



Illinois Extension
UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS URBANA-CHAMPAIGN

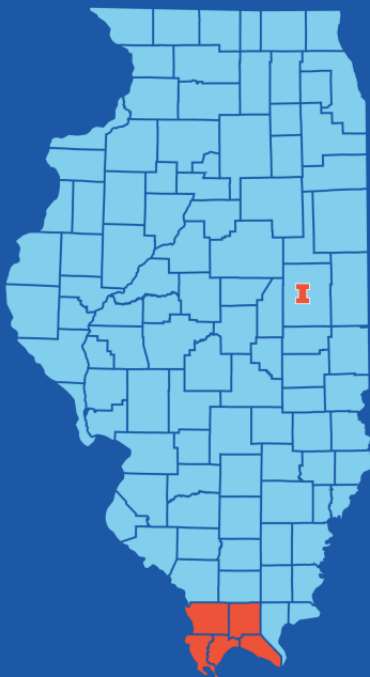


2020 IMPACT REPORT

University of Illinois Extension
Alexander, Johnson, Massac, Pulaski, & Union Counties

Illinois Extension

University of Illinois Extension provides practical education you can trust to help people, businesses, and communities solve problems, develop skills, and build a better future. Based in the College of Agricultural, Consumer and Environmental Sciences, Extension is the statewide outreach program of the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign.



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A Message from the Chancellor

The University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign is an economic engine and a driver of innovation, deeply rooted in the Illinois prairie and engaged statewide, from Cook County to Cairo. Illinois Extension brings the university to your doorstep. Extension educators live and work alongside you in every county, allowing the university to support local leaders, businesses, farmers, and residents to address grand challenges and everyday problems with practical, research-based solutions. As a youth, my own 4-H experience inspired a rewarding career in agricultural research and higher education. Today, it's an honor to lead this great public university and deepen its commitment to serve the people of Illinois.

Robert J. Jones
Chancellor
University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign



A Note from the County Director

A colleague shared an article entitled "Let's Pause." It discussed our human nature to sometimes want to "stop the ride," while some may choose to hit fast forward and watch the pages fly off the calendar. There's no doubt that 2020 was a unique year. Our five counties were not spared the effects of COVID-19. Many staff in our unit lost family and friends to the pandemic; just about every household experienced COVID-19 in some capacity. Extension implemented radical remediation policies to help stop the spread. Since March, offices have been closed to the public with staff working from home. But that did not stop Extension from continuing to offer valuable programs to the community. Staff have adapted and some are reporting record-level programming as a result of virtual offerings. We are reaching audiences that otherwise may not have been reached! Review the impacts made this year in the pages that follow. We are looking forward to a few more calendar pages flying by, so we can get back to our normal programming. Hopefully, 2021 will prove to be a return to normal.

Jody Johnson
County Extension Director



ELITE Youth Entrepreneurship Camp

In July, four inspiring youth accepted the challenge to take part in the first ever virtual ELITE Youth Entrepreneurship Camp hosted by a group of organizers from the Southernmost Illinois Delta Empowerment Zone (SIDEZ), the Illinois Small Business Development Center at Shawnee Community College, and University of Illinois Extension.

During the four-day event, the students learned business terms, identified key business risks, explored the wonderful world of entrepreneurship, researched business ideas, and then presented their chosen business idea.

In lieu of the field trip experience, students were treated to online presentations by Gabrielle Harris, G&L Clothing; Brooke O'Reilly, Davis Pastry; Alice Rogan, Creative Hands Christian Emporium; Emily Kerley, Milkmaid Creations & Antiques; Michelle Sirls, Rendleman Orchards; Shawnell Sawyer, Shea Roots; and Curt Jones, inventor of Dippin' Dots and 40 Below Joe.

In this unprecedented event, the students, organizers, and presenters focused on "what we can do," rather than "what we can't do." Susan Odum, Extension specialist in community economic development, was on hand throughout the event to encourage the students to follow their dreams.

Special thanks to our 2020 ELITE Youth Entrepreneurship graduates: Lauren Earnhart, Brynn Rehlmeier, Blake Schneider, and Jayda Wright.



The Sojourner Truth award, given annually by Legacy Training, Inc., recognizes individuals who have worked to improve the quality of life for members of their community. This year, the award was presented to Sarita and Sabrina Sawyer at the annual African-American Health Conference. The sisters were honored for coordinating and educating their community through an annual Breast Cancer Walk. Pictured above are (left to right) Sarita Sawyer, Illinois Extension community worker; Lynne Chambers, CEO of Legacy Training, Inc.; and Sabrina Sawyer.



Zoom Boosts Participation

The Inter-Agency Network for Limited Resource Populations (INLRP) offers a forum for community service agencies and not-for-profit service providers to promote their agency and events, network with other providers, reduce duplication of services, and share their expertise by acting as resources to other members. Quarterly meetings are held at rotating locations and local agencies are always invited to participate. Since going virtual in 2020, INLRP has seen a significant increase in attendance and in the number of agencies involved. There are currently 80 southern Illinois agencies actively participating in INLRP correspondence, meetings, and networking opportunities.

Engaging Youth in Rural Issues

In 2020, Extension Specialist Susan Odum had the honor of delivering a socially-distanced presentation to the 2020-2021 Union County CEO class on the importance of shopping local.

Odum engaged the students through a series of simulated activities designed to demonstrate how money flows in and out of local economies and how local spending funds critical community services. In addition, Odum led the students through an exercise designed to demonstrate the power of the multiplier and challenged the students to identify ways to utilize import substitution to create a stronger, more sustainable local economy.

Union County CEO Program Facilitator Melanie Smith said, "It was such a valuable and relevant experience. I learned so much about the importance of shopping locally that had never occurred to me before that is changing the way I spend my money. The kids did, too!"

Students also expressed the value of participating in these exercises saying, "This [activity] showed me that getting the 'best deal' is not always the right way. I am going to try to take Melanie's challenge and buy only from local businesses for my friends and family."

New Staff Join the Team

We would like to welcome Shannon Pulliam, INEP community worker; Kim Rohling, Extension program coordinator for energy and environmental stewardship; and Angela Ralls, office support assistant. Shannon and Kim are both housed in the Anna office and Angela is in the Mounds office.



Smart Grid Energy Programs Go Virtual

The Illinois Extension Smart Grid Outreach Team, comprised of eight individuals from the Community and Economic Development and Energy and Environmental Stewardship teams transitioned their standard programming online this year.

The team has been awarded over \$900,000 in external funding over the past four years to provide consumer education on the Smart Grid and home energy efficiency to rural, low-income, and senior audiences.

Prior to the pandemic, Extension Educator Erin Garrett delivered youth education on the Smart Grid and utility bills to 270 youth. She's been able to reach almost as many individuals virtually. Her webinars had 118 live participants and the webinar recordings received an additional 122 views on YouTube.

Garrett also virtually presented her train-the-trainer session on Smart Grid for Schools kits for the Environmental Education Association of Illinois' annual conference. Along with Ashley Belle, Extension educator serving Christian, Jersey, Macoupin, and Montgomery counties, Garrett will present on the importance of collaborations in outreach work at the Association of Natural Resources Extension Professionals national conference, which has been rescheduled for 2021.



Southern Illinois Conservation Workshop

Extension hosted the third annual Southern Illinois Conservation Workshop in a virtual format. The usual day-long conference was converted to a week-long webinar series, with 10 talks over five days. Nearly 150 participants joined daily. A keynote presentation on the importance of managing cultural resources on private property was followed by talks on stream restoration, native plants, nest boxes, bats, and more.



Everyday Environment Webinar Series

In rapid response to the shift from face-to-face operations to virtual programming necessitated by COVID-19, the Energy and Environmental Stewardship team developed, delivered, and evaluated a new weekly webinar series called Everyday Environment.

The comprehensive series, composed of 12 live webinars, addressed global and statewide priority environmental issues with a focus on not only enhancing and preserving natural resources, but also engaging with home and community landscapes. Direct education was delivered to 1,768 participants and the recorded webinars have surpassed 4,300 additional views, resulting in positive changes to knowledge and behaviors globally.

With the success of the series and increased interest in environmental stewardship, the series now continues with monthly live webinars. Some of the topics presented in the series included planting for pollinators, home energy check-up, and solar energy for the home.



Which Grass is Which?

Which Grass Is Which? transitioned to a virtual format in 2020, expanding the content to a three-part webinar series.

Erin Garrett, Extension educator in energy and environmental stewardship, shares basic grass identification tips, then identifies 55 species of grass in Illinois, grouped into woodland, prairie, and nuisance grass types.

The series had between 280 and 380 live participants each day. The recordings have been highly requested and the three videos have been viewed more than 600 times.

Garrett plans to continue developing a grass identification booklet and short grass identification videos in the coming year.



Welcome, new EES team member Kim Rohling!



Master Naturalist Program

Master Naturalist training began in January 2020 at Giant City State Park. Thirteen participants, including four from the Alexander-Johnson-Massac-Pulaski-Union unit, entered the program. Classes were put on hold in March, due to the pandemic, but resumed virtually in the summer. The class graduated on October 1 with a socially-distanced hike and celebration at Giant City.

Master Naturalists in the Alexander-Johnson-Massac-Pulaski-Union unit donated 350 volunteer hours conserving, managing, and interpreting our area's natural resources. Their projects included teaching about birding, calling frog and toad surveys, pollinator gardening at Fort Massac, and citizen science efforts.





Resource Packets Provided to Head Start Families

Making Food Pantry Info Available to All
Food insecurity increased dramatically during the pandemic, making it critical for food pantries to maintain accurate and up-to-date information about service times, procedures, and mobile pantry locations. Extension staff worked with many local food pantries to ensure that this information was available. A new food pantry contact sheet was widely distributed in both print and digital forms.

Union County	Anna First Baptist Church 499 Morgan Street Anna, IL 62906 Contact: Pam Fisher pammyfish48@gmail.com	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Food Pantry - Must call the church Need name, address, telephone number, number of people in household Pickup Arrangements will then be made.
	Anna Church of the Nazarene 100 Kirk Street Anna, IL 62906 (618) 833-6702 annanazspc@frontier.com	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Grocery Giveaway once a month in the parking lot
	Anna United Methodist Church 111 W. Monroe Street Anna, IL 62906 (618) 833-2234 Contact: Chris Foster cfoster@meviable.net	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Food Pantry Curbside Pickup Every 3rd Tuesday 5:00 pm - 6:30 pm
	Bethany Village 414 East Davis Street Anna, IL 62906 (618) 833-1777 Contact: Jennifer Duskey bethanyvillageinc@gmail.com	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Food Pantry Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday 9am - 4pm, closed for lunch 12 - 1:00 pm Knock on Door, Give Information, Pickup food box outside
	Donola First Baptist Church 203 E. Cross Street Donola, IL 62926 (618) 827-4323 Contact: Earnest Rider admin@donolafirst.com	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Food Pantry First Wed of month 10:00 - 11:00am Can receive assistance once per month Call Monday before date of pantry
	Harvest Church 630 E. Davis Street Anna, IL 62906 (618) 534-2244 Contact: Kim Aldridge watervallyinn@gmail.com	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Food Pantry Curbside pickup every Thursday 11:00 am - 1:00 pm Free Lunch Curbside pickup every Thursday 11:00 am - 1:00 pm Open to anyone
	JESUS IS THE LIGHT 7780 Old Highway 51 North Cobden, IL 62920 (618) 893-2050 Contact: Alex Urbe (Spanish speaking available)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Food Pantry - Drive Thru 3rd Saturday of the month 10:00 am - 12:00 noon May receive food once per month
	Salem Lutheran Church 101 W. Market Street Jonesboro, IL 62952 (618) 833-0704 Contact: Red Martin martinsalemlutheran@gmail.com	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Food Pantry Tuesday 4:00 - 6:00pm Free meal Last Wednesday of the month 5:30 pm - 7:00 pm
	Shawnee Development Council Choate Mental Health 1000 North Main Street, Anna, IL 62906 (618) 833-7431 or (618) 634-2201 Contact: Brandi Sevanski brandi_43@shawnee-development.org	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Food Pantry - Serves Union County Wednesday 9:30 am - 11:30 am and 12:30 pm - 2:30 pm Must bring a Photo ID May receive food once per month

Extension Educator Toni Wright developed an active family calendar, which was provided to Head Start families in a resource packet. The calendar suggests fun and easy activities like reading a story book and acting out the action words, or turning up the music to have a family dance party.



Southern Illinois Food Pantry Network
Nearly 100 food pantries across 16 counties form the Southern Illinois Food Pantry Network, collaborating to provide access to healthy and nutritious foods, education, resources, and advocacy.

One big success during COVID was the partnership with the Southern Illinois Community Foundation to help distribute over \$100,000 in Illinois COVID-19 Relief funds directly to food pantries. Also, two of our food pantries received grants through Ameren and Southern Illinois Healthcare.



Illinois Nutrition Education Program (INEP)

Working with national, state, and local partners, INEP provides basic nutrition, food safety, and food budgeting education to limited-resource audiences.

INEP community workers faced many obstacles to providing programming this year. They have learned new technology skills and worked with schools and partners to provide nutrition education virtually, through Zoom and Google Meet.

Patsy Bishop, Extension community worker serving Massac County, received many heartfelt thank you notes from schools. One pre-K teacher in Goreville messaged Bishop on Facebook to say, "Today Caleb said that we can drink this [fruit juice] because it says 100%. We miss you."

Healthy Cents is an INEP program that provides families with tips to eat healthy, save money, and make the most of their grocery dollars. The curriculum was revised this year with very positive responses from returning participants who say the new program better reflects their daily lives and provides more useful information.

One Metropolis participant reported weight loss and healthier bloodwork results after incorporating tips from Healthy Cents into her routine. As a result of the program, she is cooking more, eating out less, and controlling portion sizes. Additionally, she said, "I am reading the food nutrition labels and am more aware of what I put in my body."

The Massac County Women's Shelter will begin participating in the program in February.



Great Garden Detectives Spy Results

In January, the Great Garden Detective program kicked off with third graders in Vienna. Students tasted fruits and veggies, worked on posters to hang in their cafeteria, learned the parts of plants, and planted lima beans in clear cups, so they could watch them grow in the classroom. At the beginning of March, they were able to transplant them into recycled two-liter bottles. When the schools went remote, the students took their plants home where many continued to thrive. One Garden Detective even sent pictures because she was so excited to share that she got to pick beans off of her plant!



SUPPLEMENTAL NUTRITION ASSISTANCE PROGRAM EDUCATION

SNAP-Education works with Illinois families in need to make the healthier choice an easier choice. Through classes, workshops, and collaboration with community partners to adopt research-based solutions to encourage healthier nutrition and activity choices, SNAP-Education positively affects families and communities.

In 2020, SNAP-Education shifted to virtual education and resources due to COVID-19.



Addressed community partner needs by providing resources and collaboration opportunities



Provided live, virtual classes families could join from their own phone, tablet, or computer



Distributed print materials to families on topics such as recipes made with common pantry ingredients



Increased reach via social media, text, and e-news with relevant nutrition and activity information



Created a new community food resource map, Find Food Illinois, on the Eat. Move. Save. website

Heritage House was excited to host a virtual nutrition class from our Healthy Cents program. The Apple Nachos recipe was demonstrated during class, and they were excited to make it on their own. The attendees enjoyed the class and shared they were excited to attend the next one!

- Tiffney Stewart, SNAP-Education community worker

SNAP-Education Community Partnerships



23
K-12 Schools



12
Early Childhood



24
Agencies or Community Centers



18
Emergency Food Sites



4-H Shows Go on in 2020

As large gatherings were banned for safety reasons related to the pandemic, county fairs across the state were cancelled. 4-Hers eager to show their work in one of our organization's most time-honored traditions wondered if they'd lose their chance this year. Instead, Illinois 4-H got creative and went virtual. Judging for all county fairs and the Illinois State Fair was conducted online. Youth submitted a report, including photos of their project, and even created videos to showcase their efforts. What at first seemed like an obstacle to participation, turned out to be a boon. For the first time ever, all five counties in our unit were represented in both local and state 4-H exhibitions.



4-H Cloverbuds Bloom

The pandemic presented several obstacles to 4-H club growth in 2020. In particular, Cloverbuds, the youngest age group eligible for 4-H participation, seemed likely to decrease due to limited opportunities for these potential 4-Hers to learn and participate alongside older club members. To engage and increase awareness among this group, 4-H staff distributed more than 1,600 coloring books containing information about the 4-H program to school districts in all five counties. The effort resulted in several new families joining our 4-H program, as well as new club leaders emerging. Continued growth during challenging times signals great things for our program.





4-H Cooking 101

4-H Cooking 101 is a shining example of essential life skills taught through hands-on learning. Facilitated collaboratively by Teen Teachers, volunteers, and 4-H staff, this program teaches youth food safety, nutrition, and cooking techniques. Participants learn to read nutrition labels and practice cooking healthy recipes. They learn knife safety by chopping vegetables. They use ovens, microwaves, hot plates, and griddles. They even wash all of their own dishes.

In order to make the program as realistic as possible for underserved and underrepresented youth in southern Illinois, 4-H staff consciously incorporate food items and ingredients commonly found in food pantries. Family-style meals are not only encouraged, but actively modeled throughout the program in the hopes that youth will take these lessons back to their own families. Upon completion, each participant receives a cookbook, project activity log, games, recipes, an apron, and a kitchen tool to take home.

In the first two months of 2020, more than 300 students in Dongola, Cobden, and Maple Grove schools participated in 4-H Cooking 101. 4-H staff are currently working on a virtual format of the program, which they hope to launch in March 2021.



Special thanks to the Clever Clovers 4-H Club in Johnson County for this great idea encouraging a focus on gratitude during an unusual and challenging Thanksgiving. In partnership with Rendleman Orchards, 50 pumpkins were made available for “adoption.” Adopters were asked to write something they were thankful for on the tag, then share the pumpkin with their families.

4-H Helps Promote Census

Massac County 4-H supported efforts to promote the 2020 census in their communities by distributing signs and information in Joppa, Brookport, and Metropolis.



Gary Brumley (back row, second from right), chairman of Johnson County Commissioners, made a proclamation with Johnson County 4-H members in advance of National 4-H Week in October. A proclamation allows elected officials to endorse the incredible achievements of 4-H youth and volunteers.

Welcome to the Real World

In March 2020, 4-H hosted over 450 students at Shawnee College for Welcome to the Real World, a financial literacy program. In a hands-on simulation, youth choose an occupation, receive their first paycheck, and rotate through eight bill-paying stations. The stations include groceries, housing, transportation, utilities, insurance, clothing, entertainment, and a wildcard station called chance. The program is designed to illustrate different levels of compensation for different occupations and how career choice impacts other areas of life. The active, simulation format gives youth a unique glimpse into the kinds of decisions they will face in their adult lives. Welcome to the Real World is a true community effort with more than 40 volunteers from local partnerships participating in the simulation.

4-H Hall of Fame Inductees 2020



Carmen Birk-Martin
Alexander County



Flora Helman
Pulaski County



Cindy & Jim Walker
Union County



Georgia Vinson
Johnson County



Tammie Obermark
Massac County



Grants Support Food Insecurity Efforts

Two community gardens that donate fresh produce to local food pantries received nearly \$6,000 in financial support from multiple sources in 2020. Extension staff, in partnership with Master Gardeners, applied for and received two Growing Together Illinois grants to support the continuation of the Plant a Row, Watch COPE Grow food donation garden in Metropolis and the creation of the Pilot Garden in Cairo.

4-H Federations in Massac and Alexander-Pulaski counties partnered to receive two Farm Credit Community Improvement grants to support the building of permanent fences around both gardens.

A donation from the Autism Society of Southern Illinois will support the addition of a sensory plot at the Cairo garden.

These gardens play an important role in combating food insecurity and lack of access to fresh produce in our communities.

Collaborative Effort to Distribute Food to Those in Need

Pictured above: Laborers' Union Local 773, State Senator Dale Fowler, and FFA provided food boxes for pickup at the Extension office in Mounds on October 28, and at Goreville City Park on October 22. Many thanks to the groups that helped hand out boxes!

Financial Report

Below is the distribution of dollars (as a percentage of total revenue) that University of Illinois Extension serving Alexander, Johnson, Massac, Pulaski, and Union counties collected during fiscal year 2020 (July 2019 – June 2020). Because of the commitment of local funds by our county governments, Extension administration committed more federal Smith/Lever funds to the unit, allowing additional staff to be hired.



- 36% Federal — SNAP
- 29% Federal — Smith/Lever
- 17% Local
- 15% State
- 3% Donations



Jody Johnson
*Alexander, Johnson, Massac, Pulaski,
and Union County Extension Director*



Kristi Scout
*4-H Youth Development
Extension Educator*



Erin Garrett
*Energy & Environmental Stewardship
Extension Educator*

4-H Youth Development

Vickie Taylor, Johnson & Massac Counties
Dena Wood, Alexander, Pulaski, & Union Counties

Energy & Environmental Stewardship

Kim Rohling, Unit-Wide

Illinois Nutrition Education Programs (INEP)

Patsy Bishop, Massac County
Shannon Pulliam, Union County
Lindsey Sadler, Unit-Wide
Sarita Sawyer, Alexander & Pulaski Counties
Tiffany Stewart, Johnson County

Office Support Staff

Tami Crest
Brenda Hileman
Angela Ralls
Monica Reid

Extension Council

The Extension Council is authorized by the University of Illinois Board of Trustees, in accordance with state law, to be actively involved in the operation of University of Illinois Extension. Extension councils cooperate with Extension staff in planning, promoting, developing, implementing, evaluating, and financing an Extension program designed to meet the needs, interests, and resources of the local communities served.

Alexander/Pulaski Counties

Josie Eason
Derek Eurales
Shawna Rhine
Anganetta Terry

Massac County

Megan Henderson
Kent Hollis
Pearl Meadows
Cheryl Vanderford

Johnson County

Natalie Dougherty
Zach Garrett
Jonathan Voelz
Phyllis Webb

Union County

Margarita Bartolo
Chris Boyd
Rhonda Dillow
Greg George

UNIT STATISTICS

Programs



697

Programs led by unit staff and volunteers

Volunteers



307+

Volunteers supporting our programs

People



10,180+

People directly reached through our programs

Web



9,500+

Page views on unit webpages

Facebook Posts



274

Posts to the unit Facebook page

OFFICE INFORMATION

Alexander/Polaski County Extension

Oakley Lane
Mounds, IL 62964
(618) 745-5200
Fax: (618) 745-5201

Johnson County Extension

208 East Main Street
P.O. Box 158
Vienna, IL 62995
(618) 658-5321
Fax: (618) 658-2028

Massac County Extension

1438 West 10th Street
Metropolis, IL 62960
(618) 524-2270
Fax: (618) 524-3948

Union County Extension

515 East Vienna Street
P.O. Box 604
Anna, IL 62906
(618) 833-6363
Fax: (618) 833-6304

By appointment only:

Shawnee College
8364 Shawnee College Road
Ullin, IL 62992

All offices open
Mon. - Fri., 8 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.
Closed from noon - 1 p.m.

ONLINE



facebook.com/AJMPU.Unit/



extension.illinois.edu/ajmpu



go.illinois.edu/Unit27Youtube

Cover photo: Staff during a recent Zoom meeting.

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).

Issued in furtherance of Cooperative Extension work, Acts of May 8 and June 30, 1914, in cooperation with the US Department of Agriculture by the Director, Cooperative Extension Service, and University of Illinois.