



Illinois Extension
UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS URBANA-CHAMPAIGN

2021 Addressing Local Needs,
Solving Global Challenges
Bond, Clinton, Jefferson, Marion, and Washington Counties



Jordee Koehler
County Director

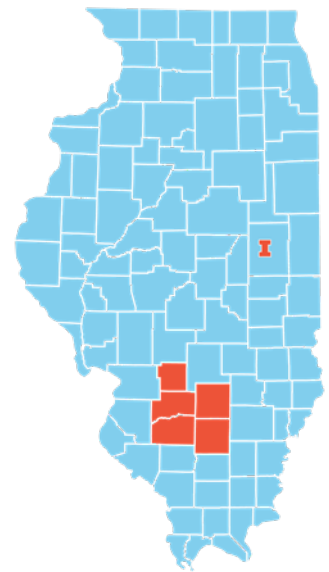
Serving Bond, Clinton, Jefferson, Marion & Washington Counties

A Message from the County Director

Here at University of Illinois Extension, this last year has provided even more confidence and clarity in the critical role we play within the communities we serve throughout Bond, Clinton, Jefferson, Marion, and Washington counties. Local poverty levels are as high as 12% for adults and 25% for children, which means food access and food insecurity are serious threats to our community's health and wellness in a multitude of ways. We cannot accept these numbers as our reality; we know that together – as community leaders – we can fight this, and that is exactly what we have been doing over the last year.

Extension rises to meet these challenges by cultivating an ecosystem of complementary programs and efforts. From developing 4-H youth into young, problem-solving leaders, to active, retired volunteer Master Gardeners who install raised beds to harvest hundreds of pounds of food for local pantries, we are making a difference. Our SNAP-Ed teams are also relentless in their efforts, managing Mobile Markets and bringing more empowering education about food and nutrition to classrooms and low-income adult communities. It is because of so many community partners that we can have this kind of impact. On the following pages, you'll see exactly how our Extension team is changing lives. To all our partners, thank you. To those just getting to know us, let's talk. We have work to do.

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Jordee Koehler".



Think Global, Act Local

Illinois Extension embodies the land grant mission of University of Illinois, providing applied research and education to address societal grand challenges and local issues.

Community Support Strong and Resilient Youth, Families, and Communities

- Connectedness and Inclusion
- Involvement and Leadership
- Thriving Youth

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

Look for these icons throughout this report to see how Illinois Extension is meeting these grand challenges at a local level.

Illinois Extension 2021 Statewide Highlights

Outreach Provided

565	335	84
Illinois Communities Served	Educational Sessions Per Week	Online Courses

Partnerships Supported

6,445	278	1,000
Adult Volunteers	Community Gardens	School Partnerships

Learners Engaged

8,000,000	14,450	500,000
Website Users	Online Course Users	Educational Program Attendees

Resources Generated

\$14,000,000	\$242,000
Value of Volunteer Contributions	Value of Donated Garden Produce

Extension leaders meet with local stakeholders to define annual priorities that allow us to respond to evolving and emerging needs and make meaningful progress toward important long-term outcomes. This blend of long-range focus and local accountability is a powerful strategy that ensures we stay true to our mission as we serve communities across the state.



Community

Connectedness and Inclusion

A strong sense of community brings people together to support each other in times of need and growth. Accepting and celebrating differences creates an environment where all voices are important and heard. When strong networks of peers and organizations support youth and families, even the most vulnerable community members feel they belong and are valued.

Grow, Gobble, Give touches local communities

4-H staff and local volunteers partnered with Ashley Public Library and Germantown Public Library during the fall/winter 2021-2022, offering a pilot series of lessons with a focus on food access. Youth participants learned to grow their own food through hands-on activities and explored unique spaces for gardening, such as windowsill herb gardening during winter months. Growing food from recycled or scrap parts of vegetables was a favorite lesson and showed youth there really are no limits to vegetable gardening.

In addition to growing their own food, youth tasted fruits and vegetables and created some of their own recipes, helping them build confidence and life skills in the kitchen.

Youth participants stepped up as changemakers, learning about hunger and sponsoring a food drive which produced over 200 donated items to support local community members in need.

Programs such as Grow, Gobble, Give create opportunities for youth to lead change as they advocate for more food-secure communities.

Partners, including the local libraries, supported programming with shared space, resources, and a shared vision for offering youth a safe environment to practice important life skills needed to grow into successful leaders and inspiring them to explore potential paths for their future.

Involvement and Leadership

When people volunteer or advocate for a local issue, they see themselves as part of the solution and their community pride soars. Providing decision-makers with practical, timely, and research-based information gives leaders the tools they need to strengthen their communities and improve the quality of life in rural and urban areas throughout Illinois.

Two gardens, hundreds of pounds of produce donated to fight food insecurity

The local University of Illinois Extension unit manages two community gardens, one in Mt. Vernon and one in Salem. Within each garden, there are multiple raised beds, some of which are claimed by local community members at no cost. One bed in each garden is actively managed by Extension to raise and donate fresh food to local pantries.

This endeavor is a partnership between Extension and the funding organization, Growing Together Illinois. The purpose of this program is for community members to meet and share common interests in sustainable gardening, provide the knowledge needed to garden successfully, and give gardeners the opportunity to give back to the community.



“Thanks to this grant, there is no charge to members for the use of a community and family beds,” says Christina Lueking, Extension horticulture educator. “Each garden is managed by someone who represents Extension, and we work with families and individuals to ensure they maintain their beds and learn more about growing your own food along the way.”

Jefferson County family receives 2021 4-H Family Spirit Award

The Family Spirit Award recognizes Illinois families who have benefited from 4-H and continue to advocate for the Illinois 4-H program over multiple generations. In addition to length of 4-H membership, families advocate for the county and state 4-H programs through their community service and philanthropy.

As a young girl living through the depression, Ida Mae faced many challenges, but her mother and 4-H were constants in her life.

For four generations, the values of 4-H and family still guide the Jackson Family. Their legacy was honored as the 2021 Illinois 4-H Foundation Family Spirit Award. The family has 146 years of 4-H membership and another 111 years as 4-H volunteers.

Though they traveled different paths, 4-H was their compass, a family spokesperson says, and influenced many of their career paths. Until her passing at the age of 95, Ida Mae was still actively involved in 4-H. According to family members, “The entire family still relies on the skills learned though 4-H, as they promote family and community.”



Thriving Youth

Thriving youth are the core of healthy, robust communities. Illinois Extension’s mentorship-based youth development model focuses on social competence, academic success, career development, and community connection. The 4-H experience creates opportunities and environments for all youth to thrive now and in the future.

4-H Shows recognize youth accomplishments

Conference judging at 4-H shows is unique in that it allows youth to express what they have learned to experts in specific project areas and then discuss ways to improve upon a project in the future. Not only do members get immediate feedback on their project exhibits, they also gain life skills, such as setting goals, preparing in advance, evaluating their own work, and communicating effectively with others. 4-H judging scores members against a set standard for projects rather than against other participants. There are more than 200 project options, including animal sciences, beekeeping, computers, robotics and visual arts to name a few. Approximately 400 youth across the unit’s five counties participated in various 4-H shows in 2021.

4-H legacy honored by Foundation
go.illinois.edu/FamilySpirit2021



4-H is Growing True Leaders

4-H youth programs are empowering and preparing Illinois youth for success both now and in the future.



Opportunity4All

Advancing the mission for all youth in Illinois to be empowered and prepared for success.





Environment

Enhancing and Preserving Natural Resources

The survival of our planet depends on the quality of our water, land, and air. These shared resources must be managed through sustainable practices that support ecological balance. We must take steps now to effectively steward these resources for generations to come.

Extension clears invasive species with local partners

Invasive species cause problems by pushing out native plants that offer habitat for wildlife on both public and private lands. Locally, Japanese honeysuckle is an aggressive invasive that outcompetes local native plants.

A partnership between volunteers, Illinois Extension Forester Chris Evans, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, and local Illinois Extension offices is tackling the issue of invasive species on public lands surrounding Carlyle Lake. Evans assisted local volunteers to identify, manage, and remove invasive species.

Following an educational session, participants, Extension Master Naturalists, and park rangers put their new knowledge to work by cleaning the area behind the visitors center at Carlyle Lake.

This activity celebrated National Public Lands Day initiative and opened the door for more invasive clean-up work in the area. In the future, an outdoor classroom amphitheater will be installed in the newly cleared section.

Park Ranger Kim Hammel indicates the knowledge Evans shared on identification and removal of invasive species is valuable and helps bring the Corps of Engineers at Carlyle Lake closer to reaching its goal of creating a volunteer base to remove unwanted species that cause native biodiversity loss.

We would like to thank the U of I Extension for having this hands-on workshop. Without their help, this work would have been hard to accomplish.

KIM HAMMEL, PARK RANGER

Engagement with Home and Community Landscapes

There is growing evidence that time spent around plants and in green spaces has many benefits including improved health, better interpersonal relationships, and a higher quality of life. Sustainable home landscapes also increase property values and build stronger ecosystems for plants and wildlife.



Energy and Environment Programs
go.illinois.edu/BCJMWenvironment



Participants from the Invasive Species Work Day pause to show the area they cleared which will be the home of an outdoor classroom at the Carlyle Lake Visitor Center.



New horticulture educator to serve growing need for home and community gardening and landscape practices

Since the start of the pandemic, an estimated 18.3 million new people have taken up gardening, and 42% of existing gardeners increased their garden activities. Christina Lueking, Extension horticulture educator, will be working to meet the needs of new and existing gardeners. Lueking moved to the educator role after working as an agricultural and natural resources program coordinator where she supported educational opportunities for the community. Lueking says the need for sustainable landscape systems continues to grow as communities and urban landscapes develop.

“The need for research-based information on sustainable practices and production yields will be critical for the future of horticultural crops and the economic value that they bring to our local environments and communities,” she says.

Leveraging tomatoes and peppers to increase home gardening activity

Tomatoes and peppers are the most widely grown vegetables. They are the go-to for both new and experienced gardeners. More than 80 people participated in a webinar on the pitfalls of growing these vegetables. Educator Ken Johnson talked through the common pests and diseases, such as whiteflies, hornworms, fruitworms, wilt, blight, leaf spots, and Anthracnose. He also provided tips on how to combat these issues for a healthy harvest. This tomato and pepper season we will be taking our webinar knowledge and applying it with the community in the garden.



Rooted in community. Growing through connection.

County Extension offices now have the support of two new program areas — **Agriculture and Agribusiness** and **Natural Resources, Environment, and Energy** — to strengthen the economic viability and environmental sustainability of Illinois agriculture, natural resources, and community natural assets.



69
Master Gardener
Volunteers



48
Master Naturalist
Volunteers



2,313
Hours Donated



\$67,940
Volunteer Value



3
Community gardens



1,140
pounds of food
donated



11
Expert consultations and
volunteer information services

Access to Statewide Programs



262
Webinar Sessions



282
New videos and
Podcast Episodes

Webinar series and online resources include:

- Master Gardener online training
- Four Seasons gardening webinars
- Small Farms webinar series
- Everyday Environment webinars
- Pesticide Safety Education program
- Certified Livestock Manager training
- Cropflix online CCA education
- Good Growing podcast and blog
- Nutrient Loss Reduction podcast
- farmdoc webinars and farmdoc daily posts
- Teacher resources on pollution prevention, weather & climate, and water quality



Find webinars
<https://go.illinois.edu/AAB-NREE>



Student volunteers from Nashville High School FFA help set-up, sort, and package items for the monthly Mobile Market hosted at the Washington County Fairgrounds.



Food

Food Access

Research shows a strong link between food insecurity, poor health, and poor academic outcomes for children. Food insecurity is not just about hunger. It's about not having access to food options that meet nutritional needs, which is particularly important for individuals and families with limited resources. Extension's network of volunteers and partners work together to address food insecurity in locally relevant ways.

Impacting food insecurity through Mobile Markets

With poverty levels in Bond, Clinton, Jefferson, Marion, and Washington counties as high as 12% for adults and child poverty levels measuring at 25%, food access and food insecurity continues to be a priority issue that staff are working to address. Mobile Markets are one way we work to meet food access needs in our communities.

Through partnerships with St. Louis Area Foodbank, SSM Health, United Way, Cusumano & Sons, and area churches, Illinois Extension staff coordinated 42 Mobile Markets in 2021. The markets were held in Centralia, Mt. Vernon, Nashville, and Salem and continue on a monthly basis. They reached more than 7,800 area families last year.

In addition to planning and implementing the markets, SNAP-Ed staff members also provide nutrition education for the market participants.



Illinois Nutrition Education Programs
go.illinois.edu/BCJMWnutrition



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, SNAP-Education positively affect families and communities by using research-based solutions to encourage healthier nutrition and physical activity choices.

Reach and Impact of SNAP-Education



6,592
Total Estimated Reach



250
Number of Nutrition Education Classes Provided



SNAP-Ed has been providing nutrition and gardening education with third grade classes at South Central School in Kinmundy. Teachers have shared that the garden planted as a result has been very successful! There have been multiple harvests of lettuce, which have been served as part of snacks and also sent home for families.

SNAP-Education Community Partnerships



15
K-12 Schools



1
Market or Store



4
Early Childhood



17
Other Agencies or Community Centers



9
Food Banks and Food Pantries



Community Gardens: The impact behind the purpose

Extension fights food insecurity by cultivating an ecosystem of complementary programs and efforts – from youth to retired adult volunteers – whose work revolves around meeting this challenge throughout the five counties we serve.

One of the ways staff and volunteers work to address food insecurity is through community gardens. During the growing season donation beds at the gardens produced more than 300 pounds of produce for local food pantries. In addition, the garden spaces are used for educational programming for new and experienced gardeners.

“Community Gardens are both engaging and incredibly valuable because they introduce residents to the real possibility of growing some of their own produce,” said Jordee Koehler, Extension county director for Bond, Clinton, Jefferson, Marion, and Washington counties. “These gardens demonstrate how to help prolong home gardeners’ growing seasons and increase their harvest yield as well.”

The season closed out with public garden events to celebrate and look ahead to the next season.

Local Extension unit models new ways to reach and teach SNAP-Education

Extension partners with United Way of South Central Illinois to provide televisions for three local food pantries. SNAP-Ed community outreach workers provide education on how to prepare items that can be found at the pantries, along with ways to stretch food budgets.

Master Gardeners now also leverage these televisions to coordinate with SNAP-Ed staff to provide educational gardening videos as part of the Growing Together Illinois grant. These videos include how-to instructions on growing produce from seeds. In July, these videos were viewed by 136 people in three food pantries. Clients were provided a starter pack of vegetable seeds and a seed starting container, along with step-by-step instructions to help them get started.

With the success of these videos, additional televisions will be provided to other area food pantries. The model has been duplicated in units across the state.



Community Garden Toolkit
go.illinois.edu/toolkit





Illinois Junior Chefs mix, chop, and juice

Illinois Nutrition Education Programs offered a series of kid friendly cooking classes throughout the summer for youth 8 to 13 years of age. Junior Chef is a great way for children to learn basic cooking skills while having fun! The program is offered through Illinois Extension's SNAP-Education Programs, made possible by the USDA Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program. Participants learn useful skills, such as reading a recipe, measuring and mixing ingredients, grating and peeling foods, using knives safely, juicing citrus fruits, and cracking an egg. Each day included hands-on learning activities from a cookbook that students keep. Almost 100 youth participated in the 15 sessions.



Making holiday meals possible for local residents

Extension helped a local Jefferson County food pantry find funding for its Thanksgiving dinner food give-away. Park Avenue Baptist Church Food Pantry was able to purchase turkeys, but had no additional funds to complete the meal for their clients. Community Outreach Worker Kristen Buttrum used local connections and a partnership with Casey Avenue Baptist Church to support the funds needed. This support allowed the food pantry to purchase side items to make complete meals for 116 families at Thanksgiving.



Training with in-person and virtual options

Local school staff rely on training by SNAP-Education Educator Ashley Hoffman each summer to complete their required continuing education credits. This year, school staff had the option of going to the training held at Centralia High School or logging in online. Forty-six participants received six continuing education credits. A wide range of topics were covered, including *Garden to Cafeteria: A Guide to Using Produce from the School Garden*.



4-H Summer Food Challenge builds confidence in young cooks

The Summer Food Challenge kicked off in early June. The program taught cooking and nutrition basics while allowing youth to build confidence in the kitchen when there is no recipe to follow.

This activity was held all summer with a virtual launch, three at-home family cooking sessions, and a finale. Featured recipes included wraps, pizza, stir fry, and omelets.

Parents said that youth used food from their own garden, and the entire family got involved with taste testing family meals together.





Extending Knowledge... Changing Lives

University of Illinois Extension is the flagship outreach effort of the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, offering educational programs to residents in all 102 Illinois counties. Since 1914, Illinois Extension has been an integral part of people's educational experiences. Communities have come to rely on Extension for its practical, research-based educational offerings. Through learning partnerships that put knowledge to work, Extension's programs are aimed at making life better, healthier, safer, and more profitable for individuals and their communities.

Funding Sources



- 40% County Government
- 28% Federal Funds (including SNAP)
- 30% State Match & Ag Premium
- 1% Gifts & Donations
- 1% Program Income



- 62% Salaries
- 6% Program Expenses
- 8% Leases
- 6% Benefits
- 12% Administrative Costs
- 5% Utilities
- 1% Equipment

Community Sponsors

Bond County Board
 Bond County Home and Community Education
 Clinton County Association for Home and Community Education
 Clinton County Board
 Clinton County Extension Foundation
 Jefferson County Board
 Marion County Board
 Marion County 4-H Foundation
 Marion County Home and Community Education
 Riechmann Bros.
 Washington County Board
 Washington County 4-H Auction Committee
 Washington County Extension Education Foundation

Thank you to the individuals and businesses who locally supported our funding efforts in 2021.

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ONLINE



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Illinois Extension BCJMW

Cover photos: Clockwise from top left: Cover crops at the Dreamcatchers 4-H garden, Chris Richter leading a 4-H day camp activity, Case Borrenpohl participating in a 4-H STEM activity, Caroline Tepe and Maliah Riechmann at a 4-H 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.

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