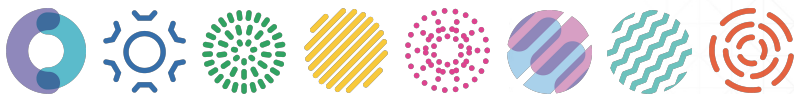


2026-2028 Plan of Work



Lifelong Learning. Lifelong Impact.

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Planning ahead is how we make sure our communities thrive. This Unit Plan of Work is our roadmap for action for the next three years. It helps Illinois Extension focus on what matters most—supporting families, farmers, and neighborhoods—while using time and resources wisely.

The plan is built on local input and real data, so every goal reflects the needs and priorities of the people we serve. By setting clear targets, building strong partnerships, and creating programs that make a difference, we can measure progress and celebrate success.

This process also keeps us accountable and transparent, showing our stakeholders exactly how we plan to strengthen agriculture, health, and community life across Adams, Brown, Hancock, Pike, and Schuyler counties.

Strategic Priorities and Themes

Illinois Extension recently completed a strategic planning process to help guide the organization over the coming years and better serve the numerous and diverse communities across the state. As part of the strategic plan, six new strategic priorities were introduced, each with specific themes intended to guide programs and partnerships. For our local Plan of Work, the priorities and themes were selected based on interviews and conversations with key stakeholders across the three counties, as well as a review of secondary data sources to affirm what was learned from the interviews. The local priorities and themes selected were:

Community

Supporting strong and resilient youth, families, and communities

- Involvement and Service
- Natural Resources
- Physical Health and Safety
- Resilient Communities
- Skilled Leaders
- Thriving Youth

Economy

Growing a prosperous economy through lifelong learning and development

- Financial Well-Being
- Workforce Readiness and Development

Environment

Sustain and restore natural resources in home and public spaces

- Healthy Plants and Landscapes
- Natural Resources
- Thriving Youth

Food and Agriculture

Maintain a safe and accessible food, fibers, and biofuel supply

- Crop and Livestock Production
- Food Access
- Food Systems
- Healthy Plants and Landscapes
- Thriving Youth

Health

Maximize health equity and access and support health promotion

- Mental Health and Emotional Well-Being
- Physical Health and Safety
- Quality of Life

Technology and Discovery

Integrate research, technology, and engagement to close opportunity gaps and build capacity

- Digital Literacy

Programs and Partnerships

For each priority and theme selected, we have specified the staff, partnerships, and programs that will help us focus on meeting the goals of each priority. This is not just a snapshot of present times, but a look forward to future plans that we will work towards over the next three years. These lists are not meant to be final or definitive, but rather a starting point for continuing existing partnerships and creating new partnerships.

Community

Programs: Ag in the Classroom; Facilitation and Coordination of 4-H shows (each county), Facilitation of 4-H Federation Clubs (each county); Junior Master Naturalist, Library Programs, Nature School Field Trips, JDUB Academy; Fresh Air - Healthy Minds; Real Colors; Ripple Effects; Western Illinois Leadership Academy

Staff: Amy Lefringhouse, Dawn Weinberg, Jennifer Shelts, Kinsey Tiemann, Kristin Huls, Madeline Davis, Shelby Crow, and Siera Duesterhaus

Economy

Programs: Ready for Work, Real Colors, Welcome to the Real World, Youth Leadership Academy

Staff: Jennifer Shelts, Kristin Huls, Madeline Davis, Shelby Crow, and Siera Duesterhaus

Environment

Programs: Ag in the Classroom, Conservation and Natural Resource Management courses (John Wood Community College), Everyday Environment Series (Webinar, Podcast, Blog, and Videos), Illinois Master Gardener, Illinois Master Naturalist, Illinois Oak Tree Savannas, Illinois Watershed Stewards, Junior Master Naturalist, Fresh Air - Healthy Minds, Your Land - Your Legacy

Staff: Amy Lefringhouse, Dawn Weinberg, Jennifer Shelts, Kinsey Tiemann, Madeline Davis, Shelby Crow, and Siera Duesterhaus

Food and Agriculture

Programs: Ag in the Classroom, Annie's Project, Illinois Master Gardener, Teacher Professional Development Workshops

Staff: Amy Lefringhouse, Dawn Weinberg, Kinsey Tiemann, and Shelby Crow

Health

Programs: Mindful Me, 4-H Cooking 101, Illinois Food Challenge, Fresh Air - Healthy Minds, Ride Right Rally

Staff: Amy Lefringhouse, Jennifer Shelts, Kristin Huls, Madeline Davis, Shelby Crow, and Siera Duesterhaus

Technology and Discovery

Programs: 4-H Welding, Electricity, and STEM Workshops

Staff: Jennifer Shelts, Kristin Huls, Madeline Davis, and Siera Duesterhaus



Illinois Extension
UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS URBANA-CHAMPAIGN

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