

Keeping Texas Prepared: The Extension Agent Network

89th Legislature: Priority Request

TEXAS A&M
AGRILIFE
EXTENSION

Objective

Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service requests support from the 89th Legislature to invest in increased personnel to address the educational programming demands of population growth in Texas. Through the combined strength of our Disaster Assessment & Recovery (DAR) Unit and the Extension Agent Network, our agency operates as a conduit of information and a force multiplier to counties and communities in times of crises, such as COVID-19, flooding, hurricanes, and wildfires.

Challenges facing Texas communities

- Community resiliency and preparedness.
- Effective coordination and collaboration between local and state government during disasters.
- Increased demand for preventive health education.
- Unmet workforce development needs.
- A rapid increase in land fragmentation across the state.

Serving Texans When & Where They Need Us

Through our subject-matter expertise and role in the Land-Grant mission of the Texas A&M University System, we are committed to innovative science-based solutions and education at the intersection of health, agriculture and environment.

With a presence in all 254 Texas counties, AgriLife Extension has embedded local teams in the communities they serve, which positions our DAR Unit to offer one of the most unique and effective disaster response infrastructures nationwide.

Our agents and specialists are looked toward as a multi-discipline resource in every Texas county and are asked to serve Texans on thousands of topics and data points that support our agricultural producers and stakeholders. We also face overwhelming demand for Family & Community Health programming.

STRENGTHEN TEXAS COMMUNITIES

Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service provides training, resources, and educational programs to bring Texans the latest research in agriculture, natural resources, and life sciences. A member of The Texas A&M University System, AgriLife Extension advances the land-grant mission of research, teaching and extension.

\$19.7 million

Over the biennium



Benefits to Texans

Anticipated Outcomes: Next Two Years



Full implementation of the agency's Disaster Assessment & Recovery agents and area chiefs across the State of Texas Regional Council of Governments (COGs) and disaster districts.



More subject-matter specialists and experts to provide educational outreach in agricultural and human health needs.



A new central hub for mapping development and demographic data to enhance statewide communication and build resiliency strategies that address land usage, growth, and disaster preparedness.

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Statewide Educational Leadership



For more than 100 years, Extension has been committed to delivering educational programs and services through a statewide network of agents and specialists. Over 90% of our annual budget directly supports this network of professional educators. Expanding agents and programs in growing areas will ensure continued access to essential education, while strengthening specialist roles and updating vehicles will enhance our ability to serve the diverse needs of individuals, families, businesses, and communities across Texas.



More programs in high growth communities



Expert personnel



Vehicle replacements



Connectivity and resiliency strategies

KEEPING TEXAS PREPARED

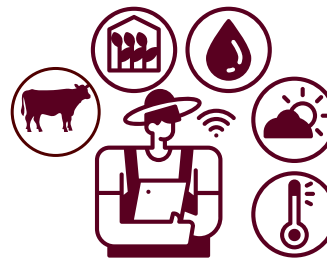
THE TEXAS A&M UNIVERSITY SYSTEM

As part of the Texas A&M University System's Keeping Texas Prepared Initiative, our DAR Unit was partially expanded by the 88th Texas Legislature and supported with funds for competitive salaries. However, we still face critical personnel gaps in addressing the demands of Texas' growth as we work to leverage the DAR Unit with support from our County Extension Agents, who serve as a force multiplier resource during crises like COVID-19, hurricanes, and wildfires. The agent network at full force would enable more effective communication and assistance to local government across the state during disaster.

Agency support for the historic Land-Grant Mission

Increase County Agents for a High Growth State

Rapid population growth and land development raises the demand for our agency's educational programs in Texas agriculture, human health, youth development and county emergency preparedness and stretches our agent's capacity to serve their communities.



Bolster Specialists and Programming

Subject matter experts in our agency's core agricultural and health programming are also a crucial part of the Keeping Texas Prepared Initiative and to promote new technologies and research to Texans.

Vehicle Replacement

New vehicles to support programming needs and the DAR Unit.

Create Office of State Geographer

A statewide analysis hub for development trends and demographics to provide accurate data to state and local leaders on land usage and population growth, economic opportunity, disaster preparedness, and mitigation efforts.

Takeaways

- +** A full realignment of DAR Unit personnel provides capacity and force multiplier resources to all Texas communities.
- +** Statewide connectivity and resiliency strategies for emergency response and resiliency help to protect our state's agricultural economy and landowners.
- +** Texas residents demand our state's own research-based programming as alternatives to inaccurate and biased information from social media and foreign interests.

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