

Website Ambassador - Pilot

The website ambassador program objective is to formalize and extend a process that is already happening informally in different regions throughout the state. County staff members with the needed website editing expertise are providing training and support to new county staff members within the first few days or weeks of employment. This allows new staff members to adjust more quickly to their role as a website editor for Extension and Outreach and gives them someone within their region to call on for support. Ambassadors could also be shared across regions.

Objectives

To help new staff get the face-to-face training on website editing in a timely manner so that they can more easily complete their job duties right away, without having to wait for a campus led training opportunity. This would not replace the self-guided courses for editor training but be used as a way to enhance the learning. The Ambassador would also be a first line of support within their region for issues.

Description of Expectations

A website ambassador must be a current web editor, have experience in more advanced web editing steps, regularly follow branding and accessibility requirements and have the ability to work well with staff on one-on-one training. The ambassador should be willing to lead, have good communication skills and be willing to take initiative.

Expectations of Website Ambassador would include:

1. Training new staff members on website editing best practices
2. Attending (virtually or in person) training from EIT – frequency to be determined, in person training will be attempted during other gatherings such as Annual Conference, Office Professionals Conference, etc. so as not to require another trip to campus
3. Helping editors to troubleshoot issues
4. Communicating with EIT about problems or concerns
5. Working with EIT and Advancement to ensure best practices, branding and accessibility guidelines are being followed
6. We would encourage Regional Directors to consider allowing ambassadors access to all county websites in their region so that they are able to fill in for other counties when needed
7. Keep region/county up-to-date on website information that might be shared from EIT

Commitment

Each Region will have two open website ambassador positions. One position will be for a one-year term (this will renew to a two-year term) and one will be for a two-year term. If agreed to by the ambassador, Regional Director, county council and EIT, ambassadors can renew their position when their term expires.

Time commitment of ambassadors is expected to be approximately 2-3 hours for each new content editor staff member but will be split between the two ambassadors appointed in each region.

Benefits to County

Benefits to the county hosting an ambassador include many different aspects for a limited time commitment from the ambassador. These include helping staff members feel more comfortable in their content editor roles quicker (making sure that websites are kept current during staff transitions), training for new staff can be completed within the first few days of hire with ambassadors located in-house, direct communication and updates from EIT (a better communication process), ambassadors will be able to take a leadership role and report directly to staff and council members regarding upcoming changes, etc.

Expenses

The county that houses the ambassador will not charge for any of the services that ambassador renders to other counties or regions. Should travel expenses need to be paid, they will be incurred by the county with the new staff member that needs to be trained (whether the new staff member goes to the ambassador or vice versa).

Selection Process

County staff will nominate a current web editor in their region that they feel best fits the expectation requirements of a website ambassador. Upon close of the nomination process, the Regional Director and county council members will approve the selection of two staff members for the open ambassador positions.

Evaluation

This is a pilot program. Effectiveness of the program will be rated by number of support calls and emails coming into EIT and by the use of surveys throughout the process of both ambassadors and new staff members that have benefitted from the ambassador program.

Timeline and Communication Plan

The announcement and nomination process will take place before the county website transitions start, that way ambassadors are in place during this process to help facilitate conversations.

- Bob Dodds to present pilot program at Leadership Team
- Present to the IA Extension Council Association (next meeting is June 23rd) and request their help in presenting to the Extension Councils.
- Present idea to Regional Directors
- Present idea to Extension Councils
- Present idea to Advancement Specialists
- Present idea to county staff
- Open nominations

Training

EIT already provides in depth user guides and courses for training materials. This training includes required self-guided courses. Each editor receives a certificate of completion towards their professional development goals once they have completed the training. The meetings and trainings with ambassadors will include more

detailed and advanced how-to instructions. It will also be an avenue for communication regarding updates from EIT or a place where ambassadors can share ideas across county lines and ask questions.

Contacts

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