

## Common Errors Made in Writing Accomplishment Statements

- **No impact reported** – only a description of activity.

Every accomplishment statement should report the results of the program, not just why and how it was conducted. The “so what” of programming efforts.

-**Impact of activity reported was very small** (ie. The amount saved by program participants was \$35.00 when four 4-Hers learned to sew shorts or 15 Homemakers saved \$6.00 per member by making a glass bottomed basket.)

-**Did not use the official organizational name** of the “Cooperative Extension Service”. Used Extension Office, Extension, Coop Extension, Extension Service, CES, 4-H, Homemakers instead of the official name. The Extension Office cannot carry out a program. We must use the official name.

- **Dollars reported are not focused on the intended outcome of a program.** EX: “The youth livestock program was directed by 10 leaders volunteering 20 hours each and at a value of \$17.15 per hour, that totaled a value of \$3430.00 to the community.” Or, “The youth livestock program reported an increase of \$.25 per pound for the grand champion steer at the county fair livestock sale this year.” The intended outcome should be focused on youth development and how they changed.

- **Length of statement** –

Too long –  $\frac{3}{4}$  of a page is too long to get people to read

Too short – a three sentence statement is too short to tell the story

- **Repeating the same program year after year.** Yes we have some successful programs that become annual events, but people remember.

- **Gave more credit to other organizations and agencies** we collaborated with than our own (ie. Listed them first in write up, gave primary credit because they contributed a grant.)

-**No mention of the county name.** These impact statements need to be able to stand alone. (ie. A member of congress wants to know that this happened in one of their counties.)

-**Accomplishments need to be stated in past tense.** We are describing accomplishments of programs that have already occurred.

-**The statement should not be stated in the first person.** They are not “my” 4-Hers or a program that “we” conducted.

-**Do not use acronyms** or program names that only we know, at least without some explanation – APES, BMPs, NRCS, IPM, EFNEP, IRM, SEEC, KOSA, Reality Store, LEAP for Health, etc. Neither should we use personal names of adults or youth – these are public records.

- **Trying to report impact too early or more impact than a single activity can produce.** Many individual activities will not generate evidence of impact beyond an increase in knowledge. Neither will programs generate measurable impact without follow up contact with participants.

-**Look for creative and innovative programs** that had a significant outcome with a segment of the population that is identifiable. Programs like Reality Store, Homemaker Bazaar or Annual Meeting, the Annual Tobacco Meeting, how much money was given away by the Phase 1 Committee are reported over and over again and are not indicators of Impact.