



2019-2020

Addressing Local Needs, Solving Global Challenges



Illinois Extension
UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS URBANA-CHAMPAIGN

Coles, Cumberland, Douglas,
Moultrie, & Shelby Counties



Applying a Local Lens to Statewide Issues

University of Illinois was established as part of the land grant system to provide world-class education, pioneer research, and put learning and discovery into practice to benefit the health and wellbeing of the state's residents and communities.

Extension is built on a local community framework, but our educators and specialists are part of a statewide network of Extension professionals. They work every day to improve the lives of Illinois residents and bring stability and innovation to businesses and communities.

This statewide network of educators, faculty experts, and staff are dedicated to the mission of aligning research to needs and translating that research into action plans. Their work allows Illinois youth, families, businesses, producers, and community leaders to solve problems, make informed decisions, and adapt to changes and opportunities. Educators in local units contribute to statewide efforts in their expert content area. In turn, local units benefit from these collaborative efforts and high-quality resources.

Through input from internal and external stakeholders, Extension focuses on statewide priorities in five core areas: community, economy, environment, food, and health. This blend of long-range focus, shared expertise, and local accountability is a powerful strategy that ensures we stay true to our mission while we tailor our programming to meet local community needs.

Illinois Extension's Grand Challenge Framework

Community Support Strong and Resilient Youth, Families, and Communities

- Thriving Youth
- Connectedness and Inclusion
- Involvement and Leadership

Economy Grow a Prosperous Economy

- Economic Vitality
- Financial Wellbeing
- Workforce Preparedness/Advancement

Environment Sustain Natural Resources in Home and Public Spaces

- Enhancing and Preserving Natural Resources
- Engagement with Home and Community Landscape

Food Maintain a Safe and Accessible Food Supply

- Food Access
- Food Production
- Food Safety

Health Maximize Physical and Emotional Health for All

- Chronic Disease Prevention and Management
- Social and Emotional Health
- Healthy and Safe Environments

Hallmarks of strong, resilient communities include residents who feel connected, have a strong sense of belonging, and appreciate the diversity represented in their neighborhoods. These communities often experience lower rates of violence and offer a higher quality of life. Research has shown that civically engaged youth are more likely to contribute to their communities as adults. Illinois Extension activities play a pivotal role in designing strategies to sustain a leadership pipeline, discovering opportunities for volunteers to actively engage in meeting local needs, and supporting development of robust community networks.



COMMUNITY

25	1	1,008	178	\$468,210
Program Attendance	Educational Session	4-H Club Memberships	Total Volunteers Engaged*	Volunteer Value**

* Total Master Gardener, Master Naturalist, and 4-H volunteers.
 ** Based on the Independent Sector 2019 rate of \$27.98 per hour.

Illinois Extension focuses on the following priorities as the foundation of strong and resilient youth, families, and communities.



Connectedness and Inclusion

A sense of community brings people together to support each other and overcome threats to survival and growth. Accepting and celebrating our differences is essential for creating environments where all voices are important and heard. Thriving families and communities are supported by a diverse and deep pool of community members and organizations.



Involvement and Leadership

Community pride soars when residents who volunteer, advocate, contribute, or lead see themselves as part of the solutions to local issues. Decision-makers can best enhance community vitality and improve the quality of life in both rural and urban areas when equipped with the skills and research-based information.



Thriving Youth

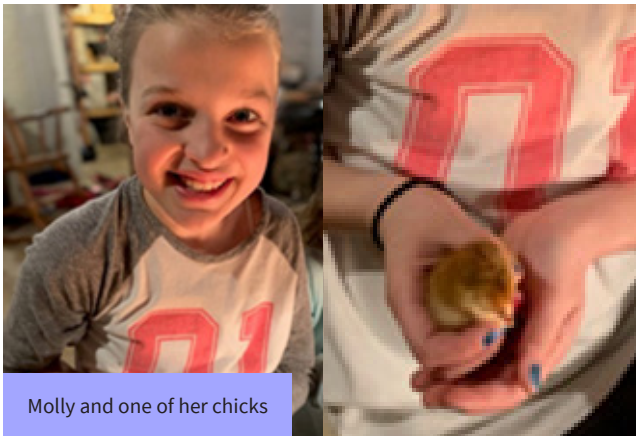
Thriving youth are the core of healthy, robust communities. Our mentorship-based youth development model applies a holistic development framework. It focuses on social competence, academic success, career development, and community connection. The 4-H club experience creates opportunities and environments for all youth to thrive, today and tomorrow.



Thriving Youth Local Program Success Stories

Cumberland County 4-H Brings Encouragement and Joy to New Member Family

Molly is a special young lady with a passion for all animals. Facing medical complications early in life, this youth has already proven herself to be determined and resilient. In 2020, Molly’s family enrolled her in 4-H sheep and poultry projects. Her mom, Maria, said, “Her older brother is 16 and he is a huge help. Her other two siblings love animals, so these 4-H projects bring joy to the entire family.” Molly’s first year was nothing short of amazing. She received the Outstanding Livestock Record and the Animals Sciences Medal of Honor for her age group. She even won a sheep from the Win-an-Animal Contest. Molly’s 4-H leader, Phil Walk, made a big impact on her first year, teaching Molly and her family everything about sheep. Losing that support person, when Phil passed away last fall, was another great challenge for Molly, but one that she’s facing with that same resilient determination. No matter the obstacles placed in her path, Molly always comes out smiling on the other side. Cumberland County 4-H is honored to count her and her family among its member community.



Molly and one of her chicks



Multi-County Livestock Workshop

The inaugural Multi-County Livestock Workshop was held in February at Okaw Valley High School. Thirty-eight 4-Hers from Moultrie-Douglas, Coles, and Shelby counties, along with 25 guests, gathered in the agriculture building to learn about beef, swine, sheep, and goats. Okaw Valley Ag Teacher Wes Wise focused his presentations on feeding, caring for, and fitting livestock.

Coldspring Copperheads 4-H Club members packing Pride Packages to be sent to soldiers in December 2019



Coldspring 4-H Club Leader Lola Thompson emphasizes the value and importance of community service activities.

Community service is important to myself and the club because I feel it assesses and fills needs in our communities where youth can find a passion and leadership to help others. In 4-H, we pledge to use our hands to greater service, and I find that many new relationships are formed when our club reaches out. I strive to get members to think about what changes they can make in their communities, and I find the members enjoy giving their time and/or money to a worthy cause of their choosing. Becoming a volunteer at a young age creates compassionate and caring adults.

LOLA THOMPSON, 4-H CLUB LEADER



In December, Coles and Cumberland County 4-H teamed up for a virtual holiday workshop. Members, participating via Zoom, were guided through several holiday-themed crafts, including a snowman, snowflake, and a 4-H ornament. One grateful parent wrote, “My daughters attended the 4-H holiday craft workshop. They loved it!! Thank you so much for offering this for them. It was wonderful and we appreciated it so much. You were very patient with them and explained everything so well!! I hope there are more workshops like this! Thanks again!”



Thriving Youth Local Program Success Stories

What started as a single design project, grew to be much more! Two years ago, Victor Walk, Cumberland County 4-Her, created a lamp using metal he collected from around his family’s farm as an interior design project. That activity lit a spark and Victor continued exploring his new passion in 2020, ingeniously turning a World War II radio box into a desk.



Victor Walk and his WWII interior design project

Informational Health and Living Booth at the Pana Hospital Health Fair

First-year Oconee Eager Beavers Leader Andrea Schafer shares why she became a leader.

“I became a 4-H leader because I saw the positive impact [4-H] has had on my daughter, Claire. In addition, it is fun! I think I enjoy planning and doing the project workshops and community service activities just as much, if not more than the kids. One of the things I love most about 4-H is that there are so many options for the kids to explore. Not everyone has to be good at, or enjoy the same things. They can explore different projects and find the one they love. As a leader, I hope to help our members find that project they love and have lots of fun along the way.”



Moultrie-Douglas County 4-H Virtual Fair 2020

In 2020, the Moultrie-Douglas 4-H Fair went virtual! Exhibits were photographed or videoed, and uploaded to a virtual fair page. Moultrie-Douglas 4-H members received 33 Grand Champion, 15 Reserve Champion, and 14 State Fair Delegate awards. We are proud of our 4-Hers!



Shelby County 4-H Federation collaborated with University of Illinois Extension serving Moultrie, Douglas, and Shelby counties and Shelby County Farm Bureau to provide Healthy Harvest Bags to Shelby County farmers. The federation packed 325 bags, which included a brochure about how to have a safe and healthy harvest, bottled water, Gatorade, and snacks. Thank you, farmers!

This is a very important project for Federation. We want the farmers to know that we appreciate all they do for the community. This is just a small token of our appreciation.
DELANEY NATION, FEDERATION PRESIDENT

The natural wonder of Illinois is more than just its beautiful scenery. The land provides recreation for residents and visitors, habitat for pollinators and wildlife, pastures for grazing livestock, fields for growing food, and the safe water that is essential for all living things. Threats to our land, air, and water can be managed with the identification, promotion, and adoption of environmentally sustainable policies and practices. Carefully developed green spaces and natural assets help youth and adults improve learning and enhance physical and mental wellness. Sound environmental and agricultural policies contribute to a sustainable and diverse environment, increase comfort, reduce government costs, and enhance property values.



ENVIRONMENT

1,676

Program Attendance

50

Educational Sessions

1

Online Learning Session

68

Trained Volunteers *

\$83,485

Volunteer Value **

41

Expert Consultations ***

* Total Master Gardener and Master Naturalist volunteers.

** Based on the Independent Sector 2019 rate of \$27.98 per hour.

*** Supporting home and natural environment inquiries.

Illinois Extension sustains natural resources in home and public spaces by focusing on these educational priorities.



Enhancing and Preserving Natural Resources

Water, land, and air quality have significant implications for our survival. These shared resources must be managed through ecological balance and sustainable practices. Our future depends on our ability to effectively steward these resources for generations to come.



Engagement with Home and Community Landscapes

There is growing evidence that exposure to plants and green spaces provides many benefits, like improved health, quality of life, concentration, and relationships. Sustainable home landscapes can net economic benefits to communities through increased property value. They also can create environmental benefits for all by supporting pollinators and other important contributors to ecosystems.



Environment Local Program Success Stories

Master Gardeners in 2020

In early 2020, Master Gardeners hosted the Spring Into Gardening Conference. More than 100 people attended to learn about tree care, nutrition and gardening, and farmers markets. The pandemic forced members to rethink some of their usual activities, but with a little creativity and a lot of determination, Master Gardeners were able to stay active and productive. Volunteers grew and donated 2,000 pounds of produce to food pantries and WIC recipients; launched a popular new series of youth gardening workshops; and dedicated many hours to writing articles, conducting research, and supporting the Hort Hotline. The annual Fall Plant Sale was held outdoors with social distancing protocols in place. The event featured mums, houseplants, native plants, and bulbs. There was also an Ask a Master Gardener booth, where attendees could get information and advice from gardening experts. Despite this year's differences, Master Gardeners remained active and made a difference in their communities!



2020 State Master Gardener Sustained Excellence Award winner, Beth Williamson from Shelby County



State Outstanding Master Gardener Award winner, Lee Wallace from Coles County



Boot Brush Station

Master Naturalists in 2020

Master Naturalists tackled several projects in 2020, including the installation of three boot brush stations at Fox Ridge State Park to help reduce the spread of invasive plant species. Stewardship activities, such as tree planting, plant identification, and invasive species removal, continued at Warbler Ridge, Douglas Hart Nature Center, and Whiteside Gardens throughout the year.

I appreciate the diverse opportunities to volunteer in my community, make new connections, learn more about nature and gardening, and share my passion!

DIANA GLOSSER
COLES COUNTY MASTER GARDENER

Advances in agricultural practice driven by research and technology have the dual benefit of improving production efficiency and reducing the environmental impact caused by the food production system. While our production is high, one in every nine Illinois households experience food insecurity, and its rise over the past 10 years significantly impacts the health and wellbeing of Illinois residents. Over 2 million Illinois residents rely on the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program for food assistance according to May 2020 totals from Illinois Department of Human Services, with a 14% spike in the latter half of the year associated with the effects of COVID-19.



FOOD

<p>410</p> <p>Educational Contacts</p> <p>Participants in all programs</p>	<p>14</p> <p>Educational Events</p> <p>Educational sessions offered</p>	<p>1</p> <p>Community Gardens</p> <p>Supported by Extension staff and volunteers</p>	<p>2,490</p> <p>Pounds Donated</p> <p>Volume of produce donated to local communities</p>	<p>\$3,586</p> <p>Value of Donated Food</p> <p>Based on average value of \$1.44 per pound</p>
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Illinois Extension supports a safe and accessible food supply by developing knowledge and educational programs in these areas.



Food Access

Issues with access and affordability of healthy food options can perpetuate chronic illness. Healthy people and communities require safe, nutritious, and abundant food and the education to make every food choice and every food dollar count.



Food Production

COVID-19 presented challenges never before realized: supply shortages from the closure of food and meat processing plants, shifted demand from the closure of restaurants and schools, and consumer fear over uncertain transmission of the virus.



Food Safety

COVID-19 created new areas of concern for consumers on food safety from eating and storing carryout foods and potential transmission on food packages to safely preserving foods grown in home gardens.



Food Access Local Program Success Stories

As the COVID-19 pandemic quickly took hold, SNAP-Ed staff shifted their focus to the most urgent need — increasing food access in the counties we serve. The team mobilized the many partnerships formed over the years with various community organizations to get help to those who needed it most.

SNAP-Ed worked with area food banks and Catholic Charities to provide 10 mobile food pantries, which provided more than 1,200 families and 5,000 individuals with a two-week supply of food.

The Arthur Produce Auction donated an incredible 23,137 pounds of fresh fruit and vegetables. SNAP-Ed staff worked quickly to distribute the produce to 22 food pantries, school summer feeding programs, and community meal providers.

SNAP-Ed also collaborated with Shelbyville Community Gardens to provide 473 pounds of produce to the Shelbyville United Methodist Church Food Pantry.



Food packaged for a drive-through mobile food pantry in Windsor.



More fresh produce donated by the Arthur Produce Auction.



Produce donated from the Arthur Produce Auction.

Thank you for your time and efforts in obtaining the wonderful produce for the people of our area. An Amish family came at the close of the day and took the remainder of the cucumbers because theirs were not producing.
ARLONE DOAN, ARTHUR METHODIST CHURCH COMMUNITY MEALS PROGRAM

Nationally, about 86% of annual health care spending is related to chronic disease with research suggesting that up to 80% of premature heart disease, stroke, and type 2 diabetes diagnoses could be prevented. There is clear evidence from health, nutrition, and behavioral research demonstrating the positive impact of research-based communication and outreach to promote physical, emotional, and mental health. With health disparities felt unevenly across Illinois communities, education and outreach efforts need to pay special attention toward surfacing and understanding trends impacting limited-resource populations.



HEALTH

12,256

Program Attendance

411

Educational Sessions

62

Online Learning Sessions

SNAP-Education Community Partnerships

7

K-12
Schools

8

Early Childhood
Centers

14

Agencies or
Community Centers

30

Emergency
Food Sites

Illinois Extension works to maximize physical and emotional health for all Illinois residents by focusing on these priorities.



Chronic Disease Prevention and Management

Chronic diseases prevention has collective benefits to all residents of Illinois, such as lower health care costs, increase employee productivity and morale, and decrease absenteeism.



Social and Emotional Health

COVID elevated a growing mental health crisis in the country. Extension has added resources and staff to address the growing need to provide hope and care for struggling individuals and families in the state.



Health and Safety Environments

From school lunchrooms and home-based settings, to 4-H club meetings and day care facilities, Extension is building safe, healthy, and inclusive learning environments.



Social and Emotional Health

Providing Education and Support for Caregivers

More than 41.8 million people in the U.S. are providing care for someone over the age of 50. It is often overwhelming and stressful and Extension’s family life educators want caregivers to know that they are not alone in these struggles.

Extension Educator Cheri Burcham and the family life team developed a six-part webinar series addressing many of the issues and challenges that caregivers face. Discover Caregiving Relationships was attended by 321 individuals from across the nation. Of the 119 participants who completed evaluations, 96% rated the webinars high or very high in terms of education, motivation, and support.

When asked what helped them most, participants said:

- “The acknowledgment that I am not the only one with these feelings about my caregiving situation and recognizing that it is normal. I also really appreciated the links to additional resources.”
- “Specific ways of asking for help. Take time for oneself, even if it is 15 minutes here, and 15 minutes there.”
- “Emotions will run the spectrum. Some things we can control, and those we cannot, accept results without guilt.”
- “Leaning into the positive aspects of being a caregiver. Forgiving yourself for mistakes due to caregiver fatigue. Take care of yourself physically and have compassion for yourself, as well.”

Actions they intended to take included:

- “Engage those care members that are not always present and share the whole picture of necessary care.”
- “Make sure I ask for help, and make sure my cup is full so I can fill others.”
- “Try to realize my feelings are normal, to reduce guilt, and step back and put myself in the care receiver’s shoes.”
- “I will approach the situation more mindful of the moment, and take time to enjoy ‘together times.’”
- “Look into resources and sharing with others the agencies to check. I was not aware that each county had a caregiver advisor.”



Recorded webinars, tip sheets, and caregiving resources extension.illinois.edu/global/caregiving-resources
In collaboration with Illinois Department on Aging, this link is also available on their caregiver resources page.

Wits Fitness

Wits Fitness classes, which began in 2015, are normally held in five locations throughout our region. In 2020, the in-person classes transitioned to Zoom sessions, due to the pandemic. The online meetings have been a great way to keep many participants mentally engaged and socially connected during a time when social isolation was a real concern.



I enjoyed our Wits Fitness class again today. It sure jars our brains and that is a good thing! I’m all for anything that makes me think. Thank you so much for doing this virtually until we can meet again in person. JB, SULLIVAN

I always look forward to coming to class and I put it in my calendar, so I won’t forget. Sometimes, I feel like I am not as quick with thinking as I used to be, so I really enjoy this class because it gives me the chance to exercise my mind in a lot of different ways and lets me know that I can still figure things out. I live alone, so I look forward to coming to class to solve problems and see and hear real laughter from real people. Brings JOY to my day!!! JP, NEW JERSEY

Just wanted to let you know we always look forward to the Wits Fitness sessions. Besides challenging different parts of our brains, we enjoy the socialization, especially in these COVID-restricted times. And, of course, you always make the sessions fun. JF & SF, ARTHUR

Thank you, Cheri, for allowing me to join your Wits Fitness classes. I like to challenge my brain with puzzles and doing so as a group makes it more enjoyable. You made sure to offer a variety of puzzles which worked different areas of our brain. Keep up the good work!

I just wanted to tell you how much I enjoy these Zoom sessions. You make it fun with a variety of different brain-stimulating exercises. It is truly a joy to be part of this program. VA, MATTOON

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ONLINE



Unit Facebook page: facebook.com/UniversityOfIllinoisExtensionUnit19
Coles County 4-H: facebook.com/ColesCounty4H
Coles County Master Gardeners: facebook.com/ColesCountyMasterGardeners
Cumberland County 4-H: facebook.com/Cumberland-County-4-H-Illinois
Moultrie-Douglas 4-H: facebook.com/MoultrieDouglas4H
Shelby County 4-H: facebook.com/Shelby-County-IL-4-H

Cover photo: Katelyn VonBehrens, Shelby County 4-H Strasburg Tailtwisters club.

**Illinois
Extension**

College of Agricultural, Consumer & Environmental Sciences

University of Illinois, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Local Extension Councils Cooperating.
University of Illinois Extension provides equal opportunities in programs and employment.



If you need a reasonable accommodation to participate, please contact the event coordinator. Early requests are strongly encouraged to allow sufficient time to meet your needs.

The Illinois Nutrition Education Programs are funded by the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) and Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program (EFNEP).

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