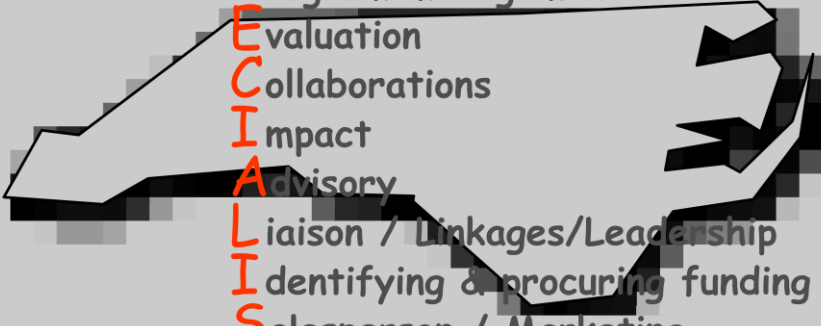


# ***Roles of County Agents (Specialist-in-Residence) and State Specialists***

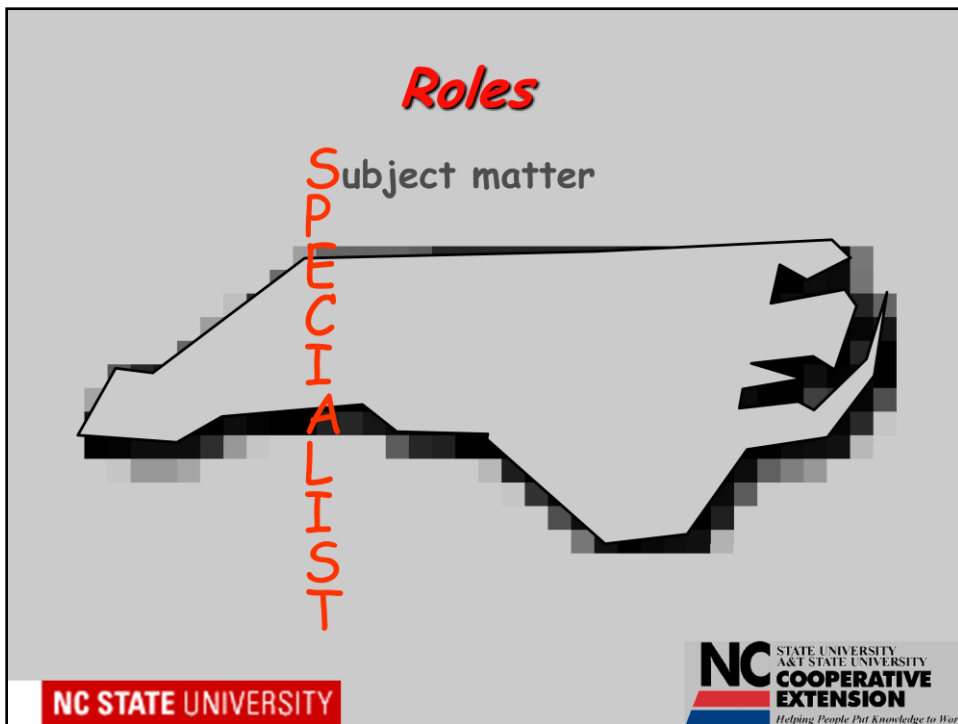


**S**ubject matter  
**P**rogram management  
**E**valuation  
**C**ollaborations  
**I**mpact  
**A**dvisory  
**L**iaison / Linkages/Leadership  
**I**dentifying & procuring funding  
**S**alesperson / Marketing  
**T**echnical support

**NC STATE UNIVERSITY**

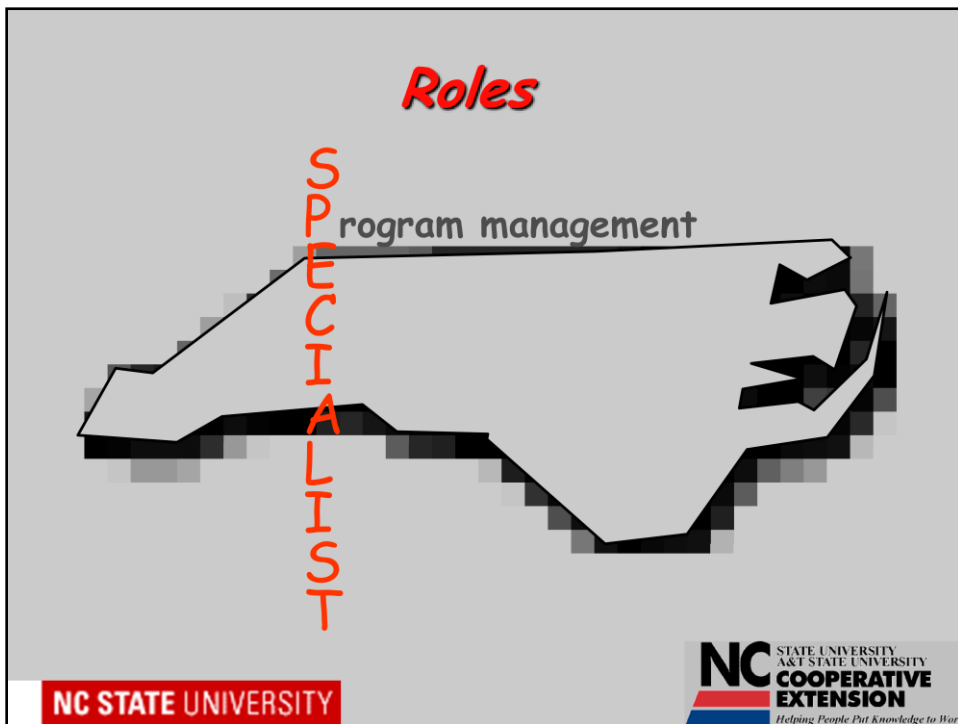
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A&T STATE UNIVERSITY  
**COOPERATIVE  
EXTENSION**  
*Helping People Put Knowledge to Work*

Now we will spend a bit of time discussing the roles of the county agents and the state specialists



Agents serve as the local subject matter expert or specialist. During the hiring process, your position probably emphasized a group of areas within FCS that are the focus of the county. The areas of emphasis are the areas identified by the local Extension Advisory as priorities for the county. Although you will focus your programming efforts in these areas, you will find that the community will seek your advice on topics within the entire range of FCS programming. Your role as the local expert is to keep yourself up-to-date on the current research in your field, participate in trainings to enhance your professional development, know the resources within the community that offer additional support in program areas, plan, implement and evaluate quality educational programs in the areas of emphasis and respond promptly and accurately to citizen questions in all areas of FCS.

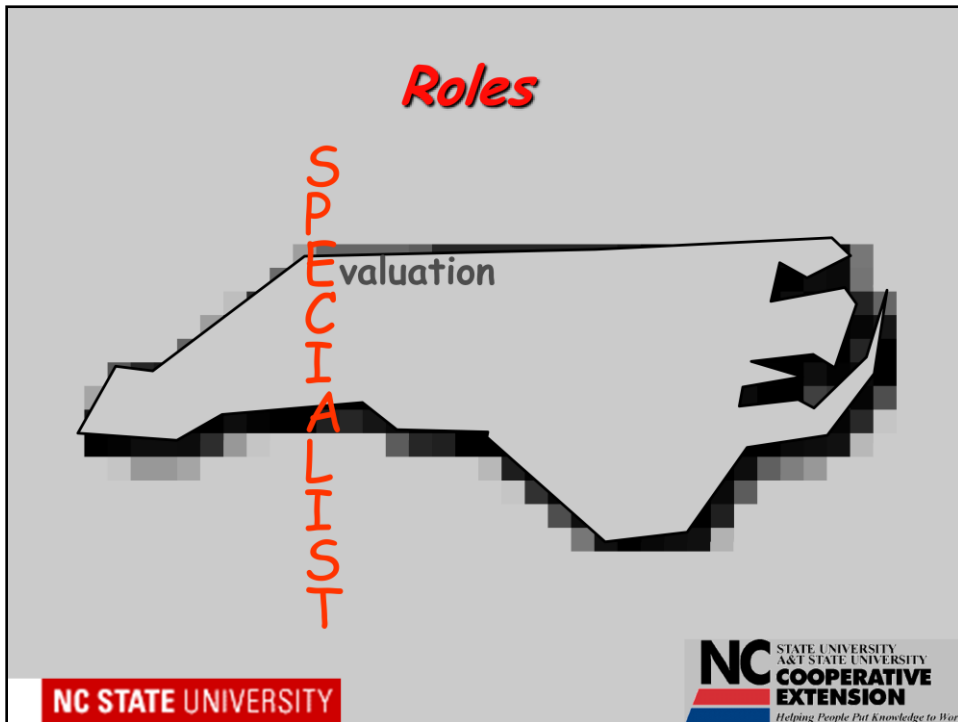
State Specialists serve as back up or resources, in their areas of expertise, for the Agents. They identify the NC trends and issues in their subject matter and offer Agents training, materials, resources, and programs in those areas. They are available to answer questions and discuss topics of importance to the Agent.



Review the County's 5-year plan to identify what has been determined as goals for impact. Beginning with these goals in mind, plan your program implementation strategies so that these goals are reached. A program is MORE than a one-shot presentation. A one-shot presentation is an "awareness" strategy, but just creating awareness in many different venues is not enough to develop a program. Ultimately, our goal is to empower people to make positive behavior changes which improve their quality of life. This requires strategies of implementation to increase knowledge, offer opportunities for process and reflection, and include opportunities for practice and for personal application of a new skill. Starting with the 5-year plan, break the goals down year-by-year. Develop

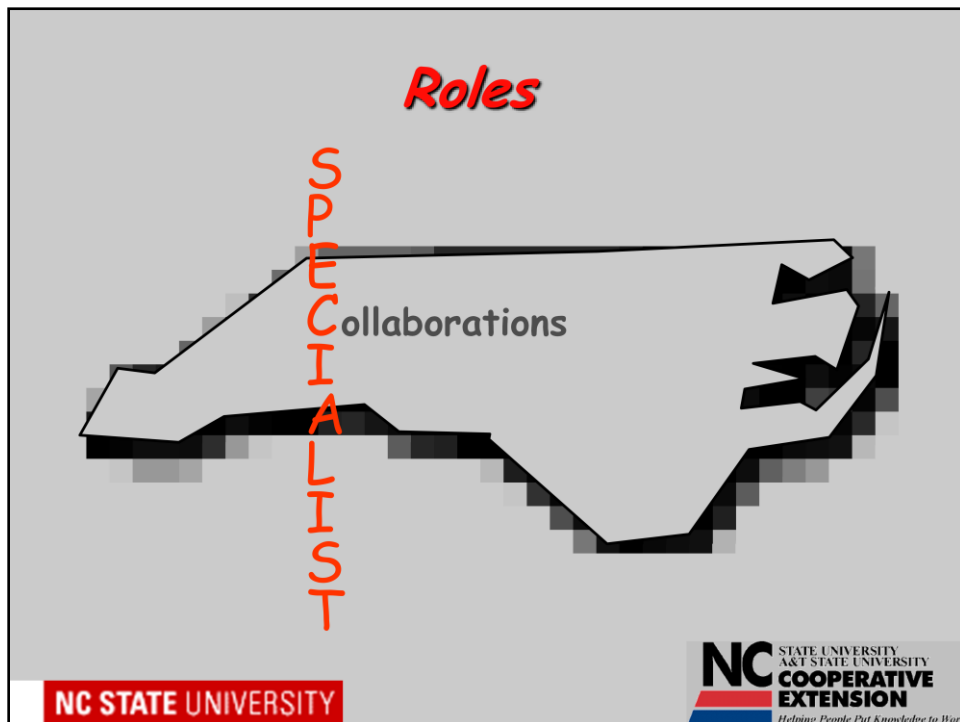
your strategies so that each one builds on the next or compliments the other strategies. Look for community partners that should be a part of the process. Seek out local experts who may be potential volunteers to help with program implementation. Seek the advice of your local FCS Advisory. In developing your plan, remember to plan only about 60% of your time devoted to achieving these goals. The remaining 40% should be reserved for staff meetings, additional community requests beyond the areas of emphasis and professional development.

The State Specialist can be of help with content and state resources that might be needed as you work through your plan.



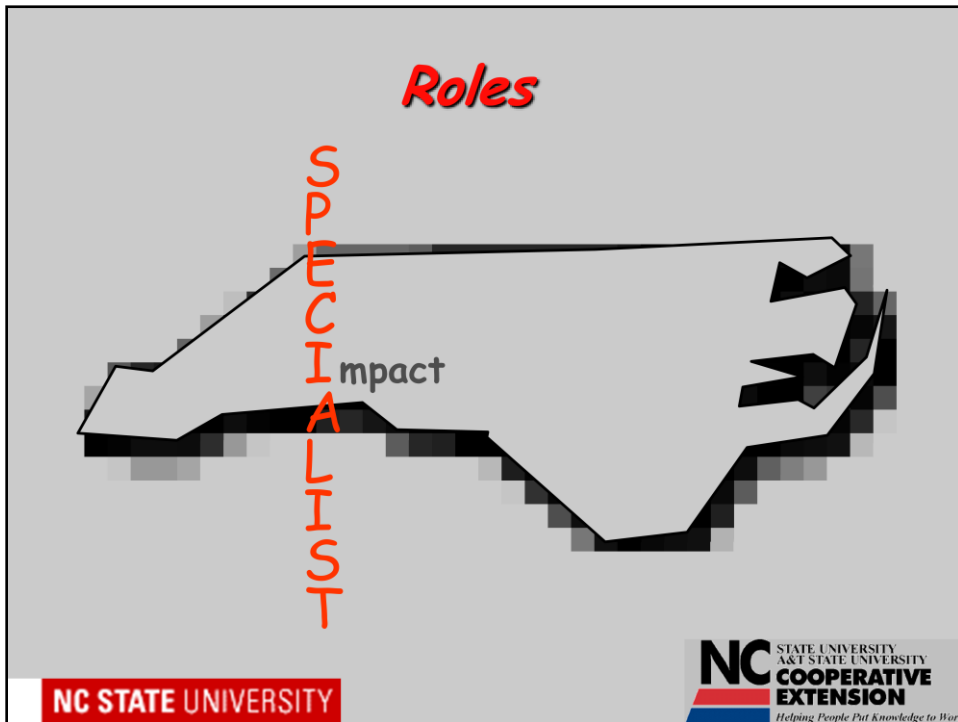
One rule of thumb to remember....”Nothing occurred if there is no evidence that it occurred.” You collect evidence of the good work you do by planning program evaluation. Evaluation planning is a part of the initial planning, not an after-thought. You have to know what it is you want to happen and what information you need in order to state it happened in order to truly evaluate the success of any program. This means that as you are planning your program strategies, you are planning how you will collect data to support the impact of your work. Recently, Extension has added some tools to help you design evaluation instruments. Information on design and collection of data for program evaluation can be found at:

[http://www.cals.ncsu.edu/agexed/exeval/Home\\_Page.html](http://www.cals.ncsu.edu/agexed/exeval/Home_Page.html) Most packaged curriculums developed by the department specialists will include an evaluation instrument designed to collect data which address the goals and objectives for NC Cooperative Extension. Specialists will also assist you with evaluation questions should you need help. It is extremely important to evaluate our efforts to show what we have accomplished so don't hesitate to ask for help if you need it.

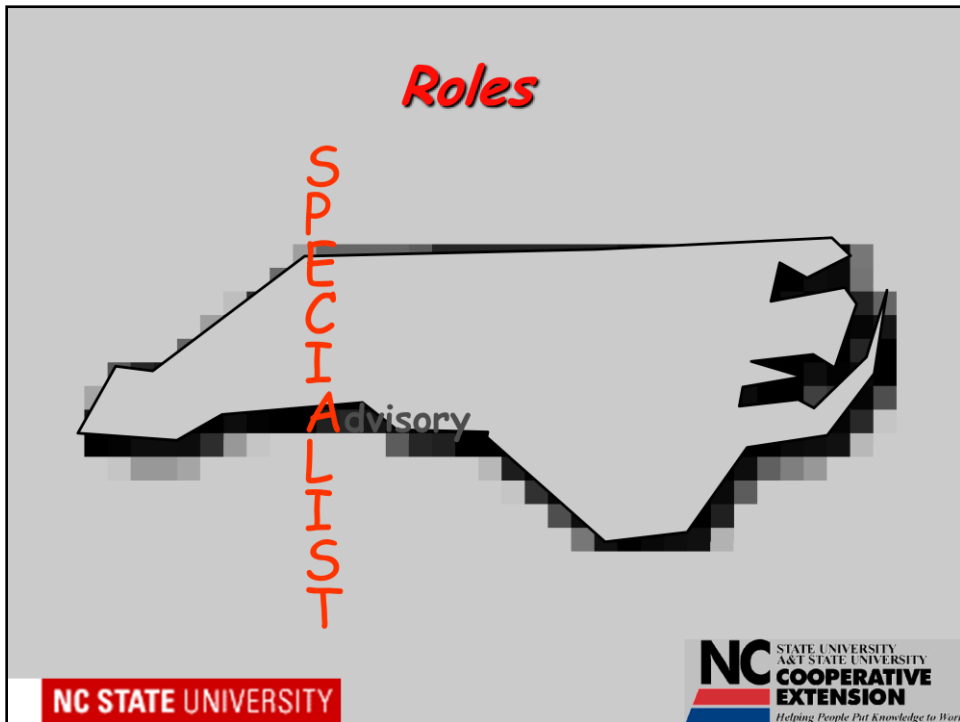


There is a saying often used in collaborative situations. It goes like this, “Together Everyone Achieves Miracles.” The key word in this phrase is, “together.” NC Cooperative Extension has the word, “Cooperative” in our name. Your program is enhanced by building good relationships with other local organizations who share common program goals. For instance, there are several organizations within a county who may be addressing the goal of decreasing the risk of childhood overweight and obesity. Within your own office, this could include the 4-H Agent and staff, the Horticulture Agent (community gardens) and the CRD Agent (developing safe places for physical activity). Additionally, the Health Department, School System, Hospital and likely many other organizations would share this goal. One of the best things you can do to reach a large goal is to work alongside local partners to address the issue from a multitude of directions. By working with these local partners, you are able to establish yourself as the resident expert in programmatic and instructional design as well as the local link to the university system and its research. A few tips for successful collaborations are:

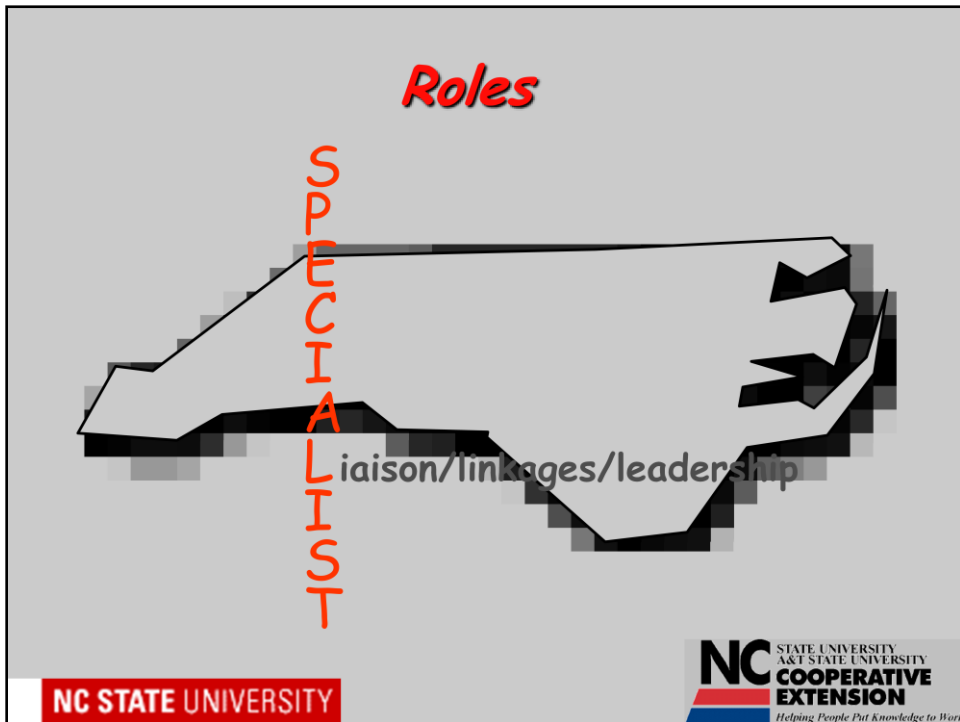
1. Clearly articulate the roles of each member of a collaborative team. This prevents competition and also enables both you and your partners to clearly articulate to local officials the importance of your specific role.
2. Meet regularly to share resources, provide updates, and to plan strategies. If you facilitate these meetings, be sure everyone feels they have taken back something from the meeting that will help them to achieve their own goals within the partnership. Be sure all feel they had input. Establish a relationship that makes all partners equal.
3. Share the success and share the blame. Everyone should get credit for the success and everyone should share blame for failed efforts.
4. Monitor progress and plan reports to local officials and/or the press together. This same scenario works on the state level and the state specialist can bring a statewide perspective into play to enhance the impact of the efforts. In fact the state specialist may ask you to join a statewide effort which includes collaborations at both levels.



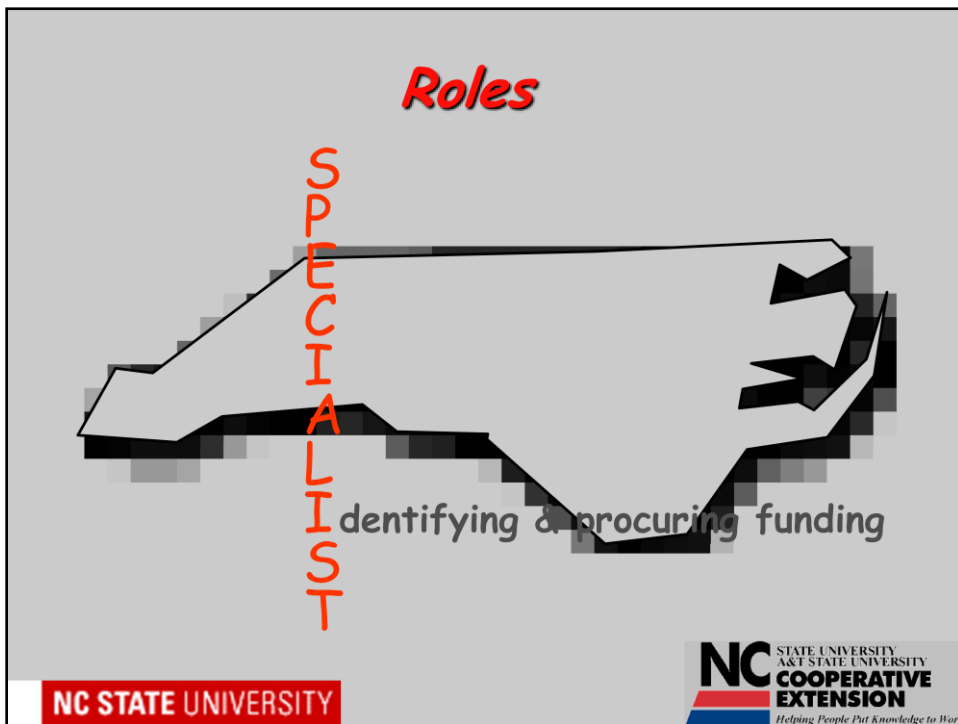
Impacts are the actual outcomes of your work...the knowledge gained, the behaviors changed, etc. Impacts can only be achieved through careful program planning and evaluation. An impact is NOT the number of people who attended an event. The number of people attending is outreach, but not impact. Both are important, but we are in the business of changing lives so we should be implementing strategies that go beyond awareness to actually encouraging real behavior changes. The impacts you achieve are reported locally to county government and others. The impacts you achieve, in a real sense, help to build support for continued funding of your position. In the same manner, your impacts as well as the other county's impacts are used by state specialists to report to State and Federal partners for the same purpose. These impacts are our statement to our stakeholders that we have accomplished what we said we would do. In other words, that they are getting their money's worth. This is critical information at both levels.



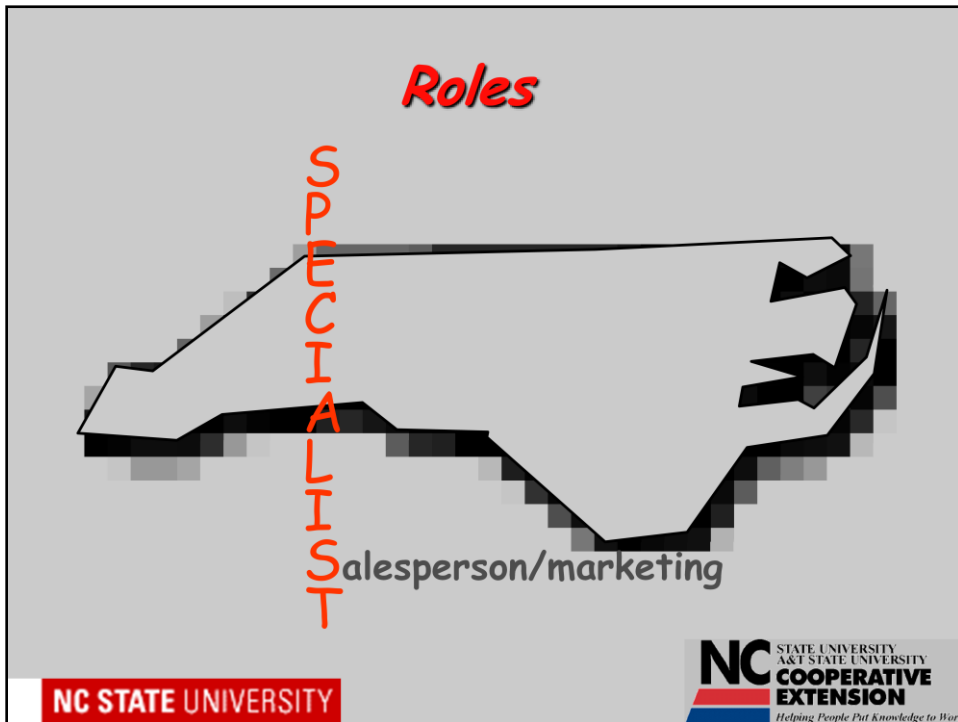
From county to county, advisory boards look a little different. Some counties encourage sub-committees and some counties encourage a single overall Extension Advisory. Regardless of which system is implemented in your county, it is important for FCS to have representation. You should have at least one representative for each of the major areas of focus. For example, if your county's plan includes Nutrition and Health, EFNEP, Financial Management and ECA, your local advisory should have a representative that will speak to the local needs in these areas. Although EFNEP is a part of Nutrition and Health programming, it is specific to a limited resource audience. If you have SNAP-Ed then you need a representative for this limited resource audience also. Limited resource audiences are often under-represented in Advisory Boards. There is a State Advisory Board that works to advise the state level of Extension in much the same way as the counties operate.



You are the liaison and link to NC State and NC A & T State universities and the national land-grant system in your county. You are also the leader for your organization and many times for the total county in FCS programming. This is a prestigious role and comes with a high level of responsibility. Your programming should reflect that you are a part of NC State and NC A & T State University and it should demonstrate a connection to the wealth of research our land-grant system provides. The state specialist has this same role at the state and national and sometimes international levels. If you need guidance in this area in your county, contact the appropriate state specialist for assistance.

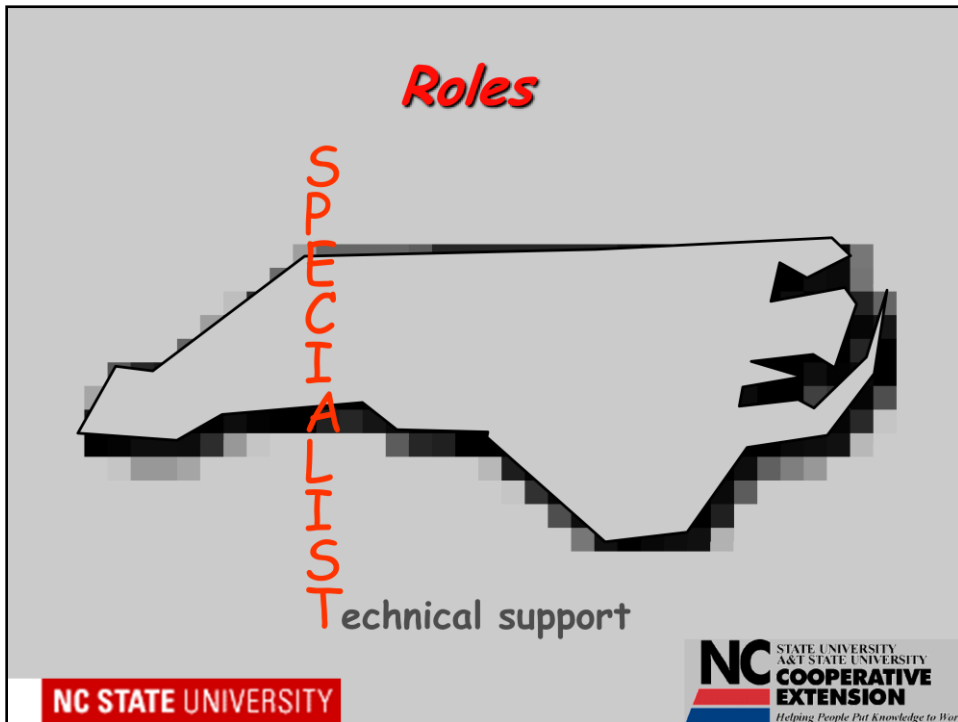


As with anything else, no one will plant a money tree for you to utilize for program implementation. Programs require funding to be successful and it will be your job to seek appropriate avenues of funding to support your work. Appropriate avenues include local grants or money secured from local partners. It may even mean state or federal grants, but you should consult with a State Specialist prior to venturing down this path. This means that grant writing is a skill you need to have in your arsenal. Additionally, you need to be prepared to express your needs each year to your CED for inclusion in the county budget request. Find out the time frame for your county. Although most requests occur in the early part of the year, the time frame varies greatly from one county to the next. One thing's for sure, "If you don't ask, you won't receive. If you do ask, you might receive." Look for other ways to support your county programming as well. For instance, if you are doing an energy conservation program, contact the local energy provider and ask if they have any items that can be used to demonstrate conservation. They may offer you both exhibits and tools for demonstration as well as giveaways for participants. The state specialists are always seeking funding and can be a great source of funding in particular areas and can be of help in honing in your grant writing skills and also in giving you ideas of where to seek funding.



You are the marketer for your program. This means that when people see you, they see the program. That's the first thing to remember. In this position, there is very little anonymity. You represent your program, your office, the organization and the university. Marketing involves putting your best foot forward everyday...in responding to emails, to phone calls, in meeting appointments, etc. It also includes publicizing your program events through a variety of venues: the internet, newspaper, radio and local TV. Print materials should be polished and should include the organization's logo.

Marketing is creating awareness to a level that people look to you and to Cooperative Extension for education in your program areas. State specialists are also viewed in the same light and may be willing to share some experiences that might be of help to you in this area. So much is about marketing...if that weren't so then the business community would not put so many dollars there.



Often, there are opportunities for you to provide technical support for other programs within the county. Let's say the horticulture agent was trying to get farmers to grow a new type of vegetable. Farmers state that they don't want to grow this vegetable because no one knows how to cook it. The horticulture agent may come to you for technical support. You could help research the nutritional benefits of including the vegetable as a part of a healthy diet, show how the vegetable can be prepared and offer both recipes and tasting at a local Farmers' Market event. The horticulture agent in turn can provide the technical support for your nutrition program by helping schools to establish community gardens and increasing vegetable consumption among youth. State specialists also use this same tactic to enhance their own and other's programming.

## ***Roles of County Agents (Specialist-in-Residence) and State Specialists***

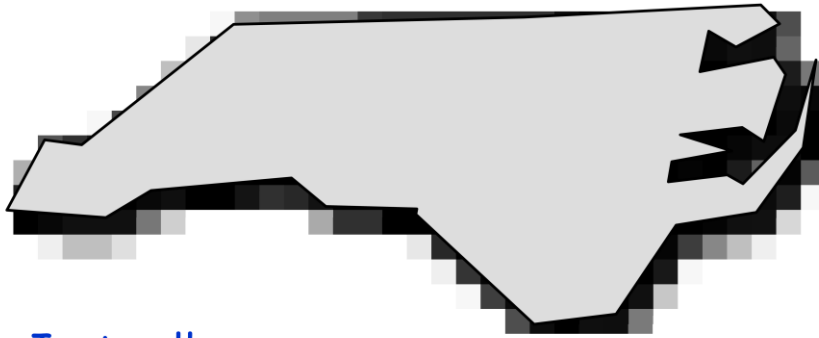
**S**ubject matter  
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As we wrap up you can again see all the roles in this slide. You have an awesome but noble and exciting task ahead of you. We hope you will take advantage of your partnership with each other and with the state specialists to make Extension shine and help the people of North Carolina live their lives to the fullest.

*Questions?*



Just call....

Lorelei Jones and Jackie McClelland

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. Now we have discussed the roles of the county agents and the state specialists. We hope we have helped you in your endeavor to be the best Agent you can be. If you have questions, don't hesitate to give us a call.