

# **Extension Programming to Enhance Urban Well-Being**

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## **Case Study Series**

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Case study series led by  
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2021

## Project Overview

For over a century, Extension has fulfilled its mission of working with community to bring local knowledge and science-based information together to co-create solutions for well-being. Extension has increasingly recognized the unique context of engagement in urban communities to improve social, economic, and environmental conditions (Crossgrove et al., 2005; Gaolach et al., 2017).

To better understand and expand upon Extension programming in urban communities, qualitative research provided a foundation for a series of cases presented in program snapshots. The cases selected for this study incorporate urban context and strategy (De Ciantis, 2015), as well as elements of [well-being](#) (Rath, Harter, & Harter, 2010).

- Urban Context: scale, diversity, complexity, urban-rural interface
- Urban Strategy: positioning, programs, personnel, partnerships
- Well-being: Career, Social, Financial, Physical, Community

This case study project was conducted to inform a book chapter on Extension Programming to Enhance Urban Wellbeing for the book titled "The Role of the Social Sciences in Extension" which will be published by Cambridge University Press in 2023. This case study research aims to help urban Extension leaders and other social scientists better understand:

- The real-life context of urban Extension in communities across the country.
- Urban Extension strategies, programs, and impacts as illustrated in alignment with the [National Urban Extension Leaders \(NUEL\) framework](#) (De Ciantis, 2015).
- Opportunities to further advance how Extension addresses the urban context in ways that result in Extension being relevant locally, responsive statewide, and recognized nationally.

For this study, a thematic approach guided case selection, with each program occurring in an urban context and each contributor having a connection to a national urban Extension network. Different geographic locations and programmatic focus help illustrate and discover the variances unique to each area case. Program cases were identified using a search of national sources including:

- [Extension Foundation](#)
- [Joint Council of Extension Professionals \(JCEP\)](#)
- [Journal of Extension \(JOE\)](#)
- [Journal of Human Sciences an Extension \(JHSE\), Special Issue: Urban Extension \(2017\)](#)
- [National Urban Extension Leaders \(NUEL\)](#)
- [Western Center for Metropolitan Extension and Research \(WCMER\)](#)

### Cases:

- Rutgers 4-H STEM Ambassador Program
- Produce Perks in Cleveland, Ohio
- University of Idaho Extension Diabetes Prevention Program
- Fostering Sustainability at the Community Level
- Central Kentucky Job Club

Case study protocol and guidance was led by Julie M. Fox, Ph.D., [fox.264@osu.edu](mailto:fox.264@osu.edu)

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# Extension Programming to Enhance Urban Well-Being

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## Case Study Series Research Guidebook

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*Engaging with community  
to bring local knowledge and science-based information together  
to co-create solutions  
for well-being in urban communities*

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This case study series is a supplement to program snapshots  
featured in the urban-themed chapter of  
***Understanding Cooperative Extension Education in the Social Sciences***  
Maria Rosario T. de Guzman and Holly Hatton-Bowers, University of Nebraska-Lincoln  
Cambridge University Press (2024)

Case study series led by  
Julie M. Fox, Ph.D., Ohio State University Extension  
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### **Inclusion/Accessibility**

The Ohio State University is committed to building and maintaining a community to reflect human diversity and to improve opportunities for all. OSU's College of Food, Agricultural, and Environmental Sciences (CFAES) and its academic and research departments including Ohio State University Extension embrace human diversity and are committed to ensuring that all research and related educational programs are available to clientele on a nondiscriminatory basis without regard to age, ancestry, color, disability, gender identity or expression, genetic information, HIV/AIDS status, military status, national origin, race, religion, sex, gender, sexual orientation, pregnancy, or veteran status. This statement is in accordance with U.S. civil rights laws and the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

### **Suggested Citation in APA Format for this Guidebook**

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### **Suggested Citation in APA Format for the Book Chapter**

Fox, J. M. (2024). Extension programming to enhance urban well-being. In M. R. T. de Guzman & H. Hatton (Eds.), *Extension education and the social sciences*. Cambridge University Press. <https://cambridge.org/9781108833387>

### **Project Website**

<https://urban-extension.cfaes.ohio-state.edu/programs/national-program-highlights>

### **Acknowledgement**

Michelle Gaston, Ohio State University Extension, managed project details in support of this case study and its related material.

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# I. Case Study Introduction

## A. Purpose

Case studies allow researchers to investigate contemporary complex phenomenon within real-life context (Creswell & Poth, 2016; Yin, 2011) and are often used in organizational (Hartley, 1994) and social science research (Yin, 2003).

Case study research was selected as the qualitative method to inform an urban themed chapter of the new book *Understanding Cooperative Extension Education in the Social Sciences* published by Cambridge University Press and edited by Maria Rosario T. de Guzman and Holly Hatton-Bowers from the University of Nebraska-Lincoln. The chapter focuses on Extension programming in urban communities. The multiple case study approach, common in the social sciences, was selected to illuminate contextual aspects of the situation by gathering both agreed upon and diverse views (Lauckner, et al., 2012; Thomas, 2011).

This case study research aims to help urban Extension leaders and other social scientists better understand:

- the real-life **context** of urban Extension in communities across the country
- urban Extension **strategies**, programs, and impacts as illustrated in alignment with the [National Urban Extension Leaders \(NUEL\) framework](#)
- meaningful connection between urban Extension and the urban perspective in social science
- opportunities to further advance how Extension addresses the urban context in ways that result in Extension being relevant locally, responsive statewide, and recognized nationally

Cases featuring programs in urban communities with diverse audiences help inform emerging practices in program planning, marketing, implementation, evaluation, and reporting.

## B. Context

For over a century, Extension has fulfilled its mission of working with community to bring local knowledge and science-based information together to co-create solutions for well-being. Extension has increasingly recognized the unique context of engagement in urban communities to improve social, economic, and environmental conditions (Crossgrove et al., 2005; Gaolach et al., 2017). As people have moved into more suburban and urban communities, Extension began offering diverse programming such as health and nutrition, financial literacy, community development, and protecting the environment (Franz & Towson, 2008). However, there remains opportunity to address the urban context in research, program development, and organizational planning. (Gaolach et al., 2017; Panshin, 1992; Young & Jones, 2017). With a national network across the country, Extension continues to explore ways that are relevant at the local level, responsive statewide, and recognized on a national scale. The size and diversity of urban counties alone creates unique challenges and prevents mere adaptation of existing programming and strategies.

NUEL (2015) refers to programs as how Extension addresses the multitude of issues and priorities in metropolitan areas. Programs for public and private good are defined many ways throughout Extension, ranging from a single event to an issue-specific project, a collaborative initiative, or Extension's primary program areas of 4-H youth development, agriculture and natural resources, community development, and family and consumer sciences. NUEL's focus areas include improving our health, enriching youth, feeding the future, strengthening communities, and protecting the environment.

### **C. Research Team**

The research team is led by Dr. Julie Fox, with support from Michelle Gaston, DaVonti' Haynes, and Amelia Michaels, all with Ohio State University Extension.

As project leader, Fox established protocol, prepared the team for case study research, led case analysis, and authored publications. Fox made initial personal contact with the case contributors to provide context for the case studies and book chapter. As project coordinator, Gaston managed communications, publication editing, reporting, and project logistics. Data analysis was supported by graduate student, Haynes. Extension professional Michaels collaborated with Gaston on a StoryMap and other multi-media documentation of the case study. Case contributors, listed in the Methods section, submit cases according to the protocol detailed in this Guidebook.

### **D. Timeline**

In August 2020 an invitation to author a book chapter was received by Fox from editor Maria Rosario T. de Guzman. Valuing diverse perspective, Fox selected case study as a method to inform the chapter on urban Extension programming. Case contributors were invited at the end of 2020, with guidance on case study protocol provided December 2020-January 2021. Initial case study drafts will be submitted mid-February and final versions completed mid-May. Case analysis and reporting begins in February and concludes in June.



## II. Case Study **Methods**

### A. Case Selection

For this study, a thematic approach guided case selection, with the similarity of urban context and connection to a national urban Extension leader and the difference of geographic location and programmatic focus. Cases were identified using a search of national sources including:

- [National Urban Extension Leaders \(NUEL\)](#)
- [Western Center for Metropolitan Extension and Research \(WCMER\)](#)
- [Journal of Extension \(JOE\)](#)
- [Journal of Human Sciences an Extension \(JHSE\), urban-themed issue](#)
- [Joint Council of Extension Professionals \(JCEP\)](#)
- [eXtension](#)

The cases selected promise crucial insights into urban context and strategy and incorporate elements of well-being established by Rath et al., (2010). Cases were identified and participants invited to:

- illustrate how Extension addresses urban issues, particularly one that addresses youth and family well-being
- explore and describe exceptional programs that are relevant locally, responsive statewide, and/or recognized nationally
- represent each region as designated by the Extension Committee on Organization and Policy (ECOP)
- demonstrate contributor connections with national urban Extension initiatives

**Table 1. Cases and Contributors**

<b>Program Title</b>	<b>Contributor</b>	<b>Title</b>	<b>University Extension</b>
Produce Perks, Cleveland, Ohio	Nicole Debose	County Extension Director/Area Leaders	The Ohio State University
Fostering Sustainability at a Community Level	Ramona Madhosingh-Hector	Regional Specialized Agent, Urban Sustainability	University of Florida
Rutgers 4-H STEM Ambassador Program	Chad Ripberger	County 4-H Agent, CEDH	Rutgers University
Prevent Type 2 Diabetes	Bridget Morrisroe-Aman	Extension Educator	University of Idaho
Central Kentucky Job Club	Jeffrey Young	Urban Extension	University of Kentucky

## **B. Data Collection**

For this multiple case study qualitative research project, case contributors utilize this Case Study Series Research Guidebook and template to guide program observations, semi-structured interviews, and multimedia document review (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016; Weller et al., 2018). The project director provided a summary to review the project purpose, case study background, pre-specified field procedures, and expectations for sharing research findings. While the situation in each case presents a unique perspective on Extension in an urban community, the guide for the project outlined consistent content for collection of the following information.

### **Outline to guide case self-reporting, interviews, observation, and document review**

#### **Program Overview**

- Title
- Location
- Issue/s Addressed
- Audience/s
- Duration
- Scope

#### **Urban Context** (following the [National Urban Extension Leaders \(NUEL\) framework](#))

- Scale
- Diversity
- Complexity
- Urban-Rural Interface
- Unique

#### **Strategic Approach to Urban Engagement** (NUEL framework)

- Programming – Relevance and Impacts
- Positioning – Awareness and Accessibility
- Personnel – Capacity and Alignment
- Partnerships (external) – Connections and Resources

#### **Impact**

- Program's impact and how it was measured

#### **Closing Comments and Looking to the Future**

- Unique aspects of the program that haven't been mentioned yet
- Challenges faced and overcome
- Related programs you learned from as you developed this program
- What's next for the program
- Recommendations for others engaged in similar types of programming

The complete case study series template can be found in the Appendix.

## **Interviews**

Interviews of individuals or groups allow researchers to attain rich information (Hancock & Algozzine, 2017). With the template as a guide, case contributors who are not self-reporting will conduct guided interviews with program leaders and/or other key informants in individual or group settings. Interview notes will be captured via handwritten notes and/or audio recordings if permitted by the interviewee. All interviewees will be informed that the interview conversations are voluntary and confidential, and their responses would be de-identified in the final analysis and report unless approved with a signed photo release or testimonial.

## **Observations**

Direct observation is a valued technique of qualitative data collection (Morgan et al., 2017). Observing people in their natural environment avoids challenges inherent in self-reported accounts (Mays & Pope, 1995). When possible, case contributors will include observation of onsite and/or online programming and program management, using the outline to note interaction among personnel, clients, and partners as related to urban context and strategy.

## **Document Review**

Document review results in information and insight into urban Extension practice. Utilizing document review in conjunction with other methods to triangulate data can result in evidence-based best practices (Bretschneider et al., 2017) which reduces the risk of bias and increases understanding from different perspectives. Case contributors will select and review documents as guided by the case study template.

### *Note: Third-Party Materials*

*For the book chapter, the case contributor is responsible for obtaining (and recording) Permissions Clearance for inclusion of any third-party materials within the contribution. Third-party material is any textual, illustrative, audio, video, or any other copyright-protected material(s) included in the contribution in which the copyright is owned or controlled by a third-party. Permission clearance means the acquisition of the right to include third-party materials in the contribution.*

## **C. Analysis**

Fox will lead the analysis team to better understand similarities and differences in approaches to Extension based on urban context and urban strategy. The researchers' approach will be interpretive and analytical, rather than solely descriptive (Merriam, 1988; Stake, 1995). This approach was selected to illuminate contextual aspects of the situation to gather both agreed upon and diverse views (Lauckner et al., 2012).

Data will be analyzed using the constant comparative method (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016) of analysis, assigning and organizing codes into meaningful concepts. To address dependability, confirmability, and credibility, an audit trail includes coded case notes from multiple reviewers and multiple sources (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Comparative research has become an established research strategy (Bartlett & Vavrus, 2016) in urban studies for deducting conclusions based upon the understanding of commonalities and differences across places (Krehl & Weck, 2020). The approach is to contextualize not generalize insights into the urban perspective (Tasan-Kok et al., 2013).

The coding structure follows the outline included in section IIB of this Guidebook (Data Collection) and in the Appendix.

### **III. Case Study Reports**

#### **A. Case Series and Report**

The complete case study series and final report will be published by year-end 2021. Individual cases and the comprehensive series, report, and multimedia case study resources will be available online in accessible formats.

#### **B. Book Chapter**

Case study research was selected as the qualitative method to inform an urban-themed chapter of the new book *Understanding Cooperative Extension Education in the Social Sciences* published by Cambridge University Press and edited by Maria Rosario T. de Guzman and Holly Hatton-Bowers from the University of Nebraska-Lincoln. The chapter focuses on Extension programming in urban communities. Information from each case study will be summarized for program snapshots of approximately 500-750 words in the book chapter.

#### **C. Presentations**

Findings will be shared through author and case contributor presentations, with standard citations. An interactive StoryMap presentation will be created for online multimedia access to the cases.

## IV. Case Study **Appendix**

### A. Project Communications

The primary communication method was email with supplementary phone and Zoom correspondence for clarity.

#### Case Contributor

##### Sample Invitation

Hello \_\_\_\_\_,  
Hope all is well in your world. I'm working on new project and wondered if you wanted to be a contributor based on your work with \_\_\_\_\_.

As a leader in urban Extension, you're invited to contribute to a new book from Cambridge University Press on *Understanding Cooperative Extension Education in the Social Sciences*, edited by Maria Rosario T. de Guzman and Holly Hatton-Bowers from the University of Nebraska-Lincoln.

One of the chapters focuses on Extension programming in urban communities. The majority of the chapter illustrates strategic approaches to urban Extension through a series of program snapshots from across the country. As lead author, I'm inviting a few urban Extension leaders to share their stories through a case study featuring an exceptional program that is relevant locally, responsive statewide, and/or recognized nationally.

Base on your work with \_\_\_\_\_ project I hope you will consider contributing a story (case study) about one of your Extension programs that addresses urban issues, particularly one that addresses child, youth, and family well-being. The case study will be summarized into a program snapshot of 500-750 words. The complete case study series will also be shared online.

You can make a real difference by sharing your urban Extension program through this social science publication. We're designing a simple process that should not be time intensive. Initial drafts should be ready mid-Feb with a final version completed by mid-May. If you're interested in being a contributor, I'll send additional details to provide guidance on case study protocol.

Please let me know if you would like to be a contributor by December 11, 2020.  
Take care and have a wonderful holiday season.  
-Julie

## Preparation

We hope this note finds you well.

Thank you so much for contributing to the chapter *featuring Extension Programming to Address Urban Issues* in the new book, *Understanding Cooperative Extension Education in the Social Sciences*.

To inform the book chapter, we're using case study research. Your case will be published as part of the case study series and it will be summarized as a program snapshot in the book chapter.

The attached template provides an outline to guide case studies in this series. You can use this outline to guide your own self-reporting and/or use it to guide observation, document review, and/or a semi-structured interview with your program leader or program team.

This case study research aims to help urban Extension leaders and other social scientists better understand:

- the real-life context of urban Extension in communities across the country
- urban Extension strategies, programs, and impacts as illustrated in alignment with the [National Urban Extension Leaders \(NUEL\) framework](#)
- meaningful connection between urban Extension and the urban perspective in social science
- opportunities to further advance how Extension addresses the urban context in ways that result in Extension being relevant locally, responsive statewide, and recognized nationally

The draft Case Study Series Research Guidebook is attached to provide additional project background; guidance on data collection through interviews, observation, and document review; and expectations for sharing research findings. While the situation in each case presents a unique perspective on Extension in an urban community, the Guidebook for the project outlines consistent content on urban context and urban strategy.

I'm happy to visit with you if you'd like.

### Timeline

- Dec-Jan: Guidance on case study protocol
- Mid-February: Initial case study draft due
- Mid-May: Final version completed

As I think about our collective work, I'm excited about sharing this series to celebrate our cities and illustrate how *we as LGU Extension engage with community to bring local knowledge and science-based information together to co-create solutions for well-being in urban communities*.

Wishing you a happy and healthy holiday season.

-Julie

## Final Case Submission Confirmation

Thank you for contributing to the chapter *featuring Extension Programming to Address Urban Issues* in the new book, *Understanding Cooperative Extension Education in the Social Sciences*.

Julie used the case study you contributed to summarize and create a program snapshot which will be used as an example in the book chapter. Attached you will find your snapshot called Book Chapter as it was returned from the authors. If there are any changes or notes from the editor, you will see those. If you have any changes to make, please do so in the Word Doc with track changes turned on. Please submit any recommended changes back to us by Monday, October 25.

We plan to include a formatted snap shot and case study documents online here <https://urban-extension.cfaes.ohio-state.edu/programs/national-program-highlights>. Before we post those documents, we'd like you to review the working drafts we've attached, answer any questions asked, and suggest changes with track changes on. We'd also like to have this input back by October 25 if possible.

Again, we thank you for your contribution to this project showcasing the importance of urban Extension. If you have any questions, please let us know.

-Julie & Michelle

## Notice of book publication

[insert when notified by editors]

## Standard communication for case contributors to use with those they engage in the case study

I'm contributing to an urban-themed chapter of the new book *Understanding Cooperative Extension Education in the Social Sciences* published by Cambridge University Press. To help inform the chapter on Extension programming in urban communities, I'm conducting a case study on X program and would like – insert request for document, interview, or opportunity to observe. Your participation is voluntary and confidential, and your responses will be de-identified in the final analysis and report unless approved with a signed photo release or testimonial. Thank you for helping us better understand and communicate urban context and strategy.

## Standard citation in APA 7<sup>th</sup> Edition format

Fox, J. M. (2024). Extension programming to enhance urban well-being. In M. R. T. de Guzman & H. Hatton (Eds.), *Extension education and the social sciences* (pp. xx-xx). Cambridge University Press. <https://cambridge.org/9781108833387>

## B. Project Documents

### Case Study Template

# Extension Programming to Address Urban Issues

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## Case Study Series

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Insert graphic to represent this specific case study

Caption if appropriate

**Name of Urban Extension Program**

**Location**

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**Contributor Name, Title, University**

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This case study series is a supplement to program snapshots featured in the urban-themed chapter of *Understanding Cooperative Extension Education in the Social Sciences* Maria Rosario T. de Guzman and Holly Hutton-Bowers University of Nebraska-Lincoln Cambridge University Press

Case study series led by  
Julie Fox, Ph.D., Ohio State University Extension  
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2021

### Program Overview

- Title – name of your program
- Location – describe the location of your program
- Issue/s Addressed – community need and how the issue/s were identified: secondary data, primary data, participatory community engagement, advisory, etc.
- Audience/s – audience/s engaged in your program
- Reach – how widespread is your program and how it is relevant locally, responsive statewide, and/or recognized nationally?
- Duration – how long the program has been in existence

### Urban Context [National Urban Extension Leaders \(NUEL\) framework](#)

Describe your metro area.

- Scale – population density and crowded, competitive market
- Diversity – people and environments
- Complexity – navigating multifaceted issues, numerous jurisdictions, urban and university environments
- Urban-Rural Interface if relevant to the audience or program
- Unique – anything that makes your community and/or university Extension unique

### Strategic Approach to Urban Engagement (NUEL framework)

- Programming – Relevance and Impacts
  - Type/s of programming and engagement (community meetings, online or onsite education, publications, etc.) Include program planning/evaluation model used
- Positioning – Awareness and Accessibility
  - Add program marketing and communications/accessibility issues addressed
- Personnel – Capacity and Alignment
  - Address how faculty, staff, students, and volunteers were involved – roles/competencies, how prepared/recognized/rewarded
  - Share how internal university partners supported the effort needs/asset assessment, program planning and evaluation, marketing, grant/contract management, other
- Partnerships (external) – Connections and Resources
  - Types of partner/s and types of program support (financial, marketing, event space, etc.)

### Impact

- Program impacts and how measured. Consider including both data and quotes/testimonials from diverse stakeholders.
- Recognition – what recognition has the program received, including awards?
- How did the program contribute to wellbeing *as defined by Gallup* (physical, financial, social, community, career)?

### Closing Comments and Looking to the Future

- Unique aspects of the program that *haven't* been mentioned yet
- Challenges faced and overcome
- Related programs you learned from as you developed this program
- Future – *What's* next for the program?
- Recommendations for others engaged in similar types of programming

Extension Programming to Address Urban Issues: program name
Draft maby 2

### Multimedia Documentation/References

First, summarize the list of resources included in your case study document review. For example, consider program planning correspondence, meeting minutes, and documents; community maps and needs/asset assessments; marketing materials and social media engagement; curriculum and participant resources; impact reports and award recognition.

Then share images with captions and links to:

- multimedia resources to illustrate your programming in the urban context
- references if the program was recognized locally or nationally
- any other information that would help others better understand or replicate your program

### Contributor

your name, title, university/Extension, contact

**Brief bio as it relates to your role/s with local and national urban Extension**

*Local: How is Extension positioned in your university? How is urban positioned in Extension?*

*National: ECOP region and your connections with NUEL, NUEL, JOE/JHSE author, ESP Affinity, Urban 4-H program group, WCIMER, ~~extension~~ urban efforts, the Kettering Urban Communities Reimagined project.*

*Consider including personal perspective on how and why you became involved with urban Extension*

*Acknowledge others who contributed to the case study, except for interviewees who participated voluntarily in confidential conversations (see Case Study Guidebook).*

*Insert logo to be included with publication.*

Extension Programming to Address Urban Issues: program name
Draft maby 3



## Case Study Review Guide

### Extension Programming to Address Urban Issues

#### 2021 Case Study Series – Analysis

##### Q1 Program Overview

Case	A1. Location/s (type)	A2. ECOP Region	C. Issue/s (how identified)	C1. Audience Description	C2. Audience Data Source/s	D. Duration (sustained 3+ years promising 1-2 yrs)	E. Scope (local, state, national)
I							
II							
III							
IV							
V							
VI							
VII							
VIII							

##### Q2 Urban Context

Case	A. Scale	B. Diversity	C. Complexity	D. Urban/Rural	E1. Unique City	E2. Unique Univ	F. Overall Context
I							
II							
III							
IV							
V							
VI							
VII							
VIII							

Extension Programming to Address Urban Issues: Case Study Analysis

Draft 12/22/20 1

##### Q3 Urban Strategy

Case	A1. Program Planning Model	A2. Program Engage Methods	B. Positioning	C1. Personnel	C2. Volunteers	C3. Internal partners	D. Partnerships (type, contribution)
I							
II							
III							
IV							
V							
VI							
VII							
VIII							

##### Q4 Impact

Case	A1. Impact	A2. How measured	B. Recognition	C. Wellbeing Contribution
I				
II				
III				
IV				
V				
VI				
VII				
VIII				

##### Q5 Closing and Future

Case	A. Unique program aspects	B. Challenges	C. Related Programs	D. Future Plans	E. Recommendations	F. Contributor National Connection	G. Method (self-report, interview, document review, observation)
I							
II							
III							
IV							
V							
VI							
VII							
VIII							

Extension Programming to Address Urban Issues: Case Study Analysis

Draft 12/22/20 2

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# Extension Programming to Enhance Urban Well-Being

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## Case Study Series

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### **Rutgers 4-H STEM Ambassador Program New Jersey – Collaboration of Seven Urban Counties**

Chad Ripberger, Janice McDonnell, Marycarmen Kunicki, Marissa Staffen, James Nichnadowicz  
4-H Youth Development, Rutgers Cooperative Extension

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This case study series is a supplement to program snapshots featured in the Extension Programming to Enhance Urban Well-Being chapter of ***Extension Education and the Social Sciences***

Maria Rosario T. de Guzman and Holly Hatton, University of Nebraska-Lincoln  
Cambridge University Press (2024)

Case study series led by  
Julie M. Fox, Ph.D., Ohio State University Extension  
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2021

## **Program Overview – Rutgers 4-H STEM Ambassador Program**

### **Location**

The Rutgers 4-H STEM Ambassador Program began in 2009. The program is in the central cities of seven of the most urban counties of New Jersey, including six northern and central New Jersey counties that are in the New York metro area, between Philadelphia and New York City. Those counties are Essex, Hudson, Mercer, Middlesex, Passaic, and Union as well as Atlantic County in South Jersey, home of Atlantic City.

### **Issue/s Addressed**

The Rutgers 4-H STEM Ambassador Program began in 2009 with the objective of encouraging urban youth from groups underrepresented in STEM to participate in science and research in a series of interactive activities, and gain a better understanding of opportunities available in science, engineering, and technology. Part of the growing 4-H youth development mandate is to prepare and empower our youth to get involved in a career in STEM. Several years ago, a series of national reports sounded alarm bells among youth development specialists about the need to engage our youth in science and technology, across all backgrounds, but especially in our urban communities.

The 2006 National Academies report, *Rising Above the Gathering Storm*, highlighted the shortage of highly qualified educators and mentors who can translate and teach science, engineering, technology, and math content and skills. A 2007 report from the National Association of State Universities and Land-Grant Colleges identified science, engineering, technology, and math for youth as a growth area. National 4-H later unveiled SET (Science, Engineering, and Technology), now 4-H Science, as a critical part of its mandate, and Rutgers Cooperative Extension has since been playing an ever-increasing and vital role in creating interest and competency in these areas, especially among those traditionally underrepresented in STEM, including women and racial and ethnic minorities.

### **Audience/s**

The primary audience includes high school youth who are from groups underrepresented in STEM majors and careers – including young women, African Americans, and Latinos. The program targets youth from urban communities between Philadelphia and New York City, where 4-H has fewer youth engaged in traditional project areas but more programming through collaborating afterschool and summer program providers. Each year, a new cohort of 45-65 8th-9th graders are selected to receive full scholarships to participate in the multi-year pre-college program (over 500 teenagers have become 4-H STEM Ambassadors since 2009). The recruitment process includes applications, transcripts, essays, and interviews. Many are the first generation in their family to pursue a college education. A secondary audience is the younger youth reached by the trained 4-H STEM Ambassadors, as they facilitate science and engineering projects through afterschool, weekend, and summer programs in their home communities.

Another important audience is a large group of Rutgers scientists and engineers (about 35-50 per year) who contribute their time and expertise to the program. These STEM professionals include Rutgers professors, post docs, graduate students, and undergraduates. They lead full-day research projects, invite STEM Ambassadors into their labs and classrooms, and participate in roundtable discussions about their journey in STEM.

## **Reach**

Currently, seven of New Jersey's 21 counties are engaged in the Rutgers 4-H STEM Ambassador Program by recruiting and supporting a new cohort of 45-65 teenagers as ambassadors each year. This is a total of more than 200 teens involved in any given year (over four years of high school). The STEM Ambassadors primarily serve youth audiences in their home communities in the seven participating counties. They have also expanded their STEM teaching and promotion to other counties with the use of virtual technologies, especially since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic.

## **Urban Context**

The Rutgers 4-H STEM Ambassador Program serves youth from several targeted cities within the New York metropolitan area – including Newark (281,054), New Brunswick (55,960), Passaic (70,019), Paterson (145,710), and Trenton (83,412). These communities stretch from Philadelphia to New York City and represent some of the most densely populated urban communities of New Jersey, which is the most densely populated state in the country. These cities are racially and ethnically diverse with concentrations of poverty, drug abuse, violence, and low performing schools.

## **Strategic Approach to Urban Engagement**

### **Programming**

The Rutgers 4-H STEM Ambassador program currently has three primary clusters of objectives – (a) STEM exposure, skill development, and identity, (b) college readiness and access, and (c) leadership and contribution. The comprehensive, multi-year pre-college program engages traditionally underserved urban youth in a variety of experiences that support their development in each of these three areas. Since its beginning in 2009, the program has primarily accomplished its objectives through an intensive weeklong STEM immersion experience at Rutgers-New Brunswick and through the teens' subsequent ongoing service and development as STEM Ambassadors in their home communities in partnership with their local 4-H staff throughout their remaining years of high school.

### ***Program Kickoff at Rutgers-New Brunswick – Sparking STEM Interest and Engagement***

After 8th and 9th graders from targeted urban communities are selected by their local 4-H staff to join the program, they begin their involvement with a week on campus in July. During their weeklong residential experience, they explore STEM through hands-on activities in animal science, biomedical science, biotechnology, computer science, engineering, exercise science, food science, geospatial technology, landscape architecture, marine science, microbiology, nutritional science, and other disciplines. Youth participate in discussions, workshops, research projects, and engineering challenges alongside faculty, staff, and graduate students.

The roundtable discussions with scientists and engineers is a component that was added in 2013 to allow youth to get to know the scientists, their educational backgrounds, interests, and goals, before jumping into the labs. After quick introductions from 10-12 STEM professionals, the youth select four to get to know better through discussions and Q&A in smaller groups. Since many of the youth welcomed into the program have relatively few STEM mentors and role models, these types of interactions can promote the development of STEM identity in teens initially reluctant to see themselves as scientists and engineers.

After a morning of meeting with STEM professionals, the youth participate in two 90-minute undergraduate lab sessions to experience hands-on, inquiry-based STEM activities in a format similar to what is included in the coursework of an undergraduate student. Since 2014, the participants have also attended an educational and entertaining series of physics demonstrations by the outreach staff of the Rutgers Physics Department.

On Wednesday of their program kickoff week, youth work in small groups with a scientist or team of scientists (often a professor with grad students) on a full-day research project or engineering challenge. These groups and projects are distributed all across campus in a variety of lab and field settings, working on authentic problems with modern technologies. During these sessions the STEM Ambassadors have mapped the effects of Hurricane Sandy using geospatial technologies in the Rutgers Nature Preserve, studied microplastic pollution by sampling local rivers and returning to the lab for sample analysis, and formulated personal fitness plans after taking several measurements before and after exercise in the exercise physiology lab, just to mention a few projects. They have also studied fish migration patterns, computer programming, ocean currents with the aid of drones, genetics, app development, microbiology, robotics, and musculoskeletal tissue regeneration. Youth collect data regarding their research question, interpret their data, and determine the best way to communicate their findings. After Wednesday's dinner, each team prepares a scientific poster to be shared during a STEM poster session on Friday prior to the closing luncheon.

### ***Supporting College Readiness and Access***

While STEM exposure, skill development, and identity are central to the program, we also include several components that address our college readiness and college access objectives. Just the experience of living on campus for the week and attending classes is valuable, as the teenagers anticipate what it will be like to go to college, especially since several of the 4-H STEM Ambassadors will be the first in their family to do so. They also learn about campus life and the opportunities available at Rutgers from an admissions officer's presentation and Q&A on Monday afternoon of the program's kickoff week, a Tuesday afternoon campus bus tour with a student ambassador, and an undergraduate student panel with a representative from the Dean's office during a cookout on Tuesday evening. All of these interactions are designed to help the 4-H STEM Ambassadors develop a better understanding of Rutgers, various schools and majors, the admissions process, scholarships and other forms of financial aid, campus housing, student organizations, and other programs of interest, such as the Equal Opportunity Fund (EOF) program.

After their initial week on campus in July, the 4-H STEM Ambassadors continue to receive pre-college support and guidance during their four years of high school. 4-H faculty and staff provide numerous opportunities for the teenagers to develop leadership skills and participate in meaningful service to their community (see next section). Program staff also provide additional opportunities for career and college exploration, including guest speakers and campus visits. They also assist the 4-H STEM Ambassadors with the college application process and, in many cases, provide letters of recommendation.

### ***Leadership and Contribution as 4-H STEM Ambassadors***

Their initial week on campus also helps prepare them to become 4-H STEM Ambassadors, the aspect of the program focused on leadership and contribution. On Thursday of that week, the teens begin their day with a panel presentation from current 4-H STEM Ambassadors who

showcase all of their community activities and impacts as ambassadors. Then the new recruits learn STEM curricula that they can use to facilitate STEM projects for younger youth. They have time to discuss best practices for out-of-school science programming prior to practicing and teaching a mini-lesson from the morning's workshops. During these "teachbacks" the youth and adult facilitators provide constructive feedback. Then on Friday, they present their science posters of their full-day research projects to administrators, parents, and other guests prior to the closing recognition luncheon, providing another chance for them to practice communicating science.

As 4-H STEM Ambassadors, they return home and work with their local 4-H program to promote 4-H, science, and engineering to other youth. While everyone accepted into the program pledges to contribute a minimum of 50 hours of service to STEM programs in their home county's 4-H program, many provide far more hours. While the portfolio of out-of-school STEM programs varies from county to county, the teen ambassadors work with local 4-H faculty and staff to plan, co-facilitate, teach, and/or support afterschool, Saturday, and summer programs. These programs occur at Extension offices, schools, libraries, collaborating youth organizations, fairs, and on university campuses. Since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic, they have also taught several online programs.

Through the years, the 4-H faculty and staff have engaged the 4-H STEM Ambassadors in a variety of ongoing initiatives, such as the National 4-H STEM Challenge (formerly known as National Youth Science Day). This year, they have facilitated the Mars Base Camp challenge for their peers and younger youth throughout the state, using virtual technologies. In the past, they have also led activities for groups of youth at Rutgers Day, the Rutgers Geology Museum, and at the USA Science and Engineering Festival in Washington, D.C. For a five-year period, the 4-H STEM Ambassadors from Passaic and Mercer counties were also involved in the CYFAR-funded Science Pathways program which provided weekly ongoing training in a variety of maker projects. The ambassadors participated in the projects in the makerspace and then led the projects for other youth.

Each year, several teenagers are rewarded for their level of engagement as 4-H STEM Ambassadors and asked to join the group on campus again in July to serve in a leadership role, helping to plan and implement the program for the newest recruits. When the summer of 2020 kickoff week changed to a virtual experience, the ambassadors worked alongside the staff to plan and implement the week and the resulting online teaching opportunities.

Outside of their involvement as 4-H STEM Ambassadors, once accepted into the program, the teenagers become involved in other aspects of their local 4-H program. Over the years, 4-H STEM Ambassadors have expanded their 4-H involvement by participating in county fair, teen leadership conferences, national 4-H summits, and other events. The 4-H STEM Ambassador Program has served as the entry point into 4-H for several youth from these targeted cities, and it has also helped diversify the overall 4-H program in the seven participating counties.

## **Positioning**

The Rutgers 4-H STEM Ambassador Program is functioning out of a traditional county-based Extension model in partnership with the state 4-H science agent and her staff, located at Rutgers-New Brunswick. For the most part, the seven counties involved in the 4-H STEM Ambassador program do not have large traditional, community club-based 4-H programs focused on animal projects and agricultural traditions. Therefore, 4-H faculty and staff in these



very densely populated counties have been collaborating for several years to redefine how 4-H can serve expanded and diverse audiences through a variety of STEM initiatives, while still providing the essential elements of the 4-H experience.

A lot of the Extension work of these seven urban counties is accomplished through partnerships with other youth-serving organizations located in the targeted central cities of each. These organizations have been key to building awareness of Extension programs such as 4-H STEM Ambassadors. Partnerships with urban schools and organizations with a similar mission have been very helpful to recruitment efforts and to increasing access to the programs by those underrepresented in STEM.

More recently, Rutgers established the [Office of Urban Extension and Engagement](#), and the team is collaborating with them to enhance the awareness and accessibility of programs, including 4-H STEM Ambassadors.

## **Personnel**

The Rutgers 4-H STEM Ambassador Program is led by a team of 4-H faculty and staff with the support of several others throughout Rutgers University.

### ***4-H Faculty and Staff***

4-H faculty and staff from the seven participating counties, along with those from the state 4-H science agent's office on campus, work together to design and implement the 4-H STEM Ambassador program, using the strengths and resources of each. Chad Ripberger is responsible for the overall coordination of the group, program logistics, and fundraising. Janice McDonnell recruits, trains, and coordinates the more than 35 Rutgers scientists and engineers that participate in the program each year. Marycarmen Kunicki and Marissa Staffen lead the training and support of the teens in their work as ambassadors, coordinate the involvement of the returning teen leaders, and work with Janice on evaluation. Jim Nichnadowicz and Kendrin Dyitt, as well as the other aforementioned members of the team, recruit and mentor participants. Christine Bean and Alesha Vega support the on-campus coordination of the scientists' engagement with the youth. Alesha is currently leading the development of online training modules. Kenny Faillace provides technology support. All are involved in the management of the ongoing outreach that the teens lead while serving as 4-H STEM Ambassadors in their home communities.

### ***Internal University Partners***

#### ***Rutgers Scientists and Engineers***

Scientists and engineers, including Rutgers faculty, staff, post-docs, graduate students, and undergraduates, have served as mentors, invited ambassadors into their labs, facilitated research projects and field experiences for the teens, and participated in roundtable discussions, sharing their STEM journey and providing guidance and support. These professionals and students have been recruited from several schools within the university (Arts and Sciences, Engineering, Medical, Nursing, Pharmacy) and all departments within the School of Environmental and Biological Sciences (SEBS).

#### ***Rutgers Center for Mathematics, Science, and Computer Education***

Faculty and staff from the Rutgers Center for Mathematics, Science, and Computer Education have supported the program in many ways over the past several years. As experts in K-12 STEM pedagogy, they have provided training and curricula for the ambassadors in engineering

design, computer science, robotics, and a variety of maker projects. They also conducted an evaluation of the program by shadowing it and conducting focus groups with staff and youth participants in 2018.

#### ***Rutgers Math and Science Learning Center***

Patricia Irizarry coordinates lab-based classes for the ambassadors at the Rutgers Math and Science Learning Center. She has also been instrumental in involving the 4-H STEM Ambassadors in outreach at the Rutgers Geology Museum.

#### ***Rutgers SEBS Office of Academic Programs***

Assistant Deans from the Office of Academic Programs, originally Sharice Richardson and now Serafina Smith, recruit Rutgers students to serve with them on a panel to discuss admissions, financial aid, academics, and student life.

#### ***Rutgers Office of Communications and Marketing***

Staff from the Rutgers Office of Communications and Marketing, including Paula Walcott-Quintin, Jennifer Simon, and Bonnie Wasielewski, have been instrumental in creating awareness of the program through Rutgers Cooperative Extension websites and social media channels. They are strong proponents of the program and have engaged local media organizations in the promotion of the program through coverage on cable news and through statewide newspapers, magazines, and websites, including New Jersey 12 News, The Star Ledger, New Jersey Monthly, and New Jersey Tech Weekly.

#### ***Partnerships (external)***

While the funding for the start of the program in 2009 was from an internal Rutgers Cooperative Extension Community Enhancement grant, the program has received financial support from a variety of corporate partners since, including Tyco International, Samsung, and Bristol Myers Squibb, our current sponsor. In addition to their financial support, volunteers from Bristol Myers Squibb have worked alongside 4-H STEM Ambassadors since 2013 to provide the Tomorrow's Innovators Science Saturday program for 4th-7th graders from Trenton. In addition, STEM professionals from Bristol Myers Squibb have participated in roundtable discussions with our 4-H STEM Ambassadors during their initial training week at Rutgers-New Brunswick.

## **Impact**

### **Program Impacts**

The team has documented their impact through a variety of pre/post surveys, focus groups, and a longitudinal study of the 243 youth who participated in the program's first six years (2009-2014).

Based on the 105 past participants who completed the 2015 survey (43% response rate):

- 82% believe interactions with scientists motivated and supported learning
- 70% feel participation better prepared them for college
- 55% can see themselves as STEM professionals
- 50% reported a positive change in motivation to learn about science

Of those attending college:

- 59% enrolled in a STEM major or are interested in a STEM career
- 31% attended Rutgers

A majority of ambassadors (80%) responded that their experience with the program was positive and helped shape their goals, widening their perspective in terms of possible STEM careers and areas of scientific study and research. Most importantly, most ambassadors said that their interaction with scientists, interaction with fellow participants, and opportunities to share their projects resulted in increased confidence in themselves, improved interpersonal skills, and strengthened interest in science and engineering. A complete description of impact is available in an article published in the National Science Teaching Association's (NSTA) *Connected Science Learning [journal](#)*. The team is currently conducting another study of all participants through 2019 and anticipates sharing those results in late 2021.

## **Recognition**

In addition to the NSTA journal article, the Rutgers 4-H STEM Ambassador Program is featured in the *4-H Science in Urban Communities Promising Practices Guide*, a national 4-H [resource](#). It is also one of eight programs included in *Priming the Pipeline: Lessons from Promising 4-H Science Programs*, a [publication](#) by Policy Studies Associates for National 4-H Council. The team has also presented the program at the National 4-H Leaders Meeting and the National Urban Extension Conference. In 2015, it received the National Excellence in Urban Programming Award from the National Association of Extension 4-H Agents. In 2020, the program team was awarded the Rutgers School of Environmental and Biological Sciences/New Jersey Agricultural Experiment Station Team Excellence Award.

## **Closing Comments and Looking to the Future**

### **New Online Learning Modules Incorporated into Initial Training of New Cohorts**

The Rutgers 4-H STEM Ambassador staff and teens are currently collaborating with Rutgers iTV Studio to finalize a series of [online learning modules](#) that new participants will complete prior to their initial week on campus in July. The goal of these self-directed asynchronous modules is to provide the newly recruited teenagers a foundational understanding of the program, 4-H Youth Development, STEM opportunities and skills, and Rutgers University prior to their time with us on campus. Because of that change, in-person time can be maximized while at Rutgers-New Brunswick to focus on objectives that can't as easily be met online.

### **Cross-County Collaboration for Ongoing STEM Ambassador Outreach**

The goal has always been to increase the number of times the ambassadors from the seven counties can be together to collaborate on projects and continue their own development, as a statewide group. Since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic, significant progress has been made toward accomplishing that goal. Historically, scheduling and transportation have been major challenges. With the use of Zoom and other virtual and remote technologies, the 4-H STEM Ambassadors have been meeting as a statewide club, across county lines, to plan and deliver their outreach. During the in-person programming suspension, the ambassadors have been able to lead training for new recruits, meet with a group of Rutgers scientists and engineers for discussions, travel to a marine lab in Florida, host and emcee an exciting new

series called Ask a Scientist, facilitate numerous sessions of the National 4-H STEM Challenge (Mars Base Camp), film several segments for the above online modules, and provide feedback on a set of activities currently under development for a new curriculum – all remotely.

Institutional support will help further strengthen and grow the program and ensure it is sustained. The strong program model has gradually been built over the past 13 years and is one that is consistent with the goals and aspirations of Rutgers University, at all levels.

## **Recommendations**

Based on experience developing the Rutgers 4-H STEM Ambassador Program – building effective partnerships and capitalizing on their many benefits is important. The extensive partnerships cultivated over the years are critical in providing such a rich youth development opportunity. At the onset of planning in 2008, tapping into the wealth of resources available within the other schools, departments, and centers of Rutgers University was vital. The goal was to connect youth from targeted central cities within the region to the wonderful people, places, technologies, and opportunities available at their state university. If there is an interest in this type of programming, all Extension personnel have similar resources available within their land-grant university.

In similar fashion, partnerships have been formed in the areas of program funding, recruitment, and outreach. Just like universities, urban communities have a tremendous amount of potential for fruitful collaborations and partnerships – it takes time and patience to determine how to best align Extension resources with those of other organizations. If there is interest in this type of programming, it is helpful to determine which community organizations share the passion for promoting the development of STEM identity within youth underrepresented in science and engineering.

Others are encouraged to get started and gradually build and improve over time. With each year of the program, the design has been tweaked and incremental improvements made. This diverse team of 4-H professionals with a variety of skills and abilities has learned each other's strengths and distributed the workload accordingly. As needed, reach out to others throughout the university and cities to capture additional expertise and skills that further enhance the program and the experience for the teenagers serving as ambassadors.

## **Multimedia Documentation/References**

Each of the following resources provide additional information and a better sense of the program:

Impact Report (2018) <http://nj4h.rutgers.edu/pdfs/STEM-Ambassador-Impact-Report.pdf>

New Jersey Teens Delve into STEM Learning, video by Samsung, former sponsor (2014)  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GDmCczBNuf4>

One of four 4-H Science Programs featured in Partnering with Colleges and Universities and Campus-Based Scientists, in *4-H Science in Urban Communities Promising Practices Guide* (2013) <http://urban4hscience.rutgers.edu/practices/partnerships/college.html>

One of eight 4-H Science Programs featured in *Priming the Pipeline: Lessons from Promising 4-H Science Programs* (2012)

[https://www.canr.msu.edu/4\\_h\\_great\\_lakes\\_natural\\_resources\\_camp/uploads/files/Lessons%20from%20Promising%204-H%20Science%20Programs.pdf](https://www.canr.msu.edu/4_h_great_lakes_natural_resources_camp/uploads/files/Lessons%20from%20Promising%204-H%20Science%20Programs.pdf)

Online Learning Modules <https://4hset.rutgers.edu/training/courses/2021-stem-ambassadors-online-training/>

Program Website <https://nj4h.rutgers.edu/join-stem-ambassadors/>

Promoting STEM Identity and Interest Through the 4-H STEM Ambassadors Program, in *Connected Science Learning*, a journal of the National Science Teaching Association (January-March 2019) <https://www.nsta.org/connected-science-learning/connected-science-learning-january-march-2019/promoting-stem-interest>

Press Release (2019) <https://sebsnjaesnews.rutgers.edu/2019/08/rutgers-stem-ambassadors-program-inspires-new-cohort-of-new-jersey-high-schoolers/>



*STEM Ambassadors conduct research in labs at Rutgers University during the summer, working alongside faculty and graduate students.*





*Teens participate in STEM classes on campus during the program's summer kickoff for the new recruits, to help meet the program's college readiness objectives.*



*Since 2013, the program has informally connected the STEM Ambassadors with Rutgers scientists and engineers through a series of roundtable discussions to help foster mentors and promote STEM identity.*





State 4-H science agent works with Rutgers research groups to engage the STEM Ambassadors in a variety of field experiences that contribute to data collection for ongoing research.

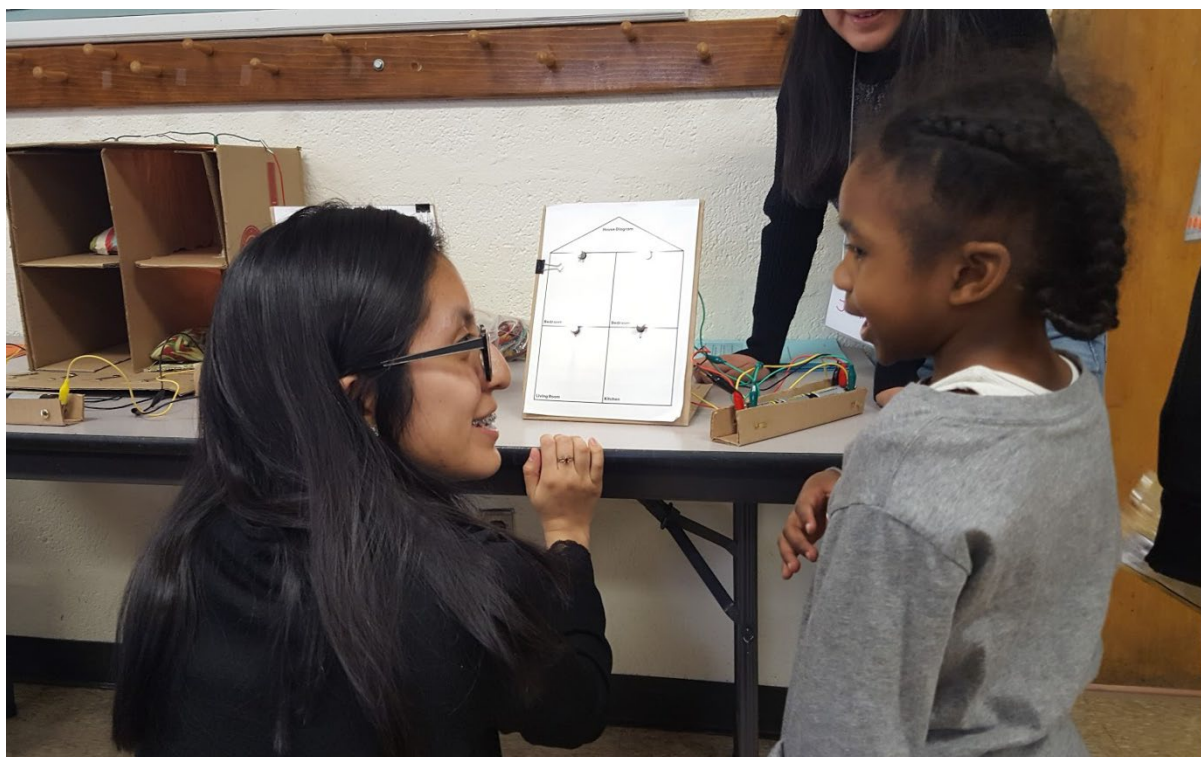


At the conclusion of their initial week on campus during the summer, the STEM Ambassadors present their science and engineering projects through a poster session leading up to the closing luncheon.





*STEM Ambassadors mentor younger students as part of a 4-H Science Saturday program.*



*A STEM Ambassador teaches a child about electricity at a 4-H science outreach event.*





*Each year, a group of veteran STEM Ambassadors are selected to serve in a leadership role for the newly recruited teens just joining the program.*

## Contributor

Chad Ripberger, County 4-H Agent, County Extension Department Head, Rutgers Cooperative Extension of Mercer County, [ripberger@njaes.rutgers.edu](mailto:ripberger@njaes.rutgers.edu).



Ripberger has focused most of his efforts on increasing youth development opportunities for urban youth through collaboration with afterschool and summer program providers throughout Trenton, New Jersey and the surrounding area. These collaborators have included the Boys and Girls Club, Children's Home Society, City of Trenton, CYO, Education Works, New Jersey Youth Corps, Urban Promise, YMCA, and others. In addition to co-leading the 4-H STEM Ambassadors, he currently leads a large collaboration with 30 volunteers from Bristol Myers Squibb, the Tomorrow's Innovators Science Saturday Program for upper-elementary- and middle school-aged youth from the Trenton area. Since 2009, he has also led New Jersey's involvement in the National Partnerships for After School Science (NPASS) project, providing training for out-of-school educators throughout the state.

Ripberger has led several national and regional 4-H Science initiatives including the National 4-H Science in Urban Communities project (2009-2013), resulting in the comprehensive [4-H Science in Urban Communities Promising Practices Guide](#) and associated professional development efforts for urban 4-H educators throughout the United States. He has shared his urban programming models through the *Journal of Extension*, *Journal of Youth Development*, and at numerous national meetings, including several urban Extension conferences.

Ripberger is just one of a dedicated team who co-lead the Rutgers 4-H STEM Ambassador Program. He acknowledges Janice McDonnell (co-founder), Marycarmen Kunicki, Marissa Staffen, Jim Nichnadowicz, Christine Bean, Alesha Vega, and Kendrin Dyitt, all of Rutgers Cooperative Extension, for their contributions to this case study.

# Extension Programming to Enhance Urban Well-Being

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## Case Study Series

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SNAP Incentive Program founded in the community and sustained through Extension

## Produce Perks Cleveland, Ohio

Nicole Debose, County Director/Area Leader, Ohio State University Extension

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This case study series is a supplement to program snapshots featured in the Extension Programming to Enhance Urban Well-Being chapter of ***Extension Education and the Social Sciences*** Maria Rosario T. de Guzman and Holly Hatton, University of Nebraska-Lincoln Cambridge University Press (2024)

Case study series led by  
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2021

## **Program Overview – Produce Perks**

The Produce Perks (Perks), Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) incentive, program was created by the Cleveland-Cuyahoga Food Policy Coalition (FPC) in 2007 to increase food access at the neighborhood level while supporting local farmers. At that time, the FPC was led by Ohio State University Extension in Cuyahoga County. The FPC recognized the need to support the provision of healthy food in walking distance of most Cleveland residents after identifying a theme in annual community reports conducted by local health departments, think tanks, and research centers. Regular monitoring of these reports along with conversations with food insecure residents motivated the creation of this issue-specific collaboration among public and private entities and stakeholders.

Participating neighborhood-based farmers' markets, farm stands, and Community Supported Agriculture (CSAs) are the core of the Produce Perks model, offering a dollar-for-dollar match on the purchase of fresh fruits and vegetables to all SNAP participants. Other key original partners included the City of Cleveland Department of Public Health, Cuyahoga County Health and Human Services, Case Western Reserve University, in addition to three local foundations: George Gund, Mt. Sinai Health Care, and St. Luke's. These three foundations provided funding for staff and Produce Perks currency, which are tokens.

The original program, implemented in 2010, focused on existing farmers' markets and farm stands in the city of Cleveland. By 2013, the opportunity to participate in Produce Perks (Perks) was offered to all for markets and stands in the county and Produce Prescription was piloted as an expansion project. In 2018, the program was adopted in other areas of the state with high rates of food insecurity, the Ohio Nutrition Incentive Network was formed, and Produce Perks Midwest was identified as the networks intermediary. This gradual expansion positioned the program to consistently serve 1,000 families per year. This translates to over \$2 million dollars being funneled into farm businesses, and the state economy, each year (Figure 1). Produce Perks has been recognized by the USDA, the programs current primary funder, as a model SNAP incentive program.

## **Urban Context**

### **Scale**

Cuyahoga County, Ohio has a population of 1.24 million and Cleveland, the largest city in the county, has a population of 380,000. The healthcare, social services, and education sectors have the greatest presence amongst all other industries in the area (US Census Bureau, 2020). Positioning Extension as a community resource, three hours away from Ohio State's main campus, in a county with over 30 colleges and universities is an ongoing challenge. Consistency in messaging that focuses on long-term partnerships, niche program topics, and quality customer experiences has been key to the success of Perks.

### **Diversity**

Residents often associate themselves as an "east sider" or "west sider." This social divide is based on the flow of the Cuyahoga River that runs from Lake Erie, down the center of the county. Cleveland has been described as "a city of ethnic enclaves divided into East and West by the Cuyahoga River" (Hallal, 2016). The western portion of the city has historically been populated by poor and working-class White and Latino families. The eastern portion the city has

historically been populated by affluent White and poor to working class Black families. In some neighborhoods, the historic demographics are shifting with gentrification. The inner and outer ring suburbs also have distinct east and west cultures where the eastern suburbs are known for being affluent and conservative and the western suburbs are known for being economically mixed and liberal.

## **Complexity**

Cuyahoga County served as the first American home for many Eastern European immigrants. There is a strong presence of Irish, Italian, and Slovenian cultures embedded in the architecture of churches and retail spaces in older communities. Within the city of Cleveland, the spirit and legacy of ethnic cultures is highly evidenced by the singular demographic makeup of neighborhoods including Asia Town and Little Italy. While some communities are integrated, evidence of redlining prevails in suburbs. The general sentiment in suburban communities reflects the Not In My Back Yard (NIMBY) opposition that surfaces when cities, schools, and workplaces begin to diversify racially and economically.

In 2006, as the issue of access to fresh fruits and vegetables, crept into suburban communities, professionals and researchers took note. Northeast Ohio has a demonstrated passion for responding to emerging community needs. The FPC lead the effort to respond to this need by assessing the locations and inventory of grocery stores, farmers' markets, and food pantries. This data was compared to the zip codes with the highest prevalence of poverty, SNAP participants, and chronic disease. This assessment and subsequent conversations revealed two things – a) the number of SNAP participants was greater in the suburbs than previously thought and b) the community was presented with an opportunity to work directly with local farmers, the source of fruits and vegetables, versus grocery stores whose primary goal is profit making. The number of high-yielding farmers in any urban county is low. To reach producers who supply grocers and farmers markets the definition of local was defined, in partnership with Cleveland State University's Institutional Purchasing Group, as 250 miles outside of the county.

The recognition of this poverty-related issue was met with some not wanting to acknowledge this made perfect sense considering the median household income in the county is \$50,300, 28% less than the U.S. median household income (US Census Bureau, 2019, 2020). Additionally, the average Ohio household receiving SNAP benefits lives at 61% of the poverty line, which amounts to \$12,456 for a family of three (Greater Cleveland Food Bank, 2021). This revelation was the beginning of the urban agriculture and equitable food access movements in northeast Ohio that birthed Produce Perks.

## **Unique**

Momentum for this emerging need was spurred by similar conversations across the country and instrumental support from local foundations that solely funded the Produce Perks program for the first eight years. The Cuyahoga Extension office co-lead the development and implementation of the program with input and guidance from local researchers, along with food and public health stakeholders. The 2014 Farm Bill solidified the program within the county and eventually in the state of Ohio with the support of Wholesome Wave. Wholesome Wave facilitated the design a model that leverages local funding for USDA funds. This facilitation was met with the storming and norming expected when working with a handful of groups. In an urban context with over 10 influential public and private organizations, aligning proprietorship and funding was a huge feat.

## **Strategic Approach to Urban Engagement**

The FPC implemented the collective impact model to intentionally establish broad community ownership at all levels, from SNAP participants to elected officials. This inclusive approach is also applied to the Produce Perks Farmers' Market Collective, providing a formal platform for training, feedback, and the sharing of ideas among farmers' market managers with Extension at its core. This group meets twice a year. Once before the beginning of the market season for training and updates on FM Tracks, token exchange, and to receive their tokens and marketing materials. The gathering after the end of market season highlights program total sales, individual market total sales, zip codes where Perks shoppers reside, average spending amounts per shopping day, number of new shoppers, number of recurring shoppers, marketing strategies, and lessons learned. The group then gains consensus on the data highlighted in the annual report submitted to the community and funders.

Data collection for Perks has advanced from collecting data on paper forms and entering that data into a complex Excel workbook to now using FM Tracks, an onsite point-of-sale system (Case Western Reserve, Prevention Research Center, 2018). Data collected with tablets at the markets is used to conduct process, outcome, summative, and impact analyses. These evaluations are instrumental in program improvement and maintaining local supplemental funding that is leveraged by PPM to secure USDA and state government funding. FM Tracks is managed by the Sears Swetland Center at Case Western Reserve University, who was a founding partner of the FPC and Produce Perks. State- and county-level data shared at National Association of Community Development Extension Professionals (NACDEP), OSU Extension, and National Extension Association of Family and Consumer Sciences (NEAFCS) annual conferences has informed SNAP incentive programs in other states.

Direct access to leading research on food systems within Ohio State's College of Food, Agricultural, and Environmental Sciences and the Cooperative Extension System did not automatically position the Cuyahoga County office as the natural local leader in food systems. Innovative, agriculturally based, approaches to food access were also heavily pursued by those in the local health care and social services arenas between 2008-2015. Reasons for this pursuit were founded in wanting to help those in need and layered with goals of public recognition for work in this trending topic area. Consistent and clear messaging on Extension's responsibility to fill gaps and form partnerships in a transparent way helped gain the support of local funders and the FPC to solely lead and implement the Produce Perks program. This approach was instrumental in maintaining the Perks program and Extension's local reputation in 2015 when the Cuyahoga Extension office experienced a transition in County Extension Directors (CED) and the FPC lost its core funding.

The cycle of coalitions proves that membership focus on trending issues ebbs and flows over time (Wageningen University and Research, 2012). Successful, long-standing coalitions revisit their purpose, current impact, and potential future impact every three to five years. The FPC was in the process of these strategic conversations when funding was lost. Prior to this event the group began to rely heavily on the 2.75 FPC staff, who were also Extension employees, to research and implement many of the group's ideas. The evaluation of the purpose and impact of the FPC resulted in adjusting the structure. The Coalition decided to no longer employ a backbone organization, and to implement a co-chair leadership model. The two co-chairs serve two-year staggered terms.

Successfully navigating these shifts and transitions was key in maintaining the positive reputation and positioning of the Cuyahoga Extension office. Communication with local-, regional-, and state-level elected officials, funders, and Extension leadership was significantly increased to maintain transparency, demonstrate office stability, and to serve as a reminder that Extension does not act as a competitor. From 2016-2018, positioning was a high priority to circumvent the potential long-term negative effects of the FPC losing its funding on Extension funding and support for other office programs and operations. The Coalition's structural change caught the attention of the Extension state director. This enhanced the need for the local team to follow the simple positioning plan of consistently saying and demonstrating they are not competitors, they offer guidance and education in areas of specialization, and that locally, they will not collaborate with organizations that see and interact with them as if their community efforts are competitive. This was a tipping point for the office and Perks (Figure 2).

Perks staff and the county Extension director prioritized sharing the Perks story by conducting workshops, presenting posters, contributing to peer-reviewed publications, and participating in panel discussions while things played out locally. Extension, continued to demonstrate its collaborative spirit by acknowledging the FPC and other key partners in all presentations and at times, offering to co-present with various members. In 2017, when the FPC decided to solely focus on advocacy, removing programming from their repertoire, this allowed Extension to separate the work of Perks from being an active member of the FPC.

With that very important structural determination, Extension could now focus on Perks and its promotion as an Extension program created by the FPC. The marketing strategy for Perks targets SNAP participants, farmers, farmers' market managers, funders, and local food stakeholders. SNAP participants are reminded that Perks increases their purchasing ability and empowers them to make their own healthy food shopping decisions. The economic benefit of participating in Perks is highlighted for farmers and market managers. Marketing, promotion, and annual reports highlight how funder and community support improves healthy eating behaviors, choices made while shopping, and stimulates the economy. Materials created to encourage participation among SNAP recipients include the distribution of 15,000 English (Figure 3) and Spanish (Figure 4) postcards each year. Partners including the Greater Cleveland Food Bank, YMCA, and the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services are instrumental to this distribution effort. Local and online radio spots, Facebook ads, and Cuyahoga Extension social media are or have been used to promote the program locally. Produce Perks Midwest, the intermediary for the statewide program, promotes the program via their social media accounts and website that includes an interactive statewide map of participating sites. Champions of Extension and Perks are key and help build informal marketing capacity.

The funding Extension received on behalf of the FPC included support for 2.75 FTE (full-time equivalents). Without that funding, Extension was only able to maintain one FTE for Perks, a community development educator, using a combination of county-appropriated funds and cost share support from OSU Extension's federal land-grant funding. As Perks expanded to include women, infants, and children (WIC) and temporary assistance for needy families (TANF), a portion of the family and consumer sciences educator FTE added capacity. Both educators are responsible for counting and distributing tokens, guiding market managers on obtaining electronic benefits transfer (EBT) machines, monitoring FM Tracks, partner relations, marketing materials, training market managers, grants management, logistics, data analysis, and supervising the AmeriCorps VISTA. Their work has been awarded by NACDEP and NAEFCS. In 2019, an intern from the Cleveland Foundation was awarded to Extension for one year to

assist with high-level administrative tasks. These tasks include FM Track data cleaning, communicating with market managers, and creating annual reports. In 2020, an AmeriCorps VISTA was secured to continue these tasks. The CED provides guidance and support on funding, logistics, partnerships, and general community relations. The College of Food, Agricultural, and Environmental Sciences Government Affairs office is a key internal partner that shares the instrumental role of Extension in the creation of Perks and its replication across the state.

Perks would not have been possible without the numerous public and private partnerships of the FPC and OSU Extension. OSU Extension's current management of Perks partnerships is streamlined to focus on implementation and funding partners. The heroes of this program are the farmers, farmers' market managers, and CSA staff. They serve as food distributors, Perks coordinators, promoters, advocates, and champions. Other current and long-term key partners include the local WIC team who actively collaborated on the creation and sustainability of WIC Perks, local hospitals that supported the innovative addition of Produce Prescription, Case Western Reserve University whose researchers and faculty continue to support funding and evaluation, Food Access Raises Everyone who collaborates on planning efforts, local foundations that continue to support incentive match funding, and ODJFS and food resource centers for program promotion and ongoing feedback.

## **Impact**

The impact of Perks on the local economy and healthy shopping habits increases each year. Since 2010, the Produce Perks program in Cuyahoga County has generated more than \$725,000 in revenues for small to mid-sized farms, and \$450,000 in fruit and vegetable purchases at Cleveland grocery stores.

2020 was a record year for Perks, providing over \$295,000 in matching dollars for the purchase of fresh fruits and vegetable. During this time of unprecedented need and demand from the community Produce Perks served over 7,300 families. Revenue from the Produce Perks program for farmers and producers increased by 99% in 2020 when compared to 2019.

Helping to improve the economic well-being of families and farmers is one outcome of the Perks program. For Extension, the most important outcomes of Perks are related to increased community and physical well-being. Perks offers participating families power in choice over which fresh fruits and vegetables they purchase. Families also have control over the quantity purchased and at what frequency. This differs from boxes of food distributed at emergency food access points in that shoppers learn how to select produce based on ripeness and seasonality. Shoppers learn how to gauge how much of a particular item they will consume before its expiration and the true cost of fresh produce, dispelling the myth that healthy food is expensive. This empowerment translates into a greater understanding of how nutritious eating impacts one's health, especially those with chronic diseases.

The ability to have choice while participating in a program that is funded in part by federal funding is unique. Perks shoppers are most proud after their first shopping trip and when they discover new produce at the markets. Conversations between farmers and shoppers often include recipe swapping, cooking suggestions, and taste testing, along with the farmer sharing the location of their farm and growing practices. These interactions not only foster a sense of community, but shoppers are also motivated to return to the market, and their desire to learn more about the food they consume is increased.



The farmers' market managers and OSU Extension staff are also positively impacted by implementing Perks. Gatherings of the market managers are full-spirited and provide one of the few opportunities for them to network as a group. Interestingly, because their market locations are spread across the county, they do not see themselves as competitors and openly share lessons learned and best practices. The community development and family and consumer sciences educators experience high levels of motivation, satisfaction, and fulfillment from the implementation of Perks and its expansion projects. Their work on this project supports their greater sense of purpose and connection to the community. Achieving a true sense of purpose is often left up to individual urban Extension employees. Meaning, in a system that is designed to serve communities utilizing packaged programs, urban Extension staff are often most successful and have high levels of satisfaction when they work on projects that meet the unique needs of their urban surroundings. Awards from NACDEP for creativity and innovation, another for an educational tool, and a resolution from the City of Lakewood provided a welcomed validation for the educators from their peers.

## **Closing Comments and Looking to the Future**

### **Unique Aspects and Challenges**

As the program grew and garnered the attention of elected officials and local food and public health professionals, proprietorship became a significant concern for the FPC and OSU Extension. The inception of Produce Perks is credited to the Cleveland-Cuyahoga Food Policy Coalition. The implementation and continuation of the program after 2016 is credited to OSU Extension. When an intermediary was identified that wanted to adopt the logo, leverage multi-year data, adopt the model, and leverage local funding for federal funds OSU Extension quickly needed to establish expectations. Establishing partner agreements earlier in the statewide adoption process would have made these conversations less awkward for OSU Extension staff, who are trained to openly share their work with the community and often at no cost.

### **Recommendations**

Well-thought-out program development is vital. Teams exploring a SNAP incentive program should be encouraged to meet with potential program participants, implementation partners, evaluators, and those with successful programs in other states. These conversations can be designed as focus groups where needs and logistics are discussed then considered afterward with their model in mind. The Cuyahoga County Perks program design was fine-tuned over many years to include farmers' market manager training, ongoing technical assistance for managers and farmers, food demonstrations, marketing and communications plans, annual impact evaluations, and a formal annual report. Many of these program components were initiated by suggestions from stakeholders and advocates.

## Multimedia Documentation/References

### Resources

- Cuyahoga County Produce Perks Economic Impact 2017-2020 (Figure 1)
- Produce Perks Timeline (Figure 2)
- Produce Perks English Post Card (Figure 3)
- Produce Perks Spanish Post Card (Figure 4)
- Lessons Learned (Figure 5)
- Produce Perks Regional Impact Report 2020 (Figure 6)
- Produce Perks Program Report 2020 (Figure 7)
- WIC Perks Program Report 2020 (Figure 8)

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**Figure 1.** Cuyahoga County Produce Perks Economic Impact 2017-2020



	2017	2018	2019	2020 To Date	Percent Change 2019 - 2020
<b>SNAP Sales</b>	\$35,985	\$38,846.25	\$35,113	\$71,217	<b>+ 100.3%</b>
<b>Produce Perks Distribution</b>	\$25,878	\$34,668.25	\$32,046	\$67,575	<b>+ 110.9%</b>
<b>Produce Perks Redemption</b>	\$25,587	\$32,124.25	\$32,292.00	\$62,224	<b>+ 92.7%</b>
<b>Redemption Rate</b>	99%	93%	101%	92%	<b>-9%</b>
<b>SNAP Transactions</b>	2,917	2,539	2,313	3,266	<b>+ 41.2%</b>
<b>Unique Customers</b>	1,071	1,051	881	1,528	<b>+ 73.4%</b>
<b>Repeat Customers</b>	385	364	319	610	<b>+</b>

**Figure 2.** Produce Perks Timeline

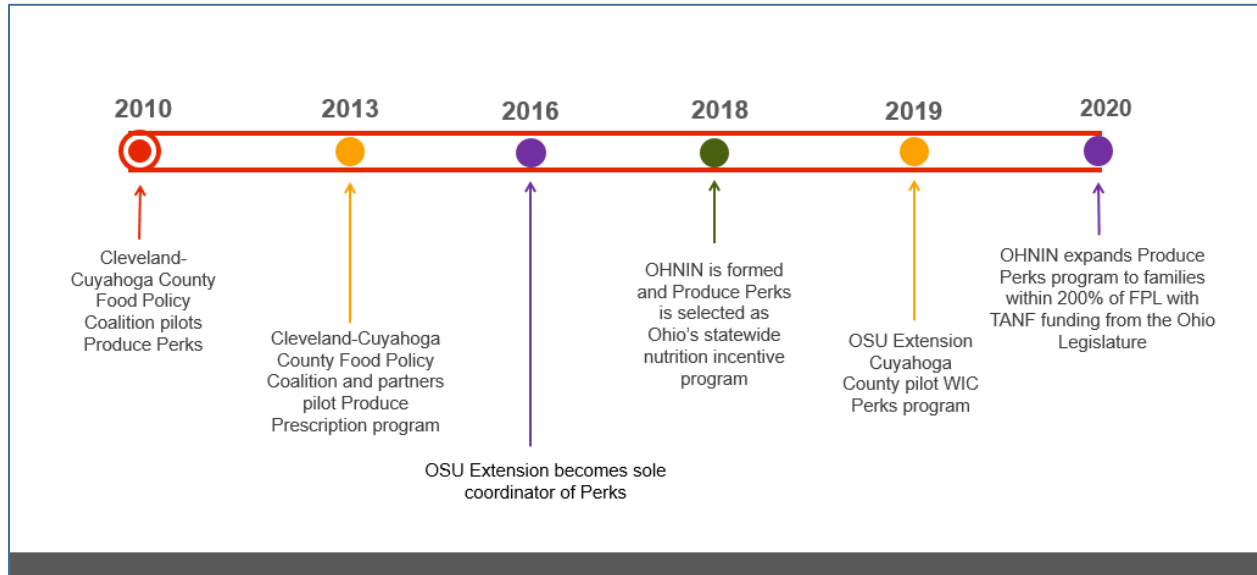


Figure 3. 2021 Produce Perks Postcard in English

# YOU SNAP. WE MATCH.





## It's the healthy way to stretch your SNAP.

**How it works:**

- 1 Find a participating farmers' market near you (see inside).
- 2 After arriving at the farmers' market, find the customer service booth and swipe your Ohio Direction Card or P-EBT.

- 3 You will receive \$1 in Produce Perks for every \$1 you spend using an Ohio Direction Card or P-EBT.
- 4 Use your Produce Perks to buy fresh, local produce from vendors at the farmers' market!



Buy a little



Get a lot

## 2021 PARTICIPATING PRODUCE PERKS GROCERY STORES

How it works at grocery stores:

- 1 Find a participating grocery store near you (listed below).
- 2 Shop using your SNAP/EBT Ohio Direction Card or P-EBT. For every \$5 you spend, get a \$5 Produce Perks coupon (up to \$10 per day) to spend on fruits and vegetables.

- 3 A Produce Perks coupon\* will print at the bottom of your receipt. Use your coupon on your next visit to get free fruits and vegetables.

Grocery stores match up to \$10 per day!

<p><b>DAVE'S MARKET—MIDTOWN</b>  <b>Sun-Sat, 7am-9pm</b> (Year Round)            1929 East 61st St • Cleveland            P: 216.361.5130</p>	<p><b>DAVE'S MARKET—EUCLED BEACH</b>  <b>Sun-Sat, 7am-9pm</b> (Year Round)            15900 Lakeshore Blvd • Cleveland            P: 216.486.6458</p>	<p><b>DAVE'S MERCADO</b>  <b>Sun-Sat, 7am-9pm</b> (Year Round)            3565 Ridge Rd • Cleveland            P: 216-961-2000</p>	<p><b>DAVE'S MARKET—SLAVIC VILLAGE</b>  <b>Sun-Sat, 7am-9pm</b> (Year Round)            7422 Harvard Ave • Cleveland            P: 216.441.0034</p>
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\*Grocery store coupons are not redeemable at farmers' markets.  
 Farmers' market tokens are not redeemable at grocery stores.

If you do not currently receive food assistance through an Ohio Direction Card and would like to apply, please call Ohio Benefits at 1-844-640-OHIO (6446) or the Greater Cleveland Food Bank Help Center at 1-855-738-2067.



ProducePERKS

VISIT [WWW.PRODUCEPERKS.ORG](http://WWW.PRODUCEPERKS.ORG) TO LEARN MORE!

# PRODUCE PERKS

## 2021 PARTICIPATING MARKET LOCATIONS

Check for Market Days & Times Near You! For help finding your nearest market call: 216.429.8200

**Markets match up to \$25 per day!**

### CITY FRESH CSA (Jun 14–Oct 29)

Weekly CSA share with 15+ locations throughout Cuyahoga and Lorain counties  
**Mon, 4–6pm | Tue, 4–7pm | Wed, 2:30–7pm**  
**Thur, 4:30–7pm | Fri, 4–5:30pm**  
 To order, visit [cityfresh.org](http://cityfresh.org)  
 P: 440.707.6606

### COIT ROAD FARMERS' MARKET

**Wed, 8am–1pm** (Jun 2–Oct 27)  
**Sat, 8am–1pm** (Year Round)  
 15000 Woodworth Rd • East Cleveland  
 P: 216.249.5455  
 RTA: E 152nd & Noble Rd (37)

### GOOD EARTH FARM STAND

**Thurs, 3–7pm** (May–Oct) | **3–5pm** (Nov–Apr)  
**Mon, 3–7pm** (May–Oct)  
**Sat, 12–4pm** (May–Oct)  
 9600 Madison Ave • Cleveland  
 P: 216.288.0170  
 RTA: W 98th and Madison (81)

### KAMM'S CORNERS

#### FARMERS MARKET

**Sun, 10am–1pm**  
 (Jun 13–Oct 17, closed Jul 4)  
 16906 Albers Ave • Cleveland  
 P: 216.252.6559  
 RTA: Rocky River Dr & Lorain Ave (22, 86),  
 Lorain Ave & W 168th St (22, 49, 75)

### LAKEWOOD EARTH AND FOOD COMMUNITY FARMERS' MARKET

**Thurs, 5:30–7:30pm** (Jun 10–Oct 28)  
 15425 Detroit Ave (front porch of Library)  
 Lakewood  
 P: 216.367.2834  
 RTA: Detroit Ave & Arthur Ave (26)

### LEAGUE PARK MARKET PLACE

**Thurs, 2:30–6pm** (May 6–Oct 7)  
 7721 Superior Ave (Corner of E 79th  
 & Superior) • Cleveland  
 P: 216.375.3757  
 RTA: Superior Ave & E 79th St (2, 3)

- Accepts WIC FMNP
- Accepts Senior FMNP

### NORTH UNION FARMERS' MARKETS:

P: 216.751.7656

#### At Chagrin Falls

**Sun, 9am–12pm** (Jun 6–Oct 24)  
 21 N Franklin St • Chagrin Falls

#### At Cleveland Clinic

**Wed, 10:30am–1:30pm** (Jun 2–Oct 20)  
 2049 E 100th St • Cleveland  
 RTA: Cleveland Clinic (7, 32, 48-48A, 58, X61)

#### At Crocker Park

**Sat, 9am–1pm** (Apr 3–Dec 18)  
 Crocker Park Blvd • Westlake  
 RTA: Bus 25, 49 & 55 A-B-C  
 (Union Ave & Main Ave)

#### At Legacy Village

**Sun, 10am–1pm** (Jun 13–Sep 26)  
 25385 Cedar Rd • Lyndhurst  
 RTA: Legacy Village (32)

#### At Shaker Square

**Sat, 8am–12pm** (Apr 3–Dec 18)  
 13111 Shaker Square • Cleveland  
 RTA: Shaker Square Rapid Station  
 (11, Blue Line, Green Line)

#### At University Hospitals

**Thurs, 10:30am–1:30pm** (Jun 3–Sep 30)  
 2074 Adelbert Rd • Cleveland  
 RTA: Adelbert Rd (48-48A and 58)

#### At Van Aken

**Thurs, 4–7pm** (Jun 10–Oct 14)  
 20100 Walker Rd • Shaker Heights  
 RTA: Van Aken/Warrensline Rapid Station  
 (Blue Line, Green Line, Waterfront Line)

### OLD BROOKLYN FARMERS MARKET

**Sat, 9am–1pm** (Jun 19–Sep 25)  
 4200 Pearl Rd • Cleveland  
 P: 216.459.1000  
 RTA: Pearl Rd & Broadview Rd (51 A-B-C)

### TREMONT FARMERS MARKET

**Tues, 4–7pm** (May 11–Oct 12)  
 1200 Starkweather Ave • Cleveland  
 P: 216.570.8201  
 RTA: W 14th St & Starkweather

Brought to you by:



ProducePERKS



THE OHIO STATE  
UNIVERSITY  
COLLEGE OF FOOD, AGRICULTURAL  
AND ENVIRONMENTAL SCIENCES



### WINTER FARMERS' MARKETS:

#### COIT ROAD FARMERS'

**MARKET**  
**Sat, 8am–1pm** (Year Round)  
 15000 Woodworth Rd • East Cleveland  
 P: 216.249.5455  
 RTA: E 152nd & Noble Rd (37)

#### GOOD EARTH FARM STAND

**Thurs, 3–5pm** (Year Round)  
 9600 Madison Ave • Cleveland  
 P: 216.288.0170  
 RTA: W 98th and Madison (81)

#### NORTH UNION INDOOR MARKET at CROCKER PARK

**Sat, 9am–12pm** (Jan 2–Mar 27)  
 Crocker Park Blvd • Westlake  
 P: 216.751.7656  
 RTA: Bus 25, 49 & 55 A-B-C  
 (Union Ave & Main Ave)

#### NORTH UNION INDOOR MARKET at VAN AKEN

**Sat, 9am–12pm** (Jan 2–Mar 27)  
 20100 Walker Rd • Shaker Heights  
 P: 216.751.7656  
 RTA: Van Aken/Warrensline  
 Rapid Station (Blue Line, Green Line,  
 Waterfront Line)



**Figure 4.** 2021 Produce Perks Postcard in Spanish

# PRESENTE SU SNAP. NOSOTROS LA IGUALAMOS.





## Es la forma sana de estirar sus CUPONES.

**Cómo funciona:**

- 1 Encuentre un mercado participante de agricultores cerca de usted (vea el interior).
- 2 Después de llegar al mercado de agricultores, busque la caseta de atención al cliente y pase su tarjeta Direction de Ohio o P-EBT.
- 3 Recibirá \$1 en Produce Perks por cada \$1 que gaste usando una tarjeta Direction de Ohio o P-EBT.
- 4 ¡Use sus incentivos de Produce Perks para comprar productos frescos y locales de vendedores del mercado de agricultores!



Compre poco



Llévese mucho

### TIENDAS DE COMESTIBLES PARTICIPANTES EN EL PROGRAMA DE INCENTIVOS PRODUCE PERKS EN 2021

Cómo funciona en las tiendas de comestibles:

- 1 Encuentre una tienda participante de comestibles cerca de usted (consulte la lista abajo).
- 2 Compre con su tarjeta Direction de Ohio o P-EBT. Por cada \$5 que gaste, obtenga un cupón de \$5 Produce Perks (hasta \$10 por día) para gastar en frutas y verduras.
- 3 Se imprimirá un cupón de Produce Perks\* en la parte inferior de su recibo. Use su cupón en su próxima visita para obtener frutas y verduras gratis.

¡Las tiendas de comestibles conceden hasta \$10 por día!

<p><b>MERCADO DAVE'S— MIDTOWN</b> domingo-sábado, 7am-9pm (todo el año) 1929 East 61st St • Cleveland Tel: 216.361.5130</p>	<p><b>MERCADO DAVE'S— EUCLID BEACH</b> domingo-sábado, 7am-9pm (todo el año) 15900 Lakeshore Blvd • Cleveland Tel: 216.486.6458</p>	<p><b>MERCADO DAVE'S</b> domingo-sábado, 7am-9pm (todo el año) 3565 Ridge Rd • Cleveland Tel: 216-961-2000</p>	<p><b>MERCADO DAVE'S— SLAVIC VILLAGE</b> domingo-sábado, 7am-9pm (todo el año) 7422 Harvard Ave • Cleveland Tel: 216.441.0034</p>
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\*Los cupones de las tiendas de comestibles no se pueden canjear en los mercados de agricultores. Las fichas del mercado de agricultores no se pueden canjear en las tiendas de comestibles.



¡VISITE  
[WWW.PRODUCEPERKS.ORG](http://WWW.PRODUCEPERKS.ORG)  
PARA OBTENER  
MÁS INFORMACIÓN!

Si actualmente no recibe asistencia alimentaria a través de una tarjeta de Ohio Direction y desea solicitarla, llame a Beneficios de Ohio, al 1-844-640-OHIO (6446) o al Centro de Ayuda del Banco de Alimentos de Greater Cleveland, al 1-855-738-2067.

# PROGRAMA PRODUCE PERKS

## ESTABLECIMIENTOS PARTICIPANTES 2021

¡Revise los días y horarios del mercado cerca de usted! Para encontrar su mercado más cercano, llame al: 216.429.8200

**¡Los mercados conceden hasta \$25 por día!**

### CITY FRESH CSA (junio 14–octubre 29)

Todas las semanas, CSA comparte con más de 15 ubicaciones de los condados de Cuyahoga y Lorain  
**lunes, 4 pm–6 pm | martes, 4 pm–7 pm**  
**miércoles, 2:30 pm–7 pm | jueves, 4:30 pm–7 pm**  
**viernes, 4 pm–5:30 pm**  
 Para hacer su pedido, visite [cityfresh.org](http://cityfresh.org)  
 Tel: 440.707.6606

### MERCADO DE AGRICULTORES DE LA CARRETERA DE COIT ■●

**miércoles, 8 am–1 pm** (junio 2–octubre 78)  
**sábado, 8 am–1 pm** (todo el año)  
 15000 Woodworth Rd • East Cleveland  
 Tel: 216.249.5455  
 RTA: E 152nd y Noble Rd (37)

### GOOD EARTH FARM STAND ■●

**jueves, 3 pm–7 pm** (mayo–octubre) |  
**3 pm–5 pm** (noviembre–abril)  
**lunes, 3 pm–7 pm** (mayo–octubre)  
**sábado, 12 pm–7 pm** (mayo–octubre)  
 9600 Madison Ave • Cleveland  
 Tel: 216.288.0170  
 RTA: W 98th y Madison (81)

### MERCADO DE AGRICULTORES KAMM'S CORNERS ■●

**domingo, 10 am–1 pm**  
 (junio 13–octubre 17, cerrado el 4 de julio)  
 16906 Albers Ave • Cleveland  
 Tel: 216.252.6559  
 RTA: Rocky River Dr y Lorain Ave (22, 86),  
 Lorain Ave y W 168th St (22, 49, 75)

### MERCADO DE AGRICULTORES LAKEWOOD EARTH AND FOOD COMMUNITY ●

**jueves, 5:30 pm–7:30 pm** (junio 10–octubre 28)  
 15425 Detroit Ave (frente a la biblioteca)  
 Lakewood  
 Tel: 216.367.2834  
 RTA: Detroit Ave y Arthur Ave (26)

### MERCADO LEAGUE PARK ■●

**jueves, 2:30 pm–6 pm** (mayo 6–octubre 7)  
 7721 Superior Ave (Esquina de E 79th y Superior) • Cleveland  
 Tel: 216.375.3757  
 RTA: Superior Ave y E 79th St (2, 3)

- Acepta el Programa Especial de Nutrición Suplementaria para Mujeres, Infantes y Niños (Nutrition Program for Women, Infants and Children, WIC) y el Programa de Nutrición del Mercado de Granjeros (Farmers Market Nutrition Program, FMNP)
- Acepta el FMNP para adultos mayores

### MERCADOS DE AGRICULTORES

#### NORTH UNION:

Tel: 216.751.7656

#### En Chagrin Falls ■●

**domingo, 9 am–12 pm** (junio 6–octubre 24)  
 21 N Franklin St • Chagrin Falls

#### En Cleveland Clinic ■●

**miércoles, 10:30 am–1:30 pm**  
 (junio 2–octubre 20)  
 2049 E 100th St • Cleveland  
 RTA: Cleveland Clinic (7, 32, 48-48A, 58, X61)

#### En Crocker Park ■●

**sábado, 9 am–1 pm** (abril 3–diciembre 18)  
 Crocker Park Blvd • Westlake  
 RTA: Bus 25, 49 y 55 A-B-C  
 (Union Ave y Main Ave)

#### En Legacy Village ■●

**domingo, 10 am–1 pm** (junio 13–septiembre 26)  
 25385 Cedar Rd • Lyndhurst  
 RTA: Legacy Village (32)

#### En Shaker Square ■●

**sábado, 8 am–12 pm** (abril 3–diciembre 18)  
 13111 Shaker Square • Cleveland

RTA: Shaker Square Rapid Station  
 (11, Blue Line, Green Line)

#### En University Hospitals ■●

**jueves, 10:30 am–1:30 pm** (junio 3–septiembre 30)  
 2074 Adelbert Rd • Cleveland  
 RTA: Adelbert Rd (48-48A and 58)

#### En Van Aken ■●

**jueves, 4:30 pm–7:30 pm** (junio 10–octubre 14)  
 20100 Walker Rd • Shaker Heights  
 RTA: Van Aken/Warrensburg Rapid Station  
 (Blue Line, Green Line, Waterfront Line)

### MERCADO DE AGRICULTORES

#### OLD BROOKLYN ■●

**sábado, 9 am–1 pm** (junio 19–septiembre 25)  
 4200 Pearl Rd • Cleveland  
 Tel: 216.459.1000  
 RTA: Pearl Rd y Broadview Rd (51 A-B-C)

### MERCADO DE AGRICULTORES TREMONT

**martes, 4 pm–7 pm** (mayo 11–octubre 12)  
 1200 Starkweather Ave • Cleveland  
 Tel: 216.570.8201  
 RTA: W 14th St y Starkweather

Llevado a usted por:



**ProducePERKS**



**THE OHIO STATE UNIVERSITY**

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AND ENVIRONMENTAL SCIENCES



### MERCADOS DE AGRICULTORES WINTER:

### MERCADO DE AGRICULTORES DE LA CARRETERA DE COIT ■●

**sábado, 8 am–1 pm** (todo el año)  
 15000 Woodworth Rd • East Cleveland  
 Tel: 216.249.5455  
 RTA: E 152nd y Noble Rd (37)

### GOOD EARTH FARM STAND ■●

**jueves, 3 pm–5 pm** (todo el año)  
 9600 Madison Ave • Cleveland  
 Tel: 216.288.0170  
 RTA: W 98th and Madison (81)

### MERCADO INTERIOR NORTH UNION en CROCKER PARK ■●

**sábado, 9 am–12 pm** (enero 2–marzo 27)  
 Crocker Park Blvd • Westlake  
 Tel: 216.751.7656  
 RTA: Bus 25, 49 y 55 A-B-C  
 (Union Ave y Main Ave)

### MERCADO INTERIOR NORTH UNION en VAN AKEN ■●

**sábado, 9 am–12 pm** (enero 2–marzo 27)  
 20100 Walker Rd • Shaker Heights  
 Tel: 216.751.7656  
 RTA: Van Aken/Warrensburg Rapid Station (Blue Line, Green Line, Waterfront Line)



**Figure 5. Cuyahoga County Produce Perks Lessons Learned**

**CFAES**

**Cuyahoga County Produce Perks Lessons Learned**

Challenge	Lesson Learned
Outreach materials in primary languages	Identify University staff, local translation services or volunteer
Reaching target audiences	Word of mouth, radio ads, and mailers sent to target zip codes
Program adjustment midseason	Not recommended. Convening managers for training/updates is challenging once markets open.
Prepare for midseason manager turnover	Invite two market staff to annual pre-season training
Secure long-term funding	Implement a public-private funding model to help ensure funding when community or government priorities shift.
Extension/University proprietorship of program model, logo, data	Partner with College branding office. If program is adopted statewide or if an intermediary is identified this ensures Extension recognition.
Extension/University proprietorship of data	Establish multi-year data sharing MOU
Survive shifts in emerging trends	Stand by office niche, consistent messaging, establish clear partner roles and MOU
Platform for ongoing feedback and community ownership	Meet at least twice per year with key stakeholder group, membership includes participants and program implementers. Increase frequency early in program development and initial years of implementation.
Follow best practices of long-standing programs	Fair Food Network, Wholesome Wave, D.C. Greens, Double Up Food Bucks
Share best practices with long-standing programs	Peer learning opportunity

**Figure 6. Produce Perks Regional Impact Report 2020**

## Produce Perks 2020

### COVID-19 Impact Report for Cuyahoga County



#### Produce Perks and the Pandemic

The Produce Perks program has continued to serve families, farmers, and Ohio retailers during the pandemic. The program has provided critical resources for food insecure families and revenue for farmers suffering from the loss of restaurant and retail sales. Farmers' markets have been able to continue to operate under Governor DeWine's Stay-at-Home Order and the Responsible Restart Ohio Plan. Produce Perks provided PPE supplies and other resources for farmers' markets to remain operational and serve their communities during the pandemic. Families receiving Pandemic EBT (P-EBT) were also able to receive matching dollars through the Produce Perks program. Food insecurity increased from 15% to 21% during the pandemic - almost a quarter of the County's residents now struggle to put food on the table. Produce Perks is needed now more than ever.

#### Impact of the Unlimited Match

In response to the pandemic, Produce Perks Midwest and The Ohio Nutrition Incentive Network offered an **Unlimited Match** for Produce Perks SNAP and P-EBT shoppers at farmers' markets in Ohio from mid-March 2020 through June 2020. The community's response to the unlimited match was strong, resulting in exponential increase in program utilization. The pandemic made traditional program promotion efforts difficult as many partner organizations were no longer seeing clients in person. The unlimited match was largely promoted only through word of mouth and on-site at market customer service booths.

	March - June 2019	March - June 2020	Percent Increase
SNAP Sales	\$8,088	\$20,531	+ 154%
Produce Perks Distributed	\$7,110	\$20,451	+ 188%
Produce Perks Redeemed	\$6,089	\$13,102	+ 115%

#### Produce Perks at Dave's Supermarket

Between mid-March and June 30, Dave's Supermarket doubled the dollar amount of incentives redeemed per month, serving twice as many SNAP consumers. The higher customer reach and Produce Perks sales continued through the rest of the year.

Fruit & Vegetable SNAP Sales	Produce Perks Redeemed	Total	Increase Over 2019
\$370,904	+ \$207,265	= \$578,169	+ 86%

#### Total Impact of Produce Perks in 2020

In 2020, the Produce Perks program had record sales due to unprecedented need and demand from the community. **The Produce Perks program was able to serve over 7,300 families in Cuyahoga County, providing critical access to fresh fruits and vegetables during the pandemic. Over \$485,000 worth of SNAP was used for healthy purchases and over \$295,000 worth of free matching dollars were spent on fresh fruits and vegetables.** Since 2010, the Produce Perks program offered at farmers' markets in Cuyahoga County has generated more than \$725,000 in revenues for small to mid-sized farms, and \$450,000 in fruit and vegetable purchases at Cleveland grocery stores.

	SNAP Sales	Produce Perks Redeemed	Families Served
Farmers' Markets	\$69,665	\$60,971	1,545
Dave's Supermarket	\$416,055	\$234,335	5,849
Total	\$485,720	\$295,306	7,394

Figure 7. Produce Perks Program Report 2020

# Produce Perks

## 2020 Farmers' Market Program Report



### What is Produce Perks?

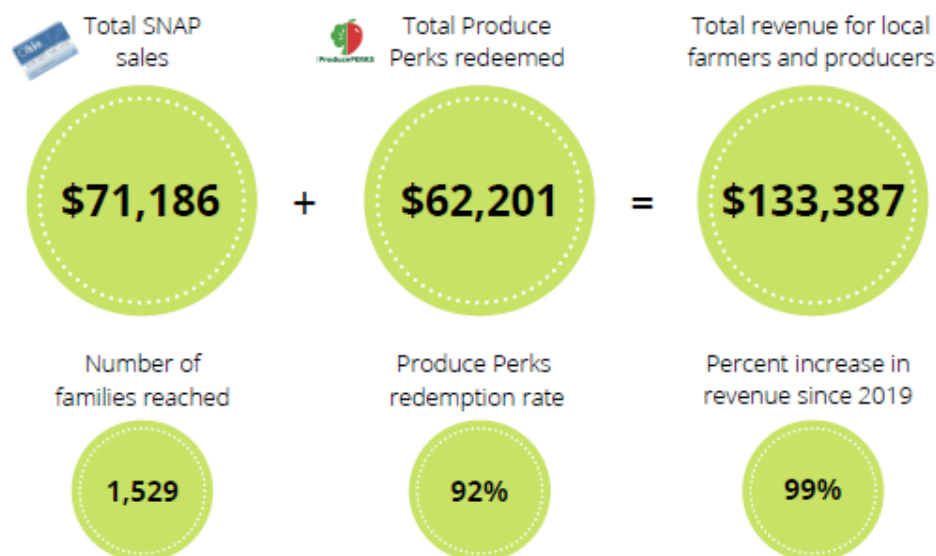
Produce Perks is a nutrition incentive program that was developed by partners of the Cleveland-Cuyahoga County Food Policy Coalition (FPC) in 2010. The program is administered locally by Ohio State University Extension, Cuyahoga County. Produce Perks is now Ohio's statewide nutrition incentive program guided by the Ohio Nutrition Incentive Network (OH-NIN). Nutrition incentive programs are evidence-based models supported by the 2014 and 2018 Farm Bills.

### How does it work?

Produce Perks offers SNAP customers a dollar-for-dollar match, doubling their purchasing power at participating farmers' markets, farm stands, CSA's, and mobile markets. For every dollar a SNAP customer spends at participating sites using an Ohio Direction Card, they receive a free additional dollar referred to as a "Produce Perk." Produce Perks can be used to purchase fresh, local fruits and vegetables only.

### 2020 Program Impacts

In 2020, over \$71,100 worth of SNAP was spent at local farmers' markets in Cuyahoga County. Approximately 1,529 families participated in the Produce Perks program, purchasing over \$62,200 worth of local fruits and vegetables. The Produce Perks program increased sales for farmers and producers participating at local farmers' markets by over \$133,300. Revenue from the Produce Perks program for farmers and producers increased by 99% in 2020 when compared to 2019.



Total dollars funneled into the local economy since 2010:

**\$725,987**

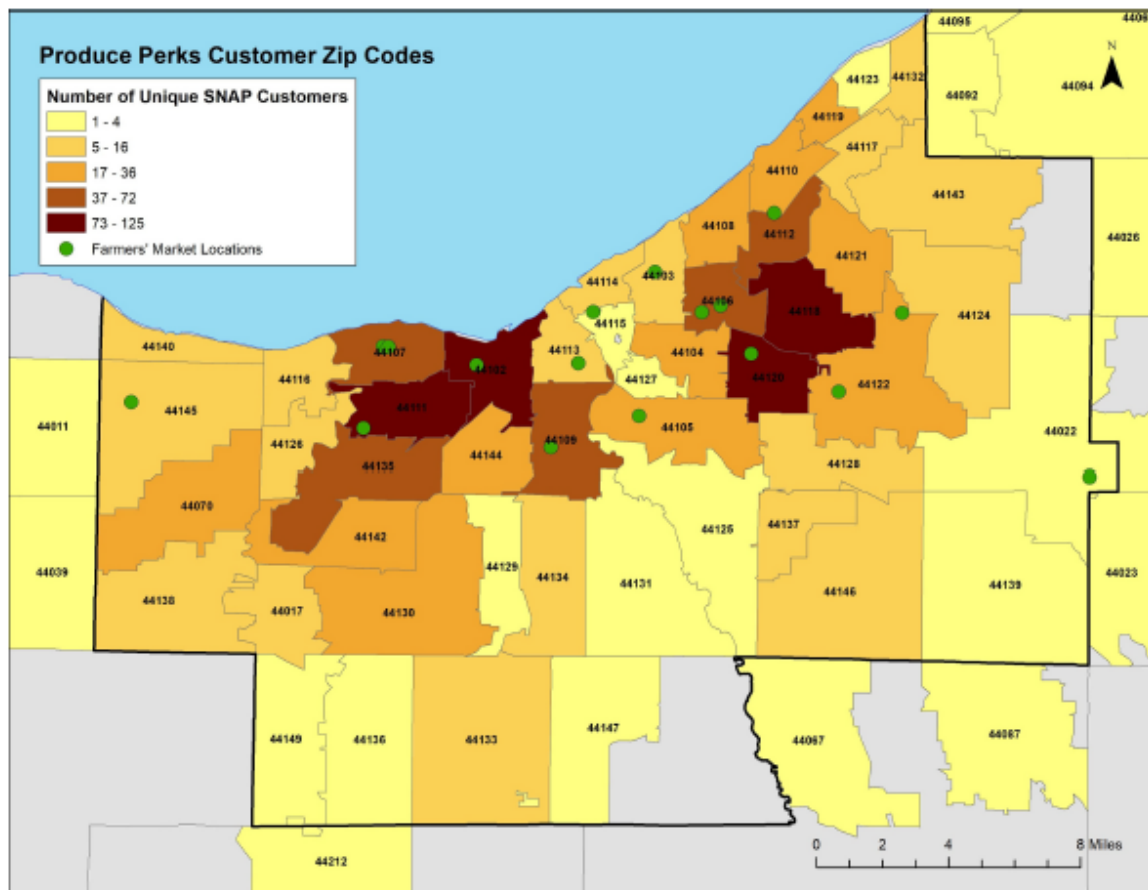
## Produce Perks and the Pandemic in 2020

In response to the pandemic, the Ohio Nutrition Incentive Network offered an **Unlimited Match**. This removed the daily matching cap of \$20 for Produce Perks SNAP and Pandemic-EBT shoppers at farmers' markets in Ohio from mid-March through June. The community's response to the unlimited match was strong, resulting in exponential increase in program utilization. The pandemic made traditional program promotion efforts difficult as many partner organizations were no longer seeing clients in person. The unlimited match was largely promoted only through word of mouth and on-site at market customer service booths. Program utilization increases in Cuyahoga County during the time the unlimited match was offered can be seen in the chart to the right.

	March - June 2019	March - June 2020	Percent Increase
SNAP Sales	\$8,088	\$20,531	+ 154%
Produce Perks Distributed	\$7,110	\$20,451	+ 188%
Produce Perks Redeemed	\$6,089	\$13,102	+ 115%

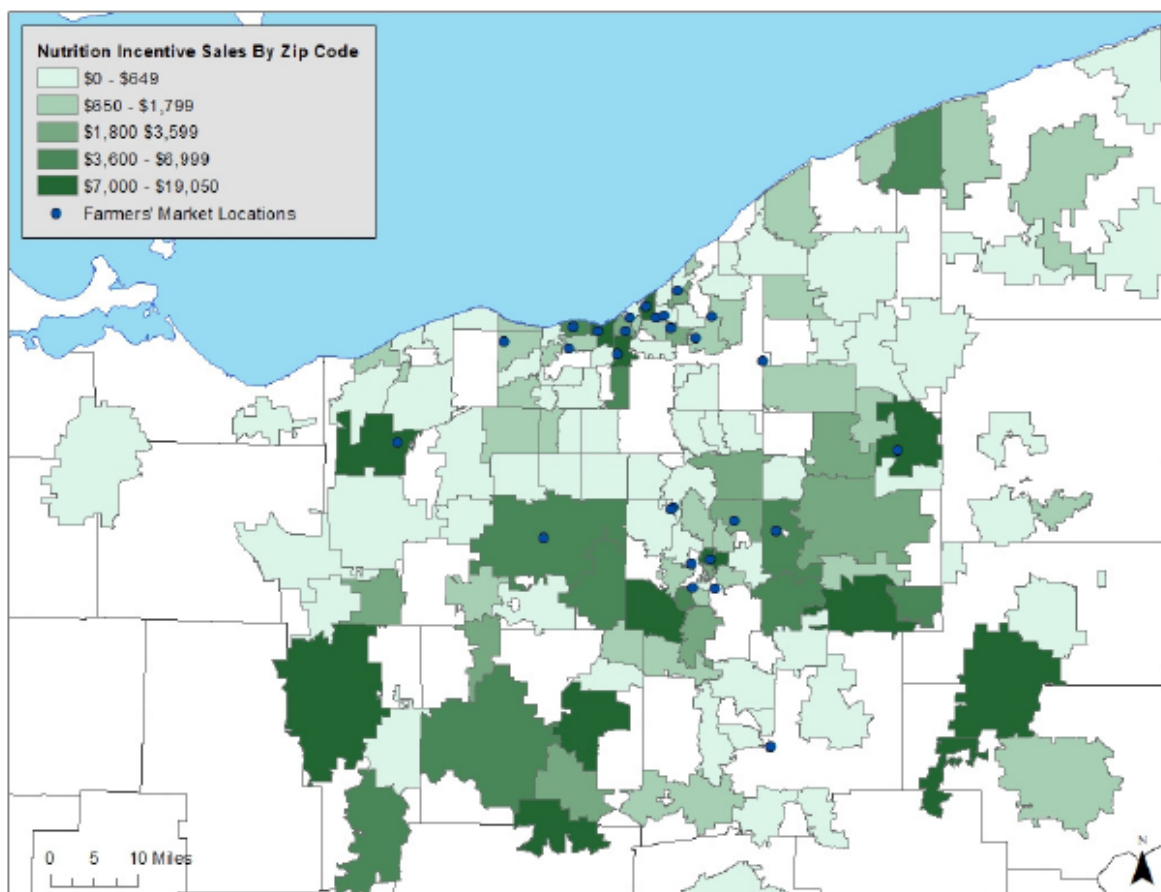
## Produce Perks in Cuyahoga County

In 2020, the Produce Perks program was offered at 15 locations across the County with 3 market locations operating year round. Over 1,500 families were served by the program in 2020. When SNAP customers visit a market and swipe their Ohio Direction Card market staff ask them for the zip code of their residence. The map below displays the zip codes reported by Produce Perks customers in 2020. The highest participation occurred among customers living in the zip codes 44102, 44120, and 44118.



## Regional Impact on Local Farmers and Producers

The Produce Perks program is also offered at farmers' markets in other counties across Northeast Ohio by Countryside, a non-profit in Summit County. Ohio State University Extension Cuyahoga County and Countryside combined their 2020 market sales data to examine the regional economic impact of nutrition incentive programs. Sales from Produce Perks and other nutrition incentive programs including WIC Perks, Carrot Cash, TANF Perks, and Summit County WIC FMNP were included in the analysis. Total sales from nutrition incentive programs reached \$305,000 in 2020, increasing sales for over 331 farmers and producers.



## Thank You to Our Funders

Ohio State University Extension Cuyahoga County extends our deepest gratitude to our funders. Without their generous financial support this work would not be possible.

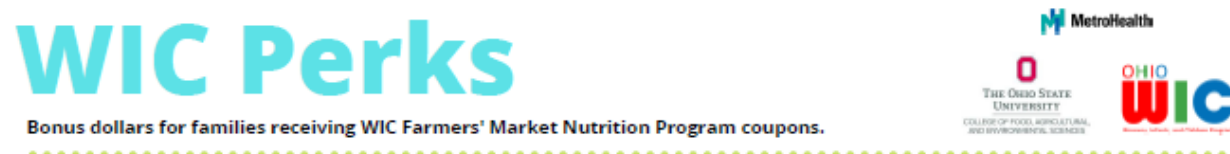
## Thank You to Our Partners

Ohio State University Extension Cuyahoga County would like to thank the following program and promotional partners: local farmers' markets; Produce Perks Midwest; the Ohio Nutrition Incentive Network; Countryside; Food Access Raises Everyone (FARE); Cuyahoga County Jobs and Family Services; Cuyahoga Women, Infants, and Children; the Greater Cleveland Food Bank.

For questions about Produce Perks in Cuyahoga County contact Amanda Osborne with Ohio State University Extension Cuyahoga at [osborne.414@osu.edu](mailto:osborne.414@osu.edu) or 216-429-8200.



Figure 8. WIC Perks Program Report 2020



## What is WIC Perks?

The WIC Perks program is an expansion of the Produce Perks nutrition incentive program in Cuyahoga County piloted in 2019. Produce Perks offers Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) recipients a dollar-for-dollar match when shopping with an Ohio Direction Card at local farmers' markets across the state. The WIC Perks pilot expanded the Produce Perks program to serve families receiving Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) Farmers' Market Nutrition Program (FMNP) coupons. The WIC Perks program is a partnership between Ohio State University Extension Cuyahoga County, Cuyahoga County Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) Program\*, and local farmers' markets to collaboratively leverage resources to offer additional services to WIC clients at select WIC FMNP distribution dates.

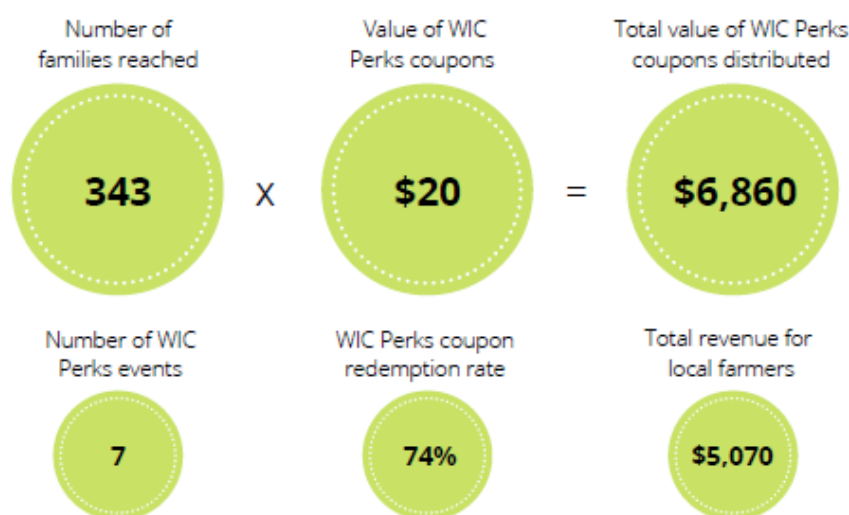
## How does it work?

After families receive WIC/FMNP coupons on select distribution dates, they have the option to engage in a short cooking demonstration, taste testing, or educational activity. In exchange for their participation, families received an additional set of coupons for fresh fruits and vegetables valued at \$20 and relevant culinary tools. The 2019 pilot served 683 families, providing them with \$13,660 worth of coupons to purchase fresh fruits, vegetables, and herbs at local farmers' markets in addition to the WIC FMNP coupons they received. The full 2019 WIC Perks pilot report can be viewed [here](#).

## 2020 WIC Perks Program

The WIC Perks program continued to serve the community during the COVID-19 pandemic, providing critical resources for food-insecure families and revenue for farmers. Farmers' markets were able to continue to operate under Governor DeWine's Stay-at-Home Order and the Responsible Restart Ohio Plan.

In 2020, the WIC Perks program was modified to comply with the health and safety mandates outlined in the Responsible Restart Ohio Plan. One modification was the WIC Perks Program was unable to offer cooking demonstrations or taste testing for program participants.



\*70 families opted to complete a follow-up survey with an additional \$1,400 in WIC Perks being distributed for a total of \$8,260. Redemption for coupons received from follow-up survey is not reflected in the redemption values listed above.

While WIC Perks coupon distribution was lower in 2020 than the pilot year, the coupon redemption rate increased by 24%. Many factors could have influenced distribution in 2020, but the program partners believe that distribution was lower due to challenges stemming from the COVID-19 pandemic. While the program was unable to offer cooking demonstrations and taste testing, many families were still excited to participate in the program for a second year. Families shared how they have been using the two kitchen tools they received previously and how they were looking forward to being able to select from the other tool options offered through the program. Educational resources provided to participants focused on seasonality, proper produce storage, and tips for using fruits and vegetables to make kid-friendly snacks.

## Exposure to Produce Perks

During the WIC Perks program families were provided with an overview of the Produce Perks program and how they could use their SNAP benefits at the farmers' market to receive free matching dollars. Many families were excited to learn about Produce Perks for the first time at WIC Perks events. The program also highlighted the opportunity to use Pandemic EBT to receive Produce Perks.

Follow-up survey results showed a statistically significant relationship between attending a joint WIC FMNP/WIC Perks distribution event in 2019 and being aware of the Produce Perks program before visiting a farmers' market in 2020.



54%

Percent of families who reported receiving SNAP benefits.

36%

Percent of families receiving SNAP who reported knowing about Produce Perks prior to WIC Perks event.

94%

Percent of families receiving SNAP who reported they planned to use Produce Perks in the future.

## Impact on WIC Farmers Market Nutrition Program (FMNP) Distribution

During 2020, WIC FMNP recipients could also receive bonus coupons funded by Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) through a program known as TANF Perks. The TANF Perks program used the WIC Perks model to partner with WIC FMNP to provide bonus coupons at the farmers' market.

The table to the right highlights the 2020 WIC FMNP distribution numbers for Kamm's Corners Farmers' Market. The Kamm's Corners Farmers' Market hosted one WIC Perks event (8/30) and two TANF Perks events (9/20 and 9/27). Significant increases in WIC FMNP distribution occurred on dates where families could receive bonus coupons through both programs. The opportunity to receive bonus coupons on select WIC FMNP distribution dates appears to have influenced which distribution events families chose to attend, a trend also observed in 2019.

Market Date	WIC FMNP Distribution
7/19	\$1,480
7/26	\$920
8/16	\$1,280
8/30	\$2,660
9/20	\$2,100
9/27	\$2,220
10/4	\$1,020
10/11	\$1,260

## Thank You to Our Partners

Ohio State University Extension Cuyahoga County would like to thank the Cuyahoga County WIC program and staff for partnering with us on WIC Perks. Cuyahoga County WIC staff were immensely supportive of the pilot since the initial concept was developed in 2018. Cuyahoga County WIC did an incredible job informing participants about WIC Perks, which undoubtedly contributed to the pilot's success. Ohio State University Extension Cuyahoga County would also like to thank the staff and volunteers of the Kamm's Corner Farmers' Market, the Old Brooklyn Farmers' Market, Coit Road Farmers' Market, and North Union Farmers' Market for their data collection and tracking efforts as well as their flexibility during the pandemic. All program partners provided support to the pilot in-kind, receiving no financial compensation for their time.

## Thank You to Our Funders

Ohio State University Extension Cuyahoga County extends our deepest gratitude to our funders. Without their generous financial support this work would not be possible.

**For questions about WIC Perks contact Amanda Osborne with Ohio State University Extension Cuyahoga County at [osborne.414@osu.edu](mailto:osborne.414@osu.edu) or 216-429-8200.**

\*An Ohio Department of Health grant funded program of The MetroHealth System.

## Contributor

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AND ENVIRONMENTAL SCIENCES

Nicole is one of 24 area leaders within the Ohio State University Extension system. The Cuyahoga County office, in Cleveland, joins the Columbus and Cincinnati offices in serving the three major urban areas in the state. In addition to serving the local community, Nicole serves as National Urban Extension Leaders North Central Regional Network Chair, participates with the Western Center for Metropolitan Extension and Research Advisory Board, and on a Kettering Urban Communities Reimagined project.

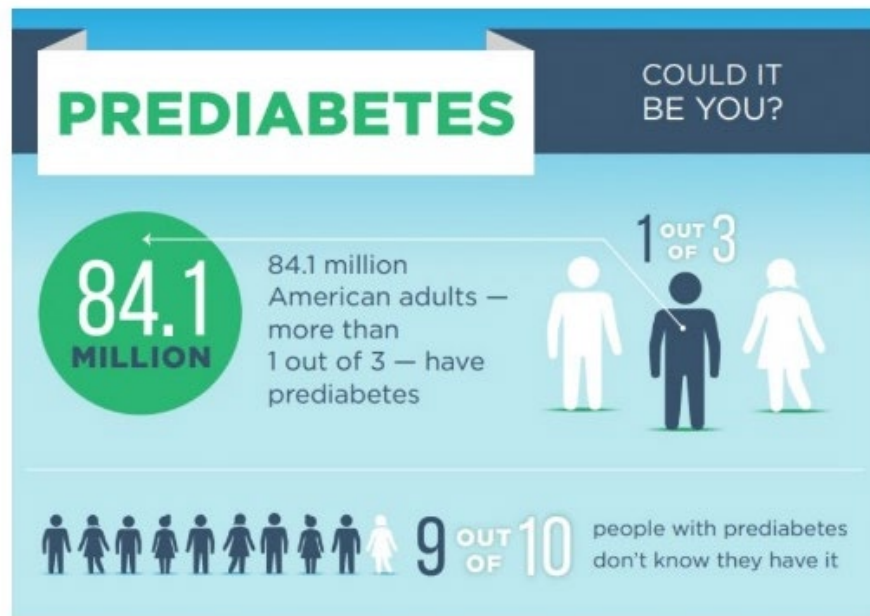
Joining Extension in 2015, Nicole shares her experience in partner relations, project management, urban planning, healthcare informatics, proposal writing, youth development, comprehensive well-being, and cultural competence with local, state, and national teams.

Special acknowledgement to Amanda Osborne, Community Development Educator/Produce Perks Project Manager and Tameka Coleman, AmeriCorps VISTA for their contributions.



# Extension Programming to Enhance Urban Well-Being

## Case Study Series



## University of Idaho Extension Diabetes Prevention Program *Southwest and Central Idaho*

Bridget Morrisroe-Aman, Extension Educator, University of Idaho

This case study series is a supplement to program snapshots featured in the Extension Programming to Enhance Urban Well-Being chapter of ***Extension Education and the Social Sciences*** Maria Rosario T. de Guzman and Holly Hatton, University of Nebraska-Lincoln Cambridge University Press (2024)

Case study series led by  
Julie M. Fox, Ph.D., Ohio State University Extension  
fox.264@osu.edu  
2021

## **Program Overview – University of Idaho Extension Diabetes Prevention Program (UI DPP)**

National, state, and county data from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and Idaho Department of Health data on diabetes and pre-diabetes demonstrate that one in three United States adults are prediabetic. The University of Idaho Extension Diabetes Prevention Program (UI DPP) is offered in southwest and central Idaho to urban and rural adults with pre-diabetes. This type of program has been provided nationally since 2010 and began in Idaho in 2017. The program is nationally recognized by CDC. It is delivered locally in-person and statewide via distance learning.

### **Urban Context**

Idaho has a large land mass but relatively small population and has a strong agriculture history. Idaho is considered primarily rural and many of the urban areas border if not encompass rural areas. During the past 10 years the state has experienced unprecedented growth that has brought many opportunities and challenges. Over half the state's population is now located in more urban areas and the needs of residents are shifting to include urban issues and priorities.

Primarily urban populations in southwest Idaho including Ada and Canyon counties; Ada with the largest state population of 469,966 residents, followed by Canyon County at 223,499. The areas the program serves includes multiple cities, towns, universities and colleges, schools, and health districts. Working with many partner agencies and organizations adds more opportunity and complexity. This has also been compounded with an almost 20% growth in population from 2010-2020, with a continued forecast of 10% increase in population every five years.

The population in Idaho is estimated to be 93% white according to the United States census, however, with almost 20% in population growth the past 10 years, it is becoming more racially and ethnically diverse. The most diverse Idaho populations are in the more urban cities of Boise, Meridian, and Nampa which are within counties reached by the program.

## **Strategic Approach to Urban Engagement**

### **Programming**

The UI DPP is delivered in several modalities, including in-person, online via distance learning, and a hybrid of both. The UI faculty and staff work with community partners to offer the program at worksites, health clinics, recreation facilities, libraries, and other sites. The faculty and staff who deliver the program participated in a CDC National Diabetes Prevention Program (NDPP) training to become certified DPP Healthy Lifestyle Coaches. As certified coaches, the faculty and staff deliver the NDPP Prevent T2 curriculum, a total of 26 lessons, in a year-long series. The UI DPP follows the CDC program model and evaluation methods. The NDPP program is research- and evidenced-based. A multi-center research study of the program showed that people at risk for developing diabetes can prevent or delay the onset of diabetes by 58 percent if they lose 5-7 percent of their starting body weight and achieve 150 minutes of physical activity each week.

### **Positioning**

The NDPP is marketed nationwide and locally in each state by departments of health and/or organizations delivering the program. The CDC and state agencies use a variety of methods to promote and market the program including television, social media, print, and radio. The Idaho

State Department of Health and Welfare (IDHW) uses television, social media, print, and partners with organizations to provide resource and referrals to the program. The UI DPP has received many referrals from health care providers and employee wellness program via the IDHW. The UI DPP is marketed in various ways that include social media, print, and word of mouth from participants, health care providers and employee wellness managers.

## **Personnel**

In Idaho, an Extension educator, has provided statewide leadership and coordination of the UI DPP, including coach training, grant writing, collecting, and reporting all the data to the CDC. This educator, along with four other educators and four staff who are certified DPP health lifestyle coaches deliver the program in south and central Idaho.

County support staff in the Extension offices provide program support with advertisement, registration, and payment. Partner agencies also provide support with advertisement, recruitment, and assistance with program registration. The grant funding received for the program is managed through the University of Idaho Office of Sponsored Program and Extension office budget support personnel.

## **Partnerships (external)**

The UI DPP started in partnership with IDHW, who reached out to UI Extension to inquire about the possibility of UI becoming a NDPP provider. In 2017, the IDHW DPP manager met with the UI Extension educator to discuss the fact that Southern Idaho was lacking providers of the NDPP, despite having the largest population in the state. Based on this the UI educator partnered with IDHW to train 12 new DPP healthy lifestyle coaches, eight of which were UI Extension faculty and staff. The IDHW has provided statewide leadership and coordination, bring both training and grant funding to providers of NDPP throughout the state. Through this partnership the UI DPP faculty and staff have received both support and funding to develop and grow the program. In addition to the IDHW, UI Extension has partnered with over 20 state agencies, employers, schools, health organizations and individuals to market, recruit, and offer the program at their sites or via distance learning.

## **Impact**

### **Program Impacts**

According to the National Institutes of Health, more than one in five health care dollars and one in three Medicare dollars are spent on diabetes and estimates show that diabetes costs the United States' economy \$322 billion annually. In Idaho, diabetes is a common, growing disease, and approximately 8.4 percent of the state's population have diabetes. In addition, the financial burden on Idaho's health care system in 2012, both direct and indirect, was approximately \$1.32 billion.

In response to this growing healthcare crisis, the CDC developed the NDPP, a year-long evidence based healthy lifestyle program. In 2016, the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services certified research that the NDPP reduced medical spending and utilization in the Medicare population. The researchers found an average savings of \$278 per year for three years in the intervention group, and significant decreases in inpatient admissions and emergency department visits.

The specific outcomes and impact of the UI DPP are:

- Certified seven Extension educators, two program coordinators, and two staff as DPP Healthy Lifestyle Coaches
- Enrolled 200 participants in 18 cohorts, in five counties, 10 towns and cities
- Estimated health care savings of \$278 per participant a year for three years = \$166,800

## **Recognition**

In 2019, the UI DPP received full recognition from the CDC and is now listed on the national registry. The Cooperative Extension National Diabetes Prevention Program (CENDPP) Workgroup received the National Extension Association of Family and Consumer Sciences, multi-state team 1st place national award. The program has been presented at four national and one international conference.

## **Closing Comments and Looking to the Future**

### **Unique Aspects**

Extension nationwide is pivoting to focus on health, and at a national level it has been stated that Extension may be in a position to do for “health” in the 21st century, what it did for “agriculture” in the 20th century; in other words, Extension as an organization can innovate, develop, and deliver new health outreach initiatives and programs.

### **Challenges**

In starting this program, there were colleagues and leaders that stated that a year-long program may not be successful or sustainable. Extension programming is traditionally short term; a one-time class or presentation, a 1- to 8-week series, and some volunteer programs that have monthly trainings throughout the year. There has also been some reluctance to deliver DPP due to past experiences delivering diabetes education in competition with healthcare providers. In addition to this initial hesitancy, the current challenge is sustaining the program and developing a way to process health insurance reimbursement for it.

### **Related Programs**

In 2017 when the UI DPP began, there were several other states offering the program, as well as a few local providers in Idaho. Other state Extension programs and local providers delivering the NDPP were contacted to get more information. The other states and providers shared great information on what work and how to get started.

## **Future**

UI Extension is currently in its fifth year of the program and have enrolled over 200 participants in 18 cohorts, in 5 counties, 10 towns and cities. UI Extension applied to be a distance learning provider in early 2020, pre-COVID-19, and delivered two series of the program completely online, and four in a hybrid model. The hybrid model allows participants to be online or in-person dependent on space and required social distancing. Two online programs and two hybrid programs started in 2021. The process to pilot an online NDPP program “HabitNu” has begun. The team is hopeful this online platform will allow for an integrated DPP database, delivery, and payment method.

## **Recommendations**

When starting a new program or approach that is not traditional to Extension, listen to and acknowledge the hesitancy and concerns from colleagues and leaders, but do not give up. Look for supportive leaders, colleagues, and stakeholders to champion any program or approach that fits your community needs, especially in urban programming. The Extension system and programs have historically been agricultural- and rural-based, but this is changing. As the population has shifted to living and working in urban areas, Extension professionals have begun to develop research, tools, and programs for the urban audiences they serve.

## **Multimedia Documentation/References**

Impact Statement – <https://www.uidaho.edu/extension/about/impacts>

[National Diabetes Prevention Program](#) website with infographics, curriculum, data, participant, and provider information.

## **Contributor**

Bridget Morrisroe-Aman, University of Idaho Extension,  
[bridgeta@uidaho.edu](mailto:bridgeta@uidaho.edu)



**University of Idaho**  
Extension

Bridget Morrisroe-Aman is an extension professional, dedicated to working with individuals, families, and communities to build healthy homes and environments. She has worked with children, youth, and families in Extension programs for 20 years. Her work includes coordinating the Children, Youth, and Families At-risk program for five years and the Eat Smart Idaho program in the southern district for 11 years. Her current role in Extension is in the most urban area in Idaho, Ada County, as the Family and Consumer Sciences (FCS) Educator, Assistant Professor, focused on nutrition, health, and food safety.

Morrisroe-Aman leads the UI Extension Diabetes Prevention Program statewide and a multi-county Master Food Safety Advisor volunteer program. She also serves as an advisory board member for the Western Center for Metropolitan Extension and Research and is the Idaho representative for the National Urban Extension Leaders. She is dedicated to using her knowledge, experience, and training to develop and innovative existing and new programs to serve urban audiences in Idaho.

The University of Idaho Extension is a department within the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences. Through a “statewide network of faculty and staff in 42 counties, three federally recognized tribes and nine College of Agricultural and Life Sciences research and extension centers, we work to transform knowledge into solutions that work.”

Morrisroe-Aman acknowledges educators Jackie Amende, Gretchen Manker, Joey Peutz, Rebecca Hutchings, and staff Sendy Martinez, Nikki Telford, Lyshell Grigg, and Andrea Trujillo who have delivered the program, assisted with presentations, collected impact and contributed to scholarly work. She also acknowledges the Southern District Director, Dr. Patrick Momont and State Extension Director, Dr. Barbara Petty, for their support and leadership.

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# Extension Programming to Enhance Urban Well-Being

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## Case Study Series

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### Fostering Sustainability at a Community Level *Pinellas County and Tampa Bay MSA, Florida*

Ramona Madhosingh-Hector, Regional Specialized Agent in  
Urban Sustainability, University of Florida/IFAS Extension

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This case study series is a supplement to program snapshots featured in the Extension Programming to Enhance Urban Well-Being chapter of ***Extension Education and the Social Sciences*** Maria Rosario T. de Guzman and Holly Hatton, University of Nebraska-Lincoln Cambridge University Press (2024)

Case study series led by  
Julie M. Fox, Ph.D., Ohio State University Extension  
fox.264@osu.edu



## **Program Overview – Fostering Sustainability at a Community Level**

Fostering Sustainability at a Community Level is a program to address community engagement, sustainability awareness, green government certification in the Pinellas County and Tampa Bay MSA, Florida. The program has been underway for 10 years and serves city and county residents, city and county staff, and students (K-12, college, university).

This case study details a multi-layered process for fostering sustainability at a community level. It can be replicated in urban and rural areas and scaled and adapted to meet educational goals. Inputs include Extension faculty, program assistants, city and county staff, and student interns.

## **Urban Context**

The Regional Specialized Agent (RSA), Urban Environmental Sustainability is a University of Florida/IFAS Extension faculty position that serves 11 counties within the Southwest Extension District. The RSA focuses primarily on the urban corridor within that region which includes the counties of Hillsborough, Pinellas, and Polk. The Tampa Bay Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA) is ranked 18<sup>th</sup> amongst metropolitan areas in the United States and is home to over 3 million residents. The region is highly urbanized but still retains its agricultural heritage in many of the counties including Hillsborough and Manatee renowned for cattle, strawberries, and now hops and hemp.

The RSA also holds the title of Bushnell Endowed Faculty, a position funded in part by Pinellas County to recognize and address sustainability issues using a systems level approach in the most densely populated county in the State of Florida. With 3.347 persons per square mile, it is one of 35 coastal counties with a total of 280 square miles and 588 miles of coastline. Issues such as land use planning, sea level rise, economic development, and sustainability are prominent in this county and the Tampa Bay region at large given its coastal proximity and attractive location. Additionally, Pinellas County also has 24 local municipalities so there is a total of 25 local governments which makes it much more complicated to address and navigate multifaceted issues that oftentimes cross geographic borders.

As outlined, this 11-county region is made up of highly urban areas and rural enclaves, and there are well established flows of people, goods, capital, information, and natural resources, as well as waste and pollution. As mentioned above, the complexity of local government structure is also complicated by the plethora of urban partners – universities, colleges, regional partners – many of them are also engaged in the work of community engagement. As such, carving niches and engaging in fruitful partnerships is of paramount importance in advancing regional goals while prioritizing local projects, balancing budgets, and addressing societal issues.

It is against this backdrop that the RSA has filled a void for the past 10 years to develop, implement, and evaluate educational programs and initiatives to promote sustainability. This position is a one-of-a-kind position for Extension and has allowed Extension to showcase its ability to use research-backed information to develop an innovative response to sustainability that has brought multiple accolades to the county. With the increased prominence of sustainability practitioners, the county and region has benefitted from additional resources and Extension continues to be a major partner with local and regional partners. This has also resulted in increased recognition for the University of Florida Extension Service as it

demonstrates the breadth and depth of services that its faculty can engage with and amplify partner efforts.

## **Strategic Approach to Urban Engagement**

The agent has utilized the “regional” label to work across county borders which leverages the interdisciplinary expertise of both the agent and the university and increases visibility of Extension and the land-grant university system as a resource. By positioning Extension in partnerships with other urban universities and regional entities, this addresses the distance disconnect between the land-grant university headquartered in Gainesville and potential clientele in the Tampa Bay region. Fostering sustainability at a community level in a highly urbanized area requires engagement on multiple levels – local governments, residents, advisory members, regional partners, youth (K-12), and college/university students.

At the community level the RSA created regional awareness by partnering with highly visible partners for green expo events and pioneered the deployment of a seven-week community-oriented sustainability training program, “Sustainable Floridians<sup>SM</sup>.” In addition to creating knowledgeable sustainability stewards, this program served as a pipeline of newly developed sustainability volunteers who increased visibility of Extension at sustainability activities and events. This complemented the county’s goal of increasing number of volunteers retained and hours of service donated. Additional community-oriented programs included biennial symposia on energy, local and regional film series with colleges and universities, energy efficiency educational programs, and workshops on coastal hazard preparedness, climate change, sea level rise, and food systems planning. To reach diverse audiences, energy efficiency programs for youth and adult were offered in Spanish and translated materials were provided to encourage behavior change. The RSA actively recruited interns from local urban university partners and benefitted from interns placed through a competitive matching process by the land-grant university (University of Florida). Interns contributed to developing social media marketing campaigns, writing blogs, and outreach education at sustainability and environmentally themed events.

At the local government level, the RSA served as de facto sustainability agent for the county and contributed to the development of multiple programs to foster an internal culture of sustainability. The RSA created a website “Green Pinellas” to showcase the county’s efforts toward achieving sustainability and the educational role Extension provided through classes, factsheets, blogs, and videos. The website development and content were supported in part by the sustainable county education committee, a county partner group convened by Extension to provide input and support Extension in its role to promote sustainability awareness and education. The RSA, with support from program assistants, also developed an employee education program consisting of training modules and a green employee pledge to create sustainability awareness among new and existing employees and co-managed the Green Business Partnership Program. Additionally, the agent facilitated face-to-face meetings and workshops with University of Florida faculty and county staff and researched and drafted a green building resolution which was approved by the board of county commissioners. Most importantly, the RSA engaged in state and national certification programs to brand the local government as a pioneer in sustainable local government operations, a reflection of its commitment to creating a sustainability ethic and culture. These programs included Green Local Government Certification from Florida Green Building Coalition and U.S. Green Building Council

[Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design \(LEED\)](#) for Cities and Communities which integrated the well-known STAR Community Rating System.

## Impact

### Program Impacts

The success of county, community, and regional efforts are documented in the awards and accolades for both the county and the RSA on a national, regional, and local scale. Pinellas County was the first local government in Florida to certify (2006) and be re-certified (2013) under the Florida Green Building Coalition standard, a feat that would not have been accomplished without Extension as its partner. The RSA's work in developing the Green Building ordinance resulted in a gain of 35 percentage points in administration and building/development categories while Green Pinellas, GreenStar programming, and LEED classes earned 37 percentage points in human resources and information services. Award presentations were made at board of county commissioners' meeting for the gold re-certification and 2013 green achievement award for recognition as the highest scoring county. In 2018, the county also earned a 3-STAR (Sustainability Tools for Assessing and Rating) rating with STAR Communities and is recognized as a LEED community amongst 90 national and international cities and communities. STAR was absorbed by the [USGBC LEED for Cities and Communities program](#).

The Green Pinellas website was launched in 2010 and between 2010 and 2014, 14,288 web visits with spikes in 2011 and 2014 were recorded. The most popular pages are energy and environmental health and user surveys launched in 2014 indicated that the most sought-after information was solar. The site is currently under review for update with the county.

Agent (RSA) coordinated the delivery of 13 lunch and learn sessions offered at six county locations for 286 employees. All employees reported the use of efficient light bulbs at home and turning off computer and peripherals at work. Employees were very familiar with personal energy and household budgets but more than 50% reported unfamiliarity with county's energy and water directive indicating a knowledge and savings gap for the county.

The inaugural regional film series was conducted in partnership with the University of South Florida Patel College of Global Sustainability, and 128 participants attended at least one film in the series, 79 returned retrospective evaluations, with a response rate of 62%. Retrospective evaluations revealed that 94% of attendees learned something new and were willing to list new knowledge gained; 94% rated the program excellent, very good, or good; 60% were unfamiliar with Extension as a resource; 34% were more concerned about climate change and 46% were more willing to engage others in a discussion about it *after* watching the film. Three month follow-up evaluations were conducted with participants who provided email addresses (N=24) with the following results: 91% (n =11) fulfilled pledges to attend a public meeting and contact a local official to express support for climate change. Twenty seven percent (27%) joined a local environmental group and 20% took advantage of sales tax suspension to purchase ENERGY STAR and WaterSense® appliances and products. Sharing information learned with friends or neighbors was the easiest pledge to complete (45%) while carbon offsets and new purchases were more difficult. Time (50%) was the biggest barrier identified in the completion of pledges.

## **Recognition**

The RSA received awards from national Extension professional associations for innovative programming, social media/online courses, radio, mixed materials, outstanding educational materials award, and Extension initiative innovation awards.

Excerpt from letter shared from a participant in Sustainable Floridians<sup>SM</sup> course “Having retired from a long teaching career, I decided to heed my own advice given to my students- follow your heart and do what makes you happy .... Part of the requirement for the Sustainable Floridian course is volunteerism. I am looking forward to getting involved in community events around Pinellas County. It is exciting for me to have the opportunity to work with others who have expertise and experience in the many areas for which I am interested in volunteering. These are a few of the benefits I gained from Sustainable Floridians. However, the greatest benefit was in getting to know others with a passion for living sustainably. Our class was comprised of people from all ages, backgrounds, interests yet we found common ground in this course. Ideas were exchanged, support and encouragement offered, and new friendships developed. Knowing that there are other people in the community who feel the same about preserving our world and living sustainability is a huge boost to my own efforts. I am grateful to the Pinellas County Extension for providing such a valuable course to the public. It was just what I needed to help guide me along a more sustainable path.”

## **Closing Comments and Looking to the Future**

### **Unique Aspects**

Extension has an office in all 67 counties in Florida but this position in Urban Environmental Sustainability is unique to Pinellas County and the Southwest District. Extension is a peripheral organization in many of the counties because of the MOU (Memorandum of Understanding) so it is difficult to be fully integrated into county operations which hinders the development of a robust sustainability ethic and performance measures. The achievements attained with Green Local Certification Programs relied heavily on partnerships with key supporters within the county, funding for part-time positions to support data collection, and cost-benefit valuation analysis for certification.

### **Challenges**

Ongoing challenges include shifts in political and funding priorities which slowed momentum on key projects e.g. greenhouse gas emission inventory, employee education, professional memberships, and lack of a central authority for sustainability. The peripheral position could only advance sustainability issues up to a certain point and perhaps that positioning by design offered a prescriptive rather than performative approach for sustainability progress. Despite the challenges, the RSA has created value and interest in sustainability operations locally and regionally and is recognized as an expert in the subject area. The county recently hired its first sustainability coordinator in 2019 and the RSA position originally created in 2005 has been held by the author since January 2010.

### **Related Programs**

To develop a robust, successful sustainability program, the RSA frequently reviewed programs on the West Coast including California and Washington, and Vancouver, Canada, as well as international programs in European countries.

## **Future**

Future efforts will focus on:

- Training programs for employees to support the local municipalities to create educated workforces to support regional work of sustainability and resiliency.
- Integrating equity, principles of DEI, and authentic community engagement processes as communities update and revise sustainability action plans.
- Creating train-the-trainer programs that contribute to building community capacity which ultimately supports quality of life and increases community vitality.
- Developing educational programs that provide information about the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals, and support integration of those principles in statewide and local projects.

## **Recommendations**

Fostering a culture of sustainability is a long-term process that can only be accomplished with a multi-layered approach to ensure that multiple audiences are engaged. Characteristics of successful programs should include some of the following features (1) identifying atypical Extension partners that have similar educational and mission values to align programs that yield added benefit (2) rethinking traditional educational teaching methods to enable Extension to “stand-out” from the crowd in the urban arena, and (3) a willingness to engage with out-of-the-box subject matter and programming that retain elements of the Extension mission.

## **Multimedia Documentation/References**

The [Urban E-Fieldbook](#) (requires LinkedIn sign in) features the film study <https://urban.extension.org/the-work-of-urban-extension/tampa-bay-region-florida/> and has a link to a poster.

[Statewide Green Building Award Winners Announced by the Florida Green Building Coalition](#)

[2019 Bonnie Teater Early Career Award Achievement Recipient](#)

## Contributor

Ramona Madhosingh-Hector, Regional  
Specialized Agent in Urban Sustainability,  
University of Florida/IFAS Extension, Southwest District



Madhosingh-Hector is a Regional Specialized Agent (RSA). She has been actively engaged in local and national urban Extension efforts by planning and participating in the inaugural Florida Urban Extension Conference in 2014, the Florida Urban Task Force, Florida Urban Summit in 2019, and facilitating National Extension Urban Leaders (NUEL) Steering Committee Meetings (2014). She is an active member of the NUEL Professional Development Action Team, supported the 2020 NUEL Inequities Dialogue, and attended and presented at multiple NUEL conferences, nationally and regionally. She is currently in a learning exchange cohort with the Kettering Foundation to explore *Democratic Practices: Creating Spaces for Deliberative Public Life* and its applicability for addressing complex issues. As a current Western Center for Metropolitan Extension & Research fellow, she will be expanding on work underway to develop competences for urban Extension personnel.

Prior to joining University of Florida/IFAS Extension, Madhosingh-Hector worked for the Florida Coastal Management Program at the Department of Environmental Protection as an Environmental Specialist. She has MS degrees in Urban and Regional Planning (FSU) and Environmental Science (FAMU) and a BS in Agriculture (UWI-Trinidad & Tobago).

# Extension Programming to Enhance Urban Well-Being

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## Case Study Series

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## Central Kentucky Job Club *Lexington, Kentucky*

Dr. Jeff Young, Director for Urban Extension and Diana Doggett,  
Family and Consumer Sciences Agent, University of Kentucky

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This case study series is a supplement to program snapshots  
featured in the Extension Programming to Enhance Urban Well-Being chapter of  
***Extension Education and the Social Sciences***  
Maria Rosario T. de Guzman and Holly Hatton, University of Nebraska-Lincoln  
Cambridge University Press (2024)

Case study series led by  
Julie M. Fox, Ph.D., Ohio State University Extension  
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2021



## **Program Overview – Central Kentucky Job Club**

Following a community assessment that determined that no other organization offered a free community job search program, *Job Club* was created in 2012 to provide free resources to the public who are facing joblessness – many for the first time. In 2019, engagement averaged over 50 persons per session, aiding scores of job seekers to maneuver a difficult point in their lives.

Job Club is designed to improve employability skills needed to compete in today's workplaces for those having been laid off, gone through an unexpected job loss, underemployed, or need to find a better work situation. Meetings featured a guest speaker or panel presenting job search topics such as resume writing, interviewing, LinkedIn, salary negotiation, networking, and transferable skills. Meeting times are reserved for networking and sharing job leads.

Research shows that the unemployed face numerous health challenges beyond the loss of income (Reine and Hammarstrom, 2012). Job Club addresses health challenges by providing a positive environment for motivated job seekers to meet, connect, share, and learn while demonstrating Extension's commitment to improving health and well-being during tough times.

Since its inception Job Club has reached 5,354 job seekers with 186 jobs secured valued at an estimated \$8.4 million. In 2019, Doggett facilitated six extended hour workshops that provided additional individualized information on job search strategies with an average of 32 participants per workshop.

Post-program evaluations indicated that 86% of past participants reported improved employability skills as a result of Job Club. Beginning in March 2020, Job Club began meeting via ZOOM webinar and tripled program attendance.

### **Participant Testimonials**

"Losing my job was more difficult than my battle with cancer. The encouraging environment of Job Club helped me maintain a positive attitude to secure employment."

"Losing my job because of the company filing bankruptcy was devastating. Job Club gave me invaluable help with my resume/cover letter as well as interview and networking skills."

"Job Club provided support and new ideas for the job seeker. Losing a job in society equals losing identity, never mind the practical concerns. Job Club offered concrete suggestions and ideas to move the search for a new position forward. The proverbial journey of 1,000 steps begins with the first one. Job Club pointed me toward a path that leads to change, growth, and at last, work!"

## **Reach**

Central Kentucky Job Club has a national and international impact, having reached over 5,354 job seekers and 217 employment recruiters throughout 146 Job Club meetings. Job seekers represented 27 states and seven counties with 2020 participation increasing by 154% (Doggett, 2019).

To communicate Job Club opportunities, Fayette County Extension sends Job Club Public Service Announcements to 68 mass media venues, such as:

- Fayette County Extension and University of Kentucky Alumni Association social media pages
- LinkedIn, Facebook, and Instagram posts
- University of Kentucky Alumni Association sends Job Club email (38,000) twice each month
- Job Club regional employer database (335)
- Job Club recent attendees receive an email reminder twice a month
- Alumni Career Services colleagues/influencer list (100)
- Job Club guest feature spots on local radio (WUKY) and television stations (WLEX, WKYT, WTVQ)
- UKNOW posts (University of Kentucky social media)
- 20 Extension offices were added to regular program announcements with the advent of COVID-19

## **Urban Context**

### **Scale**

Lexington is a city located in Kentucky. With a 2020 population of 323,878, it is the 2nd largest city in Kentucky and the 61st largest city in the United States. Lexington is currently growing at a rate of 0.22% annually and its population has increased by 9.49% since the most recent census, which recorded a population of 295,803 in 2010. Spanning over 286 square miles, Lexington has a population density of 1,142 people per square mile.

The average household income in Lexington is \$83,111 and the poverty rate of 16.81%. The median rental cost is \$896 per month, and the median house value is \$189,800. The median age in Lexington is 34.6 years, 33.5 years for males, and 35.6 years for females. For every 100 females, there are 96.2 males.

Lexington is a city located in Fayette County Kentucky. Lexington is known as the “Horse Capital of the World.” The Kentucky Horse Park, The Red Mile, and Keeneland racecourses are all located in Lexington.

### **Diversity**

According to the most recent census data, the racial composition of Lexington was:

- White: 74.86%
- Black or African American: 14.61%
- Asian: 3.75%
- Two or more races: 3.75%
- Other race: 2.81%

- Native American: 0.19%
- Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander: 0.03%

According to Lexington Urban County Government, there are over 185 languages spoken in Lexington, with the top 10 foreign languages being Spanish, Swahili, Arabic, Japanese, Nepali, French, Mandarin, Kinyarwanda, Korean, and Portuguese in addition to the official language, English. The most spoken language is Spanish, which is spoken by 6.2% of the population.

## **Strategic Approach to Urban Engagement**

The “Job Club” concept includes the following objectives:

- To teach job search strategies including resumes, interviews, LinkedIn, and more.
- To provide networking and professional development opportunities for participants.
- To engage professionals in the community as program volunteers to share their job search, network, and career knowledge.
- To provide a forum for local employers to promote job opportunities.
- To provide opportunity for Extension agents to provide program and resources to job seekers.

In addition to meeting important local needs, Job Club also addresses two of the National Urban Extension Leaders (NUEL) primary focus areas:

- Strengthen Communities
- Improve Our Health

The Family and Consumer Sciences Extension agent facilitates media interviews, resume reviews, financial management service, Job Club database, surveys, and evaluation of Job Club. As noted earlier in this case study, Job Club demonstrates how the Extension model is utilized in urban communities to develop unique programming to address issues identified by community assessment/need identification.

Additional resources were utilized by engaging the University of Kentucky Human Resources – Employment Resources and the University of Kentucky Alumni Association. University of Kentucky alumni director and HR specialists regularly presented during Job Club meetings.

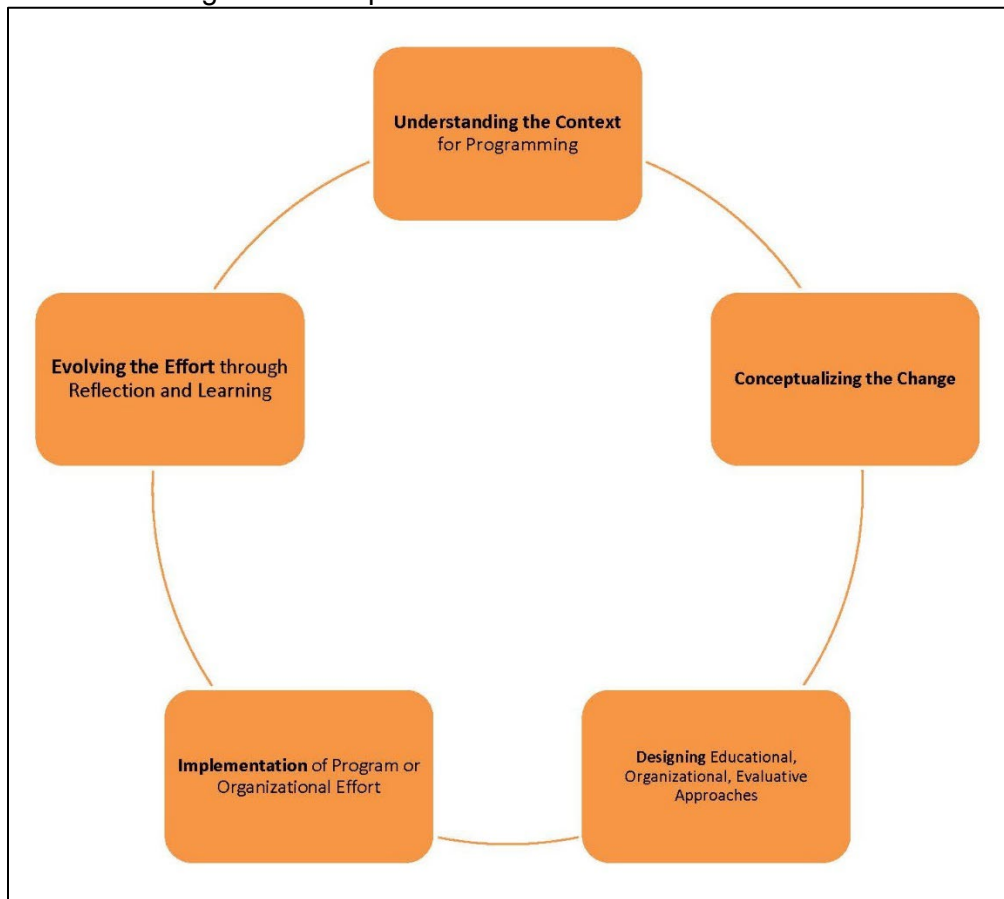
While originally designed for face-to-face implementation, Job Club was adapted to the COVID-19 crisis and continued by utilizing web conferencing tools provided by the University of Kentucky.

Another critical addition to Job Club has been the involvement of businesses and organizations that are seeking employees. Job Club provides a forum for networking and communication between job seekers and potential employers.

Program feedback consistently demonstrated a positive economic impact for participants in the form of improved skills and jobs gained.

The Extension program development model (Figure 1) is used for program development, design, implementation, and evaluation.

**Figure 1.** Extension Program Development Model



## Impact

In recognition of the impact that Job Club has within the city of Lexington, Mayor Linda Gorton endorsed Job Club for Lexington's urban community and the unemployment office officially recommends attendance. Successful job seekers frequently serve as panelists and share the value of Job Club during their job search. Surveys indicate this experience is highly regarded by attendees.

According to Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, unemployed Americans face numerous health challenges beyond the loss of income (Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, 2013). Laid-off workers are far more likely than those continuously employed to have fair or poor health. Family and Consumer Sciences Extension is committed to improving the health and well-being of individuals and families. Through this Extension program, job seekers gain the skills needed to compete in today's workplaces and acquire jobs.

In 2020, Doggett was awarded the Southern Region National Urban Extension Leaders Leadership Award for her work with Job Club.

## **Closing Comments and Looking to the Future**

As we look to the future and the challenges we will continue facing, initiatives like “Job Club” serve as beacons. They remind us that Cooperative Extension can and must continue to have a thorough understanding of our most pressing community needs. We must be willing to collaborate and explore ways to bring non-traditional resources from other university units and community organizations who share interest in addressing these types of challenges.

## **Multimedia Documentation/References**

### **Resources**

- Sample Job Club Schedule (Figure 2)
- Meeting Reminder (Figure 3)
- Newsletter (Figure 4)
- Fayette County Cooperative Extension – Job Club Webpage (Figure 5)
- University of Kentucky Alumni – Job Club Web Page (Figure 6)
- Job Club Facebook Page (Figure 7)

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**Figure 2. Sample Job Club Schedule**

### **Central Kentucky Job Club – July & August 2020 Schedule**

The Fayette County Cooperative Extension Service, University of Kentucky (UK) Alumni Association, and UK Human Resources STEPS Temporary Employment are pleased to announce the July and August 2020 Central Kentucky Job Club schedule. In an effort to continue to provide Job Club, an important community resource, while practicing responsible social distancing during the evolving COVID-19 situation, the summer schedule will be offered online via Zoom Webinar. The planning team is pleased to welcome our new partner to the Job Club team, UK Human Resources STEPS Temporary Employment.

The purpose of Job Club is to provide a positive environment for motivated job seekers to meet, connect, share and learn. The free group is open to the public and meets the second and fourth Tuesday of each month, from 9:00–10:15 a.m. Job Club is for you if you are a motivated professional and currently out of work, underemployed or looking to make a career transition. In addition, recruiters and employers are always welcome and introduced to Job Club attendees.

For more information, call the UK Alumni Association at 859-257-8905, the Fayette Cooperative Extension Office at 859-257-5582 or UK Human Resources STEPS Temporary Employment at 859-257-9555, Option 2. Additional information including testimonials from former Job Club participants can be viewed at: [www.ukalumni.net/jobclub](http://www.ukalumni.net/jobclub).

#### **Job Club Meeting Schedule:**

##### **July 14: Virtual Networking: Link Up via LinkedIn**

Presented by Beth Austin, Associate Director of Career Advising, Stuckert Career Center, University of Kentucky

Explore the art of virtual networking and learn to maximize your LinkedIn profile! These marketing strategies and ideas will help you build an audience for career growth.

REGISTER HERE: [https://uky.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN\\_9wNJzL14TE-ijbWEZiYJxQ](https://uky.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_9wNJzL14TE-ijbWEZiYJxQ)

##### **July 28: Writing on LinkedIn as a Job Transition Strategy**

Presented by Cathy Fyock, Author & The Business Book Strategist, Cathy Fyock LLC

At age 59, Cathy reinvented herself and transitioned from HR professional to book coach, and she did it all by writing. Many of Cathy's clients have used writing books, articles, and blogs as a career transition strategy. In this interactive session she'll share some practical ideas for beefing up your LinkedIn profile by publishing articles as a way to position your thought leadership.

Come prepared to roll up your sleeves and write!

REGISTER HERE: [https://uky.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN\\_2vBiU4RRRTAmYK8dfh6fx9w](https://uky.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_2vBiU4RRRTAmYK8dfh6fx9w)



Figure 3. Meeting Reminder



## Central Kentucky Job Club Meeting Reminder

### July 14: Virtual Networking: Link Up via LinkedIn

Presented by Beth Austin, Associate Director of Career Advising, Stuckert Career Center, University of Kentucky  
Explore the art of virtual networking and learn to maximize your LinkedIn profile! These marketing strategies and ideas will help you build an audience for career growth.

REGISTER HERE:

[https://uky.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN\\_9wNJzL14TE-ijbWEZiYxQ](https://uky.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_9wNJzL14TE-ijbWEZiYxQ)



### Expand Your Job Search through Networking

Plan to join us for a fun, interactive networking session immediately following this Job Club presentation. The post-Job Club networking session will be hosted on Zoom Meeting and the address code will be posted when the presentation concludes. Audio capacity is required, video capacity is preferred. We will split into small groups of 3-4. Networking and Zoom tips will be shared as well. We hope you will join for a fun time!

**Let us know when you get an interview and/or a job!** In order for Job Club to continue to receive funding, we must show impact which always relates back to numbers. We want to either continue to assist you in your job quest or celebrate your success.

**Remember to share this Job Club opportunity with a friend.**  
We depend on your networks to spread the news.

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### Career Advice Resources



[Networking Email Templates for Job Seekers During A](#)

[Pandemic If you really want the job, show you have these 6 qualities](#)

[How To Find Hope During A Career Crisis](#)

[LinkedIn: New Features to Give and Get Help From Your](#)

[Community LinkedIn: Insights to the Labor Market](#)



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### Financial Resources

[Managing Financial Stress](#)

[Protect yourself from COVID-19 scams](#)

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Figure 4. Newsletter



June 23, 2020

## Central Kentucky Job Club News

### Job Leads

76 job leads in central Kentucky on UK's job board--Handshake--for students alumni with 12+ academic credits.

Visit [www.uky.joinhandshake.com](http://www.uky.joinhandshake.com) to set up your account.

(attached)

[Census Taker](#)

[Commerce Lexington Jobs Boards](#)

[De loitte](#)

[East Kentucky Power Cooperative Forcht](#)

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[Hoosier Uplands](#)

[Kentucky Career Center Job Listings Kentucky](#)

[Chamber Workforce Deve lopment Kentucky](#)

[Contact Tracer Staffing](#)

[Kentucky Educational Television](#)

[Kentucky Non-Profit Network Kentucky](#)

[Personnel Cabinet Kentucky River](#)

[Community Care Keyence](#)

[Lexington-Fayette County Health Department](#)

[Lexington Rescue Mission](#)

[LinkedIn: Who's Hiring Right Now New](#)

[Opportunity School for Women New Vista](#)

[University of Kentucky](#)

[US Department of Home land Security](#)



"Job Club provided support and new ideas for the job seeker. Losing a job in a society equals losing identity, never mind the practical concerns. Job Club offered concrete suggestions and ideas to move the search for a new position forward. The proverbial journey of 1,000 steps begins with the first one. Job Club pointed me toward a path that lead to change, growth, and at last, work!"

Former Job Club Member



"Losing my job because of the company filing bankruptcy was devastating. Job Club gave me invaluable help with my resume/cover letter as well as interview and networking skills."

Former Job Club Member

"Losing my job was more difficult than my battle with cancer. The encouraging environment of Job Club helped me maintain a positive attitude to secure employment."





**Virtual Networking: Link Up via LinkedIn**

Tuesday, July 14, 2020  
9:00-10:15 a.m.

Presented by  
Beth Austin,  
Associate Director of  
Career Advising, Stuckert  
Career Center, University  
of Kentucky

Zoom Webinar  
Register via link below

Explore the art of virtual networking and learn to maximize your LinkedIn profile! These marketing strategies and ideas will help you build an audience for career growth.

REGISTER HERE:  
<https://uky.zoom.us/j/74147E-4BWEZYJxQ>





Online resources

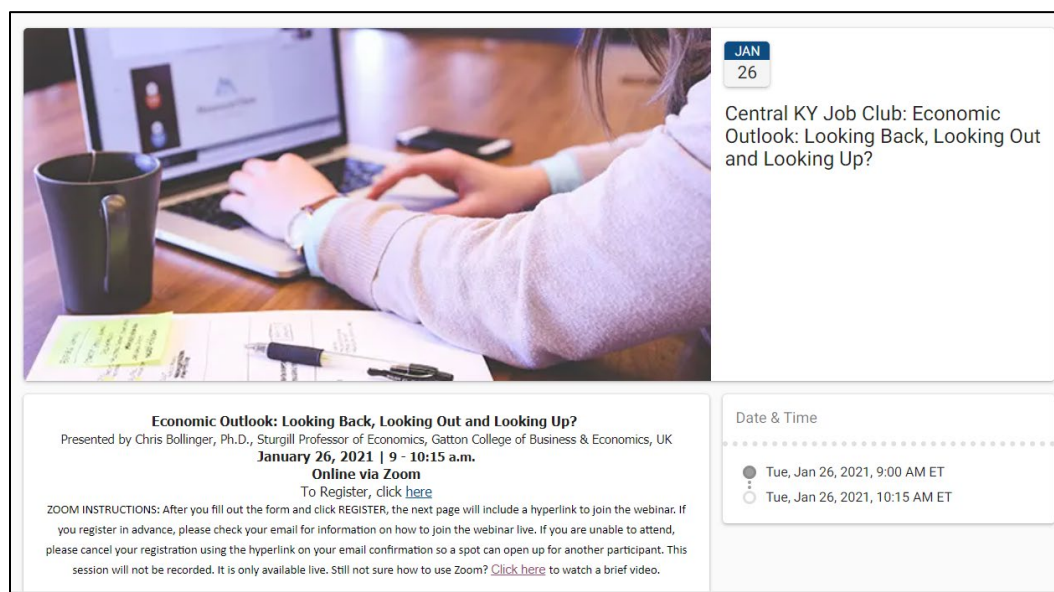
<http://fayette.ca.uky.edu/content/job-club>

<https://www.ukalumni.net/s/1052/18/interior.aspx?sid=1052&gid=1&pgid=8226>

**Figure 5.** Fayette County Cooperative Extension – Job Club Webpage  
<http://fayette.ca.uky.edu/content/job-club>



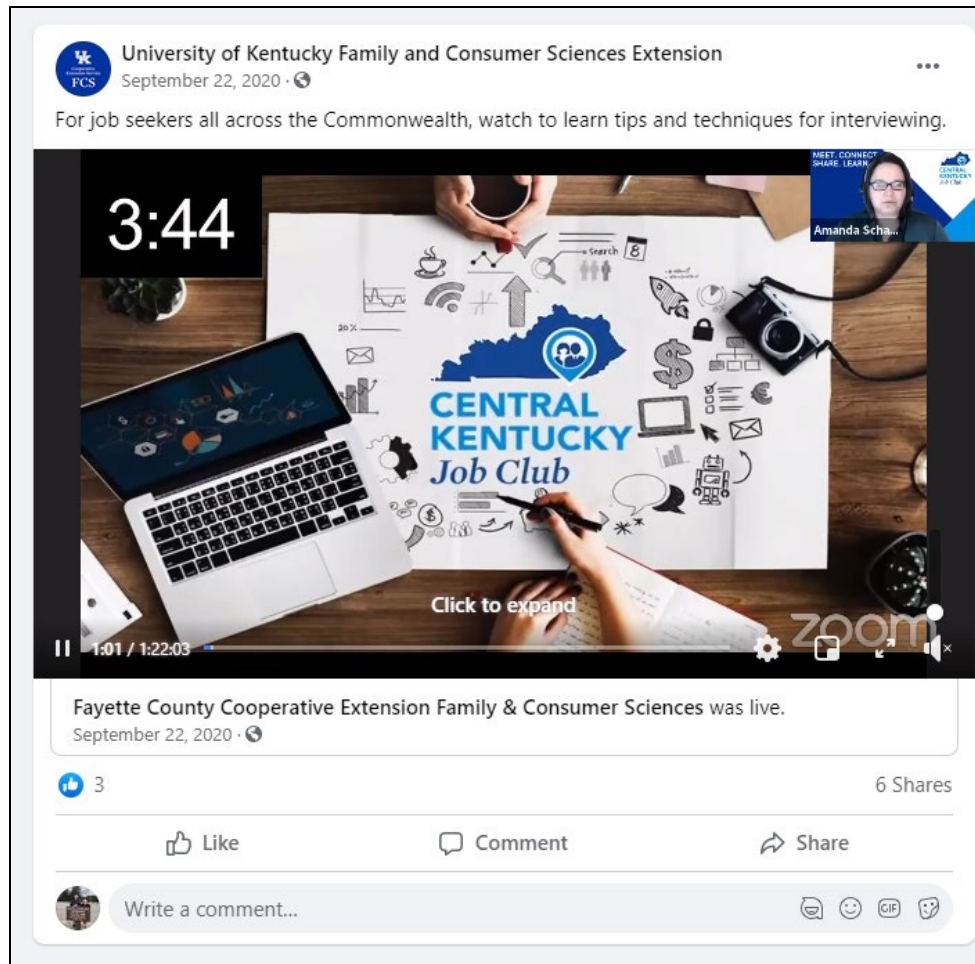
**Figure 6.** University of Kentucky Alumni – Job Club Webpage  
<https://www.ukalumni.net/s/1052/18/interior.aspx?sid=1052&qid=1&pgid=8226>





**Figure 7.** Job Club Facebook Page

<https://www.facebook.com/UKFCSExt/posts/3827236987289775>



## Contributors



Dr. Jeffery Young, director for urban Extension, University of Kentucky Cooperative Extension Service. He brings over 30 years of experience with the University of Kentucky Cooperative Extension Service, encompassing many diverse roles in one of the nation's most robust Extension systems.

This experience includes 20 years as a County Extension Agent serving urban and suburban communities, 10 years as a District Director, Director of County Operations, and currently as Director for Urban Extension. In this current role, he supports county and state Extension faculty and agents working to address the challenges facing our urban communities.

Dr. Young is committed to the land grant instruction mission and serves as an Assistant Professor on the Executive Sub-Committee for the Online Master of Science Translation and Outreach Program. Dr. Young also has teaching responsibilities within the College of Agriculture Food and Environment, where he has developed a unique undergraduate course focusing on urban issues and Cooperative Extension engagement.

Dr. Young is active with the National Urban Extension Leaders (NUEL) and serves on the National Steering Committee, National Conference Planning Committee, and as Southern Region Network Chair. Additionally, Dr. Young is a graduate of the Food Systems Leadership Institute (Cohort 13) and the North Central Region Administrative Boot Camp.

Diana Doggett is a family and consumer sciences agent with the University of Kentucky, Cooperative Extension Service. In addition to Diana's county programming efforts, she has served the field of family and consumer sciences at the regional and state level as well. Diana has served as a mentor to over 20 Extension interns, from at least three different universities. She has held leadership positions in the Kentucky Extension Association of Family and Consumer Sciences, as well as within the University of Kentucky College of Agriculture, Food, and Environment Alumni. Diana is recognized as a leader within her community and has been selected through a competitive process to participate in Leadership Lexington, Leadership Central Kentucky, and Leadership Kentucky.



## Project Reflection and Conclusion

The program snapshots illustrated Extension engagement for well-being in urban communities and inform emerging practice. Urban Extension professionals demonstrated their commitment to being stakeholder-driven and creating economic and social value. Case contributors represented different geographic areas, diverse perspectives, and similar experiences of linking and leveraging community and university assets. In diverse and dynamic urban communities, Extension benefits from taking an asset-based approach to engagement, rather than a deficit perspective.

- Positioning requires intentionally communicating relevance and inclusion that attracts urbanites to Extension resources, experiences, and professionals.
- Programs reflect local priorities and leverage national Extension networks. Best practices, meaningful data, and stakeholder engagement methods inform program design.
- Personnel and volunteers reflect diversity, increase capacity, and manage both technical and adaptive challenges.
- Partnerships span boundaries and endure the contradictions, power relations, and opportunities that are present across highly variegated urban structures (Addie et al., 2015). With multiple partners, Extension needs to measure and articulate its public value, with the shared interests in economic, environmental, and social change (Franz, 2015). New urban advocates need to be identified and stronger relationships with urban power brokers and political leadership need to be forged (Ruemenapp, 2018).

There is significant value in continuing to explore and learn from the similarities, unique contexts, and connections with Extension's community engagement along the urban-rural continuum. Despite differences, complex issues do not stop at geographic boundaries as reflected in interconnected economic, social, and environmental perspectives (Henning et al., 2014). Extension is well positioned to respectfully address urban issues through strategic approaches that address immediate priorities while systematically futuring to continuously co-align university Extension with the dynamic urban environment. Census and other data confirm that the number and diversity of people living and working in urban communities continues to increase (Desilver, 2017; Frey, 2021). Extension can help communities move beyond abstract data to better understand the contextual story about people and place and the issues that are impacting local communities.

### *2022 Author Note:*

*Additional insights into Extension programming to address urban well-being can be explored through emerging literature, such as the Journal of Human Sciences and Extension (JHSE), Special Issue: Urban Extension (2022) and emerging practice shared through events such as the 2022 National Urban Extension Conference.*

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