The responsibilities and authority of the County Extension Board comes from Arizona House Bill #2125 as approved by the Arizona Legislature in 1974 and as amended by the House Engrossed Senate Bill 1306 passed and approved by the Governor in 1986. The scope of the Board's authority is clearly stated in the Arizona Revised Statutes, Title 3, Agriculture and Dairying, Chapter I: Agriculture Administration; Article 3: Agricultural Extension Work. The statutes, with revisions, read:

TITLE 3
AGRICULTURE AND DAIRYING
CHAPTER 1 - Agricultural Administration
Article 3. Agricultural Extension Work

§ 3-124. County agricultural extension board; members; appointment; tenure; qualifications; office space

A. The board of supervisors of each county shall appoint seven persons, who are residents of the county, to a county agricultural extension board, four of whom have as their principal business the production of agricultural commodities, and the other three of whom shall be representative of organizations or persons who utilize the county agricultural extension services.

B. Each member shall be appointed for a term of two years. Members shall serve without compensation. Added Laws 1974, Ch. 90, § 2.

Former § 3-124, which contained the same subject matter as this section, was repealed by Laws 1974, Ch. 90, § 1, effective August 9, 1974.

Reviser’s Note: Laws 1974, Chapter 90 which repealed a prior version of Section 3-124 and added the above section provided in Section 5 as follows:

"Any person holding office as a member of a county agricultural extension board on the effective date of this act shall retain office until the expiration of the term for which he was appointed."

C. The board of supervisors of each county shall provide reasonable office space for the conduct of extension work in that county.

§ 3-124. Revised and approved April 1986
§ 3-126. Annual county agricultural extension budget; tax levy; collection; expenditures

A. The Arizona board of regents shall have prepared for each county an annual financial budget covering the total cost including the county's share of the cost of the extension work which, if adopted by a majority vote of the respective county agricultural extension board at a regular called meeting, shall be submitted to the board of supervisors of the county who shall place such amount of such budget as the board of supervisors shall approve on the tax rolls of the county for the ensuing year.

B. The amount placed on the tax rolls shall be raised by direct taxation.

C. The taxes, when collected, shall be transmitted by the county treasurer upon warrant drawn by the board of supervisors to the comptroller of The University of Arizona and shall be expended upon claims drawn by the board of regents.

D. All money raised by taxation by a county shall be expended for the use and benefit of that county. As amended Laws 1974, Ch. 90, § 3.

§ 3-127. Repealed. Laws 1974, Ch. 90, § 4., eff. Aug. 9, 1974

These legislated responsibilities require decision making critical to the success of the entire Extension program. Board members must have close, continuous contact with the county faculty. They need the opportunity to observe, question, judge and participate in all facets of the county program.

Duties

Based on the 1974 legislation, the duties of County Extension Board members are:

A. Approve annually the county Extension budget, submitted to Extension Board by the County Director. This budget covers all funds expended for Extension work in the county.

This is done at a meeting where the County Director presents a statement showing the previous year's expenditures for Extension and the proposed budget for the coming fiscal year. The Extension Board will determine the amount of county funds requested as that county's appropriation for support of Extension work.

This work, when signed by a representative of the Extension Board, is submitted by the Extension Board Chair and/or the County Director to the County Board of Supervisors for consideration and approval.

B. Approve the Annual County Plan of Work. This is a summary or outline of the major educational programs planned by Extension faculty with the help of their local advisory groups.
C. Approve the annual report of Extension work in the county. (Although this report is not prepared in written form in every county, other reports, oral and written, are made to the Board on a regular basis.)

Roles

The County Extension Board plays a major role in effecting a strong, well-balanced, county Extension program. This contribution is done in concert with local Extension faculty and may take many forms:

A. Evaluating educational programs requested by local advisory groups. Board members should review the major educational programs requested by local advisory groups. The Board suggest changes if these programs are, in the opinion of the Board, too ambitious, too limited, ignore needs of other audiences in the county, or are unsatisfactory for other reasons.

B. Finalizing program priorities as a basis for a county Plan of Work. The county Extension faculty presents possible priorities. The Board may suggest others. In setting priorities, Cooperative Extension is interested in involving a broad-based, representative county group which may include commodity groups, 4-H councils, homemaker clubs and community development groups. The purpose of this discussion is to build Extension/educational program priorities that are based on needs of local people.

C. Recommending increased faculty or staff positions. The Board may propose another county faculty position to meet the educational needs of local people. The request is via letter to the Director of Cooperative Extension. It must offer sound reasons justifying the need. Such requests will be given serious consideration within available budgeted funds.

The Board may suggest an additional staff person be added to the office classified staff pool. They may approach the Board of Supervisors for the additional funding needed.

Fiscal Support

All county governments in Arizona provide rent-free space to the local office of the Cooperative Extension Service. Some offices are housed in the county courthouse or other county-owned or leased buildings.

Utilities for most county office are paid for by county governments. Some telephone services are paid by The University of Arizona.

The University of Arizona asks each county government to improve County Extension offices to reflect the high professional standards of men and women who work in them.
Funds from the University of Arizona for buying new or replacement capital items are limited. At times when needed equipment for county offices cannot be purchased from Extension funds, the county Extension Board may be helpful in securing it from the county or city government, or other sources.

Space for public meetings is often not readily available in some communities. Extension Boards may be helpful in gaining cooperation of schools, churches and fraternal organizations to make their facilities available to Extension faculty for educational meetings.

Meetings

Extension Boards in concert with the County Extension Director should decide how often they meet. Most County Extension Boards will meet quarterly. A chair should be elected by the Board to preside at meetings and to sign the annual budget on behalf of the Board. These meetings are excellent means of keeping informed on county Extension programs.

Here is a sample agenda:

A. Oral reports from one or more Agents on work completed, in progress, or planned.
B. Committee progress reports.
C. Budget and Plan of Work (a matter of business once per year by law and at other times as needed).
D. Research needed in Agriculture, Family and Consumer Sciences, 4-H Youth Development, or Community Leadership and Resource Development.
E. Legislation affecting Extension work.
F. Needs of county Extension offices (equipment, space, staff).
G. Such other business as the Board may wish to discuss.

Duties of the Chair of the Extension Board

This Chair plays a key role in the county Extension program by setting the stage for Extension Board activities and involvement. Some duties are:

A. Calls meetings of Board and sees that each member is notified through County Extension Office.
B. Prepares agenda for Board meetings. (May ask County Extension Director to help.)
C. Presides at Board meetings, encouraging and contributing to participation and discussion.
D. Recommends replacement members for the Board to the county Board of Supervisors who appoint members.
E. Oversees rotation of board members after they have served their two-year term.
F. Assists new Board members in understanding duties.
G. Appoints ad hoc committee chairs and assists in selection of members and explains committee duties.
H. Makes other specific assignments for such tasks as recording secretary.
I. Signs and submits County Extension budget on behalf of the Extension Board.