

Illinois Extension
UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS URBANA-CHAMPAIGN

2021 Addressing Local Needs,
Solving Global Challenges
Boone, DeKalb, and Ogle Counties

A Message from the County Director

Perhaps you heard a Northern Public Radio broadcast on Monarch butterflies or deer and coyote encounters with Peggy Doty? Maybe your kids loved the story hour on the Wee Naturalist Virtual Program, or had a great time at 4-H Camp? You may have wandered in and out of 4-H livestock barns at your county fair, listened patiently while your talkative fourth grader described the fuzzy chicks that hatched in her classroom this spring, attended a training session for commercial pesticide, joined a community service project led by 4-H clubs, or participated in a community meeting facilitated by Extension staff. These are but a few of the many ways University of Illinois Extension touches your life and the lives of many in Boone, DeKalb, and Ogle counties.



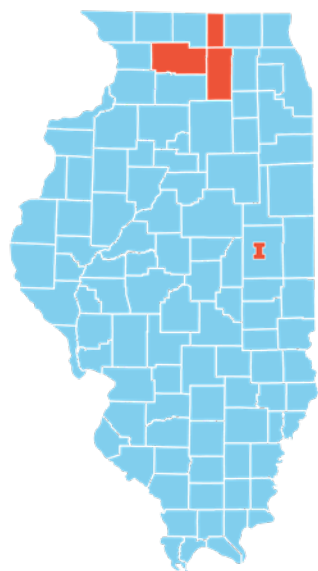
Heather Coyle
County Director

You may know us as 4-H, Ag in the Classroom, Master Gardeners, Master Naturalists, SNAP-Ed, University of Illinois Extension or Cooperative Extension. Our programming is broad in scope and difficult to briefly summarize. However, within these pages, you will find a sampling of local programs and testimonials. As you read, it is my hope that opportunities to participate, volunteer, and partner become more recognizable.

University of Illinois Extension, in coordination with local volunteers, programming, and funding partners, provide the research and practical education you can trust to develop skills, solve problems, and build better communities. Thank you to all who have given time and money to support this great mission!

Heather Coyle
County Extension Director

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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 Illinois Communities Served	335 Educational Sessions Per Week	84 Online Courses
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Partnerships Supported

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

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

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



Health happens with SNAP-Ed



The Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program Education (SNAP-Ed) team in Boone, DeKalb, and Ogle counties goes beyond teaching about healthy foods. The team has a vision to meet the needs of low-income communities by building self-reliance through providing tools for healthy living while collaborating with key stakeholders.



Four full-time staff offer services in local neighborhoods, helping participants gain confidence in making healthy food choices, being physically active, and learning budgeting skills. These actions feed into larger state goals of improving diet quality and physical activity, expanding healthy food access, and promoting community collaboration.

Staff support adults by offering budgeting and healthy lifestyle classes. Community workers primarily contribute to reaching these goals through providing evidence-based curriculum. Examples include *Serving Up MyPlate* and *OrganWise Guys*.

Serving Up MyPlate asks the questions “What are healthy food choices?” and “What is a balanced diet?” It is a collection of classroom materials that Extension uses to help elementary school teachers integrate nutrition education into math,

science, English language arts, and health. This curriculum introduces the importance of eating from all five food groups using *MyPlate* and a variety of hands-on activities. Students also learn the importance of physical activity to staying healthy.

OrganWise Guys brings science-based nutrition, physical activity, and other lifestyle behavior messages to kids through the use of characters that represent organs in the body.

The team has a vision to meet the needs of low-income communities by building self-reliance through providing tools for healthy living ...

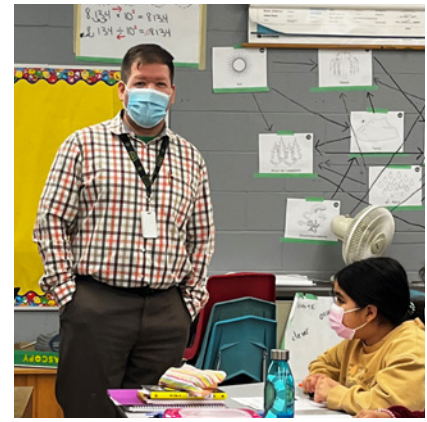
Additionally, the SNAP-Ed program in Boone, DeKalb, and Ogle counties are fortunate to have local staff who support the collaboration and food access goals at a site-based or county-level. This is done by leading and actively contributing to coalitions and projects, like *Growing Together Illinois*, a project that works closely with our Master Gardener Program to address hunger on a local level.

When working together, the team achieves all three goals of healthy, sustainable communities.



SUMP SERVES UP NUTRITION CURRICULUM

Cosme Beccera’s fifth grade math class was working with fractions and story problems involving nutritional servings in a package of rice. Several students blurted, “Hey, this is the Serving Up MyPlate stuff we do with Mrs. Coy!” Beccera was happy to relate the story to Natalie Coy, Ogle County community worker. She partners with Tilton Elementary School in Rochelle to provide the nutrition program *Serving Up MyPlate* - SUMP for short. SUMP integrates nutrition education into math, science, English language arts, and health for elementary students. “I’m happy to hear from Mr. Beccera that the students are making connections between math and SUMP,” says Coy. She also hears pupils discussing SUMP in Spanish. “I’ve heard a student say to a friend in class, ‘Wow, eso son mucho carbohidratos!’ (translation: So many carbohydrates). I’m gratified the message I’m teaching the kids stays with them!”



ORGANWISE GUYS TEACHES THE IMPORTANCE OF DAILY PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

A week after reading the story *OrganWise Guys All Hearts Need Love!*, a student in Mrs. Grover’s first grade class at Capron Elementary School told Jan Saglier, Boone County community worker, that she was exercising more. When asked to explain, the pupil said that her mom exercises every morning before going to work, and now she joins her to exercise, too. “It’s wonderful that after learning that kids need at least one hour of physical activity each day, she took it upon herself to act,” says Saglier. The OrganWise Guys program offers a whole-child approach to the prevention of childhood obesity. The program is offered in elementary schools for pre-school through fifth grade. The interactive characters depict various organs of the body for example: Hardy Heart, Windy (lungs), and Madame Muscle who help with stories, activities, and moving the body! The WISERCISE! Program provides 10-minutes of desk-side daily physical activity in the classroom.



GROWING TOGETHER ILLINOIS IS GROWING STRONG

In its third year, the Illinois SNAP-Education program allocated funds for local gardens through Growing Together Illinois. This program unites SNAP-Ed, Master Gardeners, and community members to increase fresh produce production for those in need. Funds supported an existing garden at Engh Farm in Sycamore. Engh Farm increased produce output three-fold since 2020 to amass more than 3,000 pounds of vegetables in 2021. All Engh Farm produce was committed to the Salvation Army Food Pantry in DeKalb. Similarly, a pay-what-you-can café, The Kitchen Table, in Rochelle now hosts a four-bed garden. Community groups including an Eagle Scout, 4-H clubs, and Kishwaukee College contributed to their success. The produce grown was available at the café on a display cart and at a local food pantry. In its first year, the harvest was 359 pounds of produce. Master Gardeners and SNAP-Ed offered educational lessons in the garden to support techniques on how to grow and eat local.



EAT, PLAY, GROW VIRTUAL SESSIONS HELD IN 2021

Searching for ways to engage parents and children in Extension’s Eat, Play, Grow program, Brianne Gugerty, DeKalb County community worker, contacted Two Rivers Head Start in DeKalb hoping to provide a virtual program for parents and children. Gugerty supplied handouts to parents prior to our virtual sessions. “Allocating time for translating in each session was helpful to the Spanish speaking families,” says Gugerty. Participants were encouraged to actively engage through question and answer, literacy, and musical appreciation segments. Physical movement games were included and enjoyed by the children and parents. More than 17 pre-k students and their caregivers attended. There was 100% participation, and most of them completed the pre-delivered handouts prior to the scheduled sessions. “The thought, planning, and dedication Brianne put into each session is impressive,” said KT, bi-lingual teacher. “Head Start is fortunate to offer classes hosted by Brianne.”





Annabelle, Tracey and Lily Sanderson snap a pic during a 4-H Scavenger Hunt.

4-H is pandemic anchor

Looking back on a challenging year, Tracy Sanderson says 4-H provided her family with purpose and wonderful memories. “The way 4-H adapted to offer quality programming for my children during the pandemic was fantastic. We participated in the 4-H road trip challenge, enjoyed virtual cooking, tried composting, and joined DeKalb County’s virtual 4-H club, general projects fair and livestock show,” says Sanderson. She is a 4-H alum, volunteer, and parent. A variety of activities helped focus the family on learning goals. Her daughter’s projects include computers, sewing, and baking. They discovered showmanship skills through mentoring with another 4-H family, as well as training their dog and walking their goats. The girls also attended the 4-H Summer Day Camp. “As a parent and 4-H alum, I am impressed with what the 4-H program offered during such a trying time. I encourage parents to participate in your local clubs, and embrace opportunities on the county, state, and national levels.”

4-H camp succeeds despite pandemic

Rather than cancel summer camp two years in a row due to pandemic health restrictions, 4-H staff from DeKalb, Jo Daviess, Ogle, Whiteside, and Winnebago counties cooperatively planned a 2021 4-H Day Camp event. Seventeen camp counselors assisted in the planning and execution of the camp at Rock River Christian Camp, Polo. Camp followed COVID-19 protocols but allowed a camp experience without an overnight stay. During camp week, youths engaged in a variety of activities designed to challenge, educate, and entertain.



Jude enjoyed outdoor activity at 4-H Camp.

Campers attended one, two, or three days of camp and selected favorite activities, such as crate stacking, zip line, or slip n’ slide. Evening program activities included game night, campfire, and adventure night. Each day ended at 8 for the 115 campers that took part in the adventure. “My grandson, Jude, really benefited from this 4-H Day Camp. I’ve never seen him happier than when he come home from camp each night. I am grateful for this experience for him,” says Mary McCoy, Dixon.

Ag boosts awareness

Making connections between agriculture, current events, and life is a daily task for Melinda Charbonneau Colbert, Ag Literacy coordinator for Ogle and Carroll counties. This past year, she taught 323 programs reaching 14,347 students. Melinda connected with all 12 school districts in Ogle and Carroll counties despite pandemic visitor restrictions. To overcome those challenges, she held virtual classes, filled Ag Bags with supplies, and conducted live virtual field trips.



A German Valley student tastes the butter she made during Ag in the Classroom.

“When our students know Ms. Melinda is coming for Ag in the Classroom, there’s always an air of excitement. They look forward to her hands-on activities like making butter and learning about cows,” says Forrestville Valley Principal Jonathon Schneiderma. Ag in the Classroom helps boost the student, teacher, and public awareness of agriculture’s role in the economy and society. Ag in the Classroom is offered through U of I Extension in Carroll and Ogle, with partnerships of Farm Bureau and Soil and Water.

Baby Chicks teach life skills

Hands-on learning isn’t always an easy task for teachers balancing a full agenda in their classrooms, but thanks to the 4-H Chick Incubation and Embryology program, students get an opportunity to learn by doing.



During the 2021 school year, 4-H Extension staff provided the embryology program to 60 classrooms in 26 schools across Boone, DeKalb, and Ogle counties, reaching 1,592 youth who successfully hatched 757 baby chicks.

Just three weeks of incubation transforms a seemingly lifeless chicken egg into an active, living being. Children have a natural sense of curiosity about living things in the world around them. Building on this curiosity, students can develop an understanding of biology concepts through direct experience with living things, their life cycles, and their habitats. Many believe that students learn best through their experiences and interactions with the world. They learn by listening, observing, experimenting, and applying their knowledge to real-world situations.

Recently retired Founders elementary teacher Pam Bybee says, "One of my favorite experiences in the fourth grade classroom has been implementing an embryology unit. I have happily participated in this program for several years. This is a wonderful opportunity for children of all ages. They are able to share in the life cycle process or metamorphosis in real life."

The course is designed to provide elementary and high school teachers with knowledge on the egg, its importance to man, and its role in reproduction of the species. Teachers are trained to conduct classroom incubation and embryonic development projects in conjunction with 4-H staff. During the 21-day incubation period, students learn to prepare eggs, set up an incubator, record progress, turn eggs, and test eggs for fertility. This project aligns with state learning standards.

"Also, hatching baby chicks teaches children how to be responsible for a living creature, patience, making predictions, data collection, and a love of an animal. Thank you so much to 4-H and the U of I Extension Office for sharing with us the delightful process of hatching baby chicks," adds Bybee.



Fourth grade teachers Pam Bybee and Joy Walter pose with chicks from their chick incubation experience in 2021.

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.



	Clubs	Participants
Boone	322	829
Dekalb	307	1,450
Ogle	303	2,745





Cooking School is hands-on fun

Two weeks of cooking school with hands-on learning were offered in Boone County during the summer 2021. A Walmart Healthy Living Grant aided Boone County 4-H's partnership with Belvidere School District 100 and North Boone School District 200.



The 4-H Teen Teaching model was used. Ten 4-H teens were recruited and received ten hours of training. Through this program, math and language skills were reinforced, and the youth gained valuable life skills.

The training covered positive youth development, age-appropriate lessons, classroom dynamics, as well as presentation and cooking skills. The teens tested recipes and wrote lesson plans that included cooking, nutrition, and exercise. Each teen taught a lesson and oversaw a group of students.



"I loved working with all the kids," says Teen Teacher Blake Stark. "It was a blast!"

Brooke Glander shared, "I benefited from the program by gaining leadership skills and helping kids learn through fun hands-on activities they can use in their everyday lives."

At North Boone the 10-hour program reached 42 kids; the 16-hour Belvidere program reached 21. The youth enjoyed a Food Challenge, where each group of students developed their own

recipe for pizza and salsa. The youth embraced the challenge, created their recipes, and presented their dishes to fellow students.

"It was great to see the enthusiasm in the kids," says 4-H program coordinator Melissa Irwin. "They were proud of what they made. Their confidence developed in the kitchen then led them to experiment without reservation."



Dr. Megan Johnson, assistant superintendent for Belvidere School District 100, says, "Belvidere D100 students loved the summer cooking class that was offered! The class was a fun, interactive, and hands-on experience for them. Students were excited to attend each day, and the classroom was filled with lots of laughter! The students want to know if they could do this again next summer."





Everything upstream ends up downstream



Illinois Extension has made stewardship of water, land, and air resources one of its priority areas for programming. This fall, Peggy Doty, natural resources, environment, and energy educator, and Mike Delany, community and economic development educator, assisted with one such program related to the Pine Creek watershed in Ogle County.

In the project’s initial phase, the Ogle Extension team organized a gathering on a beautiful afternoon at White Pines Forest State Park on the banks of the Pine Creek. There, Doty and Extension Specialist Rachel Curry engaged a dozen or so local stakeholders in a discussion of resource and water quality concerns.

A watershed is an area of land that drains rain water or snow from all the streams to a common outlet, such as the outflow of a reservoir, stream, lake, or wetland. Watersheds are important because the surface water features and storm water runoff within a watershed ultimately drain to other bodies of water. It is essential to consider these downstream impacts when developing and implementing water quality protection and restoration actions.

These bodies supply water for drinking, agriculture, and manufacturing, as well as offer opportunities for recreation (kayaking and fishing, anyone?) and provide habitat to numerous plants and animals. Upstream ends up downstream in the mouth of a bay or any point along a stream channel.

This Extension project has several phases and will likely take several years. The local Extension personnel will continue to support these efforts, in pursuit of the ultimate goal of a cleaner and more sustainable watershed environment in Ogle County and downstream.

Visit Dolce Vita, an organic urban garden



On its own, the Dolce Vita/Northwestern Garden is a truly impressive space. As an Illinois Master Gardener Food Donation Garden and part of the Food Needs Program of DeKalb County Community Gardens (DCCG), it covers two acres.

This organic urban garden boasts 36+ raised beds, 24 unique feature gardens, six composting areas, two hoop houses, and a Little Library. Walking paths crisscross the garden, which is also an official Certified Wildlife Habitat site with the National Wildlife Federation and Prairie Rivers Network, a certified Monarch Way Station, and an active participant in Aveda Corporation’s Sustainability Mission.

All planting, maintenance, and harvesting of produce (about 8,000 pounds each season) is done by volunteers led by Lori Brown, DeKalb County Master Gardener, and distributed directly to local residents through DCCG’s Grow Mobile and other local food pantries. Brown also partners with several organizations to provide educational and service opportunities to children and adults.

Many collaborations engaged with Brown on site in 2021: a Jr. Master Gardener Program in partnership with the DeKalb Park District, Opportunity House residents weekly opportunities to earn service hours delivering produce, partnering with the DeKalb County 4-H Little Roots program, and educational events for the DeKalb High School S.O.A.L. program. Brown plans to add a spring education partnership with Upward Bound.

“This is such a great program,” a parent of a participant in the Jr. Master Gardener program says. “My kids have learned so much, and love getting to play. We all like getting our hands dirty and helping out. When are you doing this again?”



A Dolce Vita unique feature garden.



The Kitchen Table garden beds were designed and donated by Eagle Scout David Kennedy.



The Kitchen Table Community Garden

Growing Together Illinois funding helped to establish the community gardens at The Kitchen Table. Through the combined efforts of the Ogle County Master Gardeners and SNAP-Ed, the community garden at The Kitchen Table Café in Rochelle became a central location for providing fresh produce to those in need in the Rochelle area.

The Kitchen Table is a pay-what-you-can café that provides nutritious meals to the community and serves anyone regardless of their ability to pay. Multiple community groups provided key components to the success of all the gardens. The garden beds were designed and donated to The Kitchen Table by Eagle Scout David Kennedy.

Master Gardeners and local 4-H clubs assisted with watering, harvesting, and weekly care of the gardens. Most of the transplants were started from seed and donated by Kishwaukee College's horticulture department.

The produce grown was made available to those who dined at the café as well as a local food pantry. Four garden beds produced a total of 358.25 pounds of produce. Aside from just the garden work, the Master Gardeners and a SNAP-Ed community worker offered educational lessons in the garden.

When asked what they enjoyed most about working in the garden, the youth said they really liked digging up the sweet potatoes. They had never done that before.

Buchanan Street Community Gardens



Food insecurity is an issue in Boone County. To help address hunger needs, the Boone County Master Gardeners work with a variety of audiences in community gardens to teach them how to grow their own food. This past growing season, the Master Gardeners used the Buchanan Street Community Gardens located in Belvidere as a learning space with the Juntos 4-H Latino Club.

The Buchanan Street Community Garden is a community effort garden. The City of Belvidere provides the space and water for the garden. A local high school ag teacher, along with her students, have been growing plants for the garden for the last two years and continue to offer her service to help feed the community.

Master Gardeners met with the youth twice a month, from May to October, to teach them about gardening from seed to harvest and general garden care. To encourage ownership of the garden, the youth were asked to participate in a weekly watering schedule making sure the gardens were watered on a regular basis.

The youth grew roughly 625 pounds of produce that was then donated to a local food pantry and a low-income housing apartment building. They were also encouraged to take produce home with them so they could taste and enjoy what they had grown.

Working in the gardens and donating the produce provided a community service project for the youth and gave the Master Gardeners an opportunity to share their knowledge of growing food with others. The youth enjoyed their time in the garden learning and even asked to do the project again the next growing season.



Buchanan Street Community Gardens grew roughly 625 lbs. of produce that was donated to a local food pantry.



Diverse groups gather for regional relationship-building

Boone County, like many other counties around the state, has an increasingly diverse population. One facet of the work of Mike Delany and his colleagues on Illinois Extension's community and economic development (CED) team do is the promotion of business-development opportunities for diverse community members.

In Fall 2021, Mike organized an event combining educational programming with regional relationship-building. The collaboration included several local organizations and introduced the newly formed Rockford Regional Hispanic Chamber of Commerce. Also in attendance was Adam Shanks, the newly appointed director of the U.S. Commercial Service's regional office.

Held at the Boone County Extension office, the event offered attendees a viewing of a federal Global Diversity Export Initiative webinar and tied it to a meet and greet opportunity with Shanks. The well-attended program included elected officials and economic development professionals from the area. It also provided an opportunity for the group to have a conversation about the challenges businesses face. The event has generated a new initiative in the region, a forum which will bring together business advocacy groups representing various underrepresented minorities, to enhance the business connections and opportunities of their constituents.

"I was very pleased with the educational session that Illinois Extension hosted in Boone County and was able to help a few business owners and a new chamber of commerce with the information provided in this session," says Sully Cadengo, founding president, Rockford Regional Hispanic Chamber of Commerce. "I look forward to attending more educational sessions through University of Illinois Extension and finding new ways to help the community."



Adam Shanks, left, new director of the region's U.S. Commercial Service office, is introduced to area business and civic leaders in Boone County Extension office.



As COVID-19 continued to impact governments, businesses, and communities, Illinois Extension's Local Government Education program increased its outreach aimed at economic investment and community vitality, workforce development, leadership, policy, equity, and resiliency. By partnering with state leadership and organizations in Illinois, the Illinois Extension Community and Economic Development team has provided outreach aimed to help local governments and residents build capacity to strengthen their communities and organizations and improve public services.



Access past and future programs
<https://go.illinois.edu/LGE>

Statewide Webinar Reach



60
Webinars in 2021



2,003
Individuals Learned about Leadership, Public Service, and Community Involvement



1,094
Individuals Learned about Meeting Needs of Diverse or Vulnerable Populations



3,955
Individuals Reached in Economic and Financial Stability Webinars



1,043
Reached in Economic Vitality and Community Resiliency Webinars

Community-Driven Broadband Reach



1,228
Community Leaders Educated on Broadband Expansion Opportunities



714
Participants Educated on Obtaining Funding and Needs Assessment



416
Individuals Reached on Broadband Project Management

The University of Illinois Extension's community and economic development team helps communities build capacity for creative and informed decision-making to enhance their quality of life.

EXTENSION COUNCIL

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Cover photos: (top left) Pam Bybee & Joy Walter, Embryology program; (top right) Richard Dreier, DeKalb Master Gardener
(bottom left) Buchanan Street Community Garden, DeKalb; (bottom right) Lori and Brooke teaching summer cooking classes

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.