

# Capturing Statistical Contacts for Virtual Extension Programs

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Statistical contact refers to the number of participants in your program. It also comprises other information related to the individuals who receive or engage with educational program through Extension. The Kentucky Cooperative Extension System documents two categories of statistical contacts: direct and indirect. Below are information on reporting statistical contact in a virtual setting.

## Direct Contacts

These are the individuals that participate in your program. You are able to exchange educational information with these individuals. The primary indication is that you are able to identify (race, gender, youth, adults, etc.) and quantify these individuals. However, it may be difficult to identify program participants in a virtual setting. Some participants join your program without enabling their video and some other online platforms do not have concurrent video options for all participants (e.g. Instagram). How then do we capture direct contacts in virtual settings?

- Ask program participants to sign-in using chat and comment boxes. These are available on almost all social media platforms and web conferencing Apps. You can later retrieve these numbers to report them as direct contacts.
- Choose “cannot be determined” in KERS when you cannot specify the race/ethnicity of your program participants.
- If you are unable to specify gender, KERS will allow you to report the numbers as indirect contacts.

- Comments made on your programmatic Facebook and Instagram posts can be counted as direct contacts when they are identifiable by gender.
- Educational information exchanged through emails and text messages can be counted as direct contacts when they are identifiable by gender. One way to go about this is to send a short customer satisfaction survey (this will include demographic questions that you will need for KERS reporting) to clients after their meeting with you via email or phone.
- Include demographic questions in program registration forms to enable you capture and identify program participants.



- Number of post shares can be documented as direct contact if you are able to identify who shared the post. The underlying assumption is that the individual who shares your educational post must have had a deep engagement with the post before recommending to others.

**\*For KERS reporting, individuals who are identifiable by race and gender are considered direct contacts.**

## Indirect Contacts

Indirect contacts are the number of individuals who have come in contact with your educational information but cannot be identified or you do not have a specific knowledge of who they are. Some scenarios for documenting indirect contacts in virtual settings are below.

- If you are moderating a webinar for a fellow agent who is presenting, the number of attendees are your indirect contacts.
- Impressions including likes, dislikes, emojis on Facebook, Instagram, and other virtual platforms are considered indirect contacts.
- If you have recorded a video on program topics, include number of views as indirect contacts when it is difficult to identify the specific individuals who viewed the video. This is one of the challenges of documenting statistical contacts in virtual settings.

**\*For KERS reporting, Individuals you cannot identify, especially by gender, are considered indirect contacts.**

Although indirect contacts are often more than direct contacts in virtual settings, they still help us communicate our program reach to stakeholders and funding agencies. Indirect contacts, direct contacts, and success stories help us capture a holistic impact of our program.



## Reference

The Monthly Statistical Report. (May, 2020). Retrieved from University of Kentucky [https://psd.ca.uky.edu/fies/submitting\\_statistical\\_report.pdf](https://psd.ca.uky.edu/fies/submitting_statistical_report.pdf)