggers while facilitating and have outlets for debriefing and decompressing around the challenging issues that arise in civil dialogue work across differences.

References:
● Hustedde, R. J. (1996). An Evaluation of the National Issues Forum Methodology for Stimulating Deliberation in Rural Kentucky. *Journal of the Community Development Society, 27*(2), 197-210.
● National Coalition for Dialogue and Deliberation. (2010). Resource Guide on Public Engagement. Retrieved from http://www.ncdd.org/files/NCDD2010_Resource_Guide.pdf

- Peters, S. J. (2014). Extension Reconsidered. *Choices: The Magazine of Food, Farm and Resource Issues, 29*(1), 1-6.
- Shaffer, T. J. (2016). Looking Beyond Our Recent Past. *National Civic Review, 105*(3), 3-10.
- Singletary, L., Smith, M., Hill, G., Daniels, S., Smutko, S., Ayres, J., Haaland, K. (2007). Strengthening Extension's Capacity to Conduct Public Issues Education Programs: Results of a National Needs Assessment. *Journal of Extension,* 45(2). Retrieved from https://joe.org/joe/2007june/a1.php
- Wright, W. (2012). Wicked Bedfellows: Can Science and Democracy Coexist in the Land Grant? *Higher Education Exchange*, 59-68.