

UNIVERSITY OF MISSOURI EXTENSION

Bates County 2025



Annual Report

Bates County Extension Office
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SERVE MISSOURI.
DELIVER MIZZOU.®



Extension
University of Missouri

an equal opportunity/ADA institution



Office of Extension
and Engagement
University of Missouri

VICE CHANCELLOR'S OFFICE

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Dear County Commissioners, Elected Leaders, and Friends of MU Extension and Engagement,

As I reflect on the past year, I am struck by the remarkable progress we have made together. MU Extension continues to deliver on its mission of linking the University of Missouri with every community across our state, ensuring that Missourians have access to the knowledge, resources, and partnerships they need to thrive.

Through the dedication of our faculty, staff, councils, partners, and advocates, MU Extension continues to make a measurable difference across Missouri. Last year, we had more than 1.5 million educational contacts and generated more than \$1 billion in economic impact. Building on that momentum, your support also helped secure a \$5 million recurring increase in state funding. This important milestone is already being invested in people, programs, and facilities to strengthen agriculture, improve health and well-being, support local economic development, and prepare youth for leadership through 4-H.

We have also adapted to new realities. Even as the sunset of federal SNAP-Ed funding forced hard choices, our commitment to delivering nutrition and health programs to families in need has not wavered. We are expanding investments in rural health, civic leadership and community development to address the priorities Missourians tell us matter most. We are also aligning our work with university, state, and federal priorities to maximize impact, whether in rural healthcare, agricultural innovation or workforce development.

Our strengths remain clear: people, programs, and partnerships. From nearly 6,000 4-H volunteers to county council members, master gardeners, and master naturalists, Extension thrives because of the dedication of those who serve. Our trusted, research-based content was accessed nearly 2 million times and downloaded more than 76,000 times last year, and innovative programs, from soil testing to urban revitalization initiatives, continue to meet Missouri's evolving needs.

Thank you for your continued partnership. MU Extension belongs to all Missourians, and together we will keep building resilient communities, fostering innovation, and preparing our state for the future.

With appreciation,

Chad Higgins, PhD
Vice Chancellor, MU Extension and Engagement
Chief Engagement Officer, UM System

WHO WE ARE

Faculty and Staff

Mikayla Neil
Extension Engagement Specialist

Sara Bridgewater, PhD
Nutrition and Health Education
Field Specialist

Ramon Arancibia, PhD
Horticulture Specialist

Melissa Stong
Youth Program Associate

Connie Pruden
County Office Support Staff

Elaine Anderson
Interim Regional Director

Wayne Prewitt
Retired Regional Director
(10/31/25)

Council Members

Katrina Bergman, Chairman
Kyleigh Trickey, Vice-chairman
Kara Bettels, Secretary
Breanna Yarick, Treasurer
Andrea Deal, Farm Bureau
Appointee
Jordan Deal, Farm Bureau
Appointee
Russ Bergman
Brytni Spencer
John Gray, Bates County
Commission Appointee



County executives

Jim Wheatley
Presiding Commissioner

John Gray
Northern Commissioner

Trent Nelson
Southern Commissioner

BUDGET AND MORE

Appropriations budget

Income	
County Appropriations	70,000
Total Income	70,000
Expenses	
Salaries/Benefits	48,500
Travel	5,500
Telephone	1,600
Office Supplies/Service	5,000
Professional Development, Community Engagement, Miscellaneous	6,650
Insurance	2,750
Total Expenses	70,000

(name of County) County partners

- Community Food Pantry in Butler
- Butler Senior Center
- Lily's House
- Rich Hill Memorial Library
- Hume R-VIII Elementary
- Adrian Headstart
- Zion Lutheran School
- Hume Ministerial Alliance
- Adrian R-III School
- Ballard R-II School
- Hudson R-IX School
- Rich Hill R-IV School
- Butler Christian Church
- Adrian United Methodist Church

MU Extension is a unique funding partnership.

Extension funding is a three-way partnership of federal, state and county government. Federal and state money, through the University of Missouri system, pay professional staff salaries, training costs, computers and communication equipment. County funds support the local office, secretarial and youth assistant salaries, staff mileage and council expenses.

The Bates County Extension Council, faculty and staff would like to express our appreciation to the Bates County Commissioners for their continued support of extension programs.



Local support

Did you know you can donate directly to Bates County Extension with a gift to be used immediately or as an endowment contribution for long term efforts. Monies put into the endowment are left forever to earn interest with the county office benefiting each year. You can also direct your donation to a specific program such as 4-H or Master Gardeners.

UM SYSTEM COUNTY IMPACTS

MU Extension in Bates Community Impact Report

This report offers a detailed overview of how MU Extension positively impacts [Your County] County, showcasing the meaningful ways local engagement supports residents. It includes data on the number of students, employees, retirees and alumni affiliated with the University of Missouri System, along with the healthcare and extension services provided over the past year.

In addition, the report highlights the broader contributions of the UM System across Missouri in key areas such as education, research, healthcare, economic development and public service. It features metrics like job creation, financial aid distribution, research investment, healthcare access and broadband expansion.

This report is a valuable resource for understanding the measurable benefits the UM System brings to Missouri communities. It supports informed decision-making, advocacy efforts and strategic planning by illustrating the tangible impact of university-driven initiatives at both the local and statewide levels.

Access your county's Impact Report. [Impact Report](#)



GRAND CHALLENGES

Grand Challenges

The Grand Challenges — Economic Opportunity, Educational Access, Health and Well-being, and Agricultural Stewardship — represent the most pressing issues facing Missouri communities. They are important because:

By focusing on these challenges, MU Extension in (your county) can better leverage university resources, data and partnerships to empower people to improve their lives, businesses and communities.

This report presents localized data and insights in how MU Extension in (your county name) is addressing these challenges. Each section breaks down county-specific statistics compared to state averages.

Access your county's Grand Challenges Report. [Impact Report](#)





MU Extension **Serves MISSOURI and Delivers MIZZOU**

through credible statewide programs

Missouri 4-H for Ages 8 – 18



What is 4-H?

4-H is where Missouri's young people find their spark and learn by doing. Whether raising animals, coding robots, growing gardens, or giving back to their neighbors, 4-H members gain real-world skills with the help of caring mentors.

Rooted in University of Missouri Extension, 4-H connects classrooms, communities, and families to create learning that sticks—building confident, capable leaders who are Beyond Ready for life. In 4-H, youth discover their strengths, practice resilience, and learn to lead with heart—preparing them not just for what's next, but for anything that comes their way.



Community clubs are at the heart of 4-H. Led by trained volunteers, members come together regularly to learn, lead, and serve. Youth elect officers, enroll in projects, and plan hands-on activities that build leadership, teamwork, and responsibility. Some clubs focus on a single project—like photography or livestock—while others explore a variety of topics throughout the year.

SPIN (Special Interest) **clubs** provide a short-term way to dive deep into a specific topic with expert guidance. These clubs meet for several weeks to a few months, giving youth flexibility while developing skills to be Beyond Ready for life.



4-H brings hands-on learning directly into schools through in-school and afterschool programs that extend classroom lessons. **Teachers, 4-H professionals,** and **volunteers** guide students through 4-H projects in areas such as science, agriculture, health, and leadership, helping youth connect learning to the real world.

Programs like **Show Me Embryology** give students a front-row seat to science in action as they watch chicks hatch and explore the life cycle of a chicken. These experiences help students grow curiosity, confidence, and critical thinking skills, preparing them to be Beyond Ready for whatever comes next.

Legend



Agricultural Growth
& Stewardship



Economic
Opportunity



Educational
Access &
Excellence



Health
& Well-Being

Bates County

Missouri 4-H

Local Impact

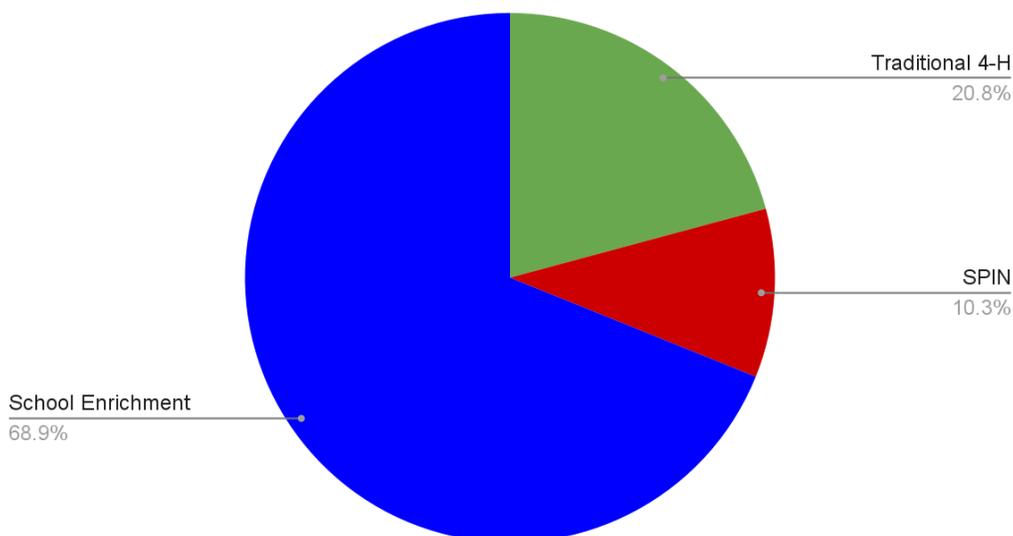
4-H Youth Development Program

4-H programs are built on the belief that youth learn best by doing. With the support and guidance of adult volunteers serving as mentors, youth engage in hands-on learning experiences through projects in areas including engineering and technology, environmental science and natural resources, plant and animal science, leadership and personal development, expressive arts, and healthy living, in addition to taking on leadership positions which help to mold them into the caring, competent, and confident citizens who know the value of contributing to their communities.

During the 2024-2025 4-H Year 971 in 2843 (or 34 percent) of Bates County youth were reached through 4-H programming through MU Extension.

4-H programming reaches youth through a variety of delivery modes in Bates County, including Community Clubs, SPIN Clubs or short-term 4-H programming, and in-school or afterschool membership or school enrichment programming. These varied delivery modes allow participants to participate in the format that best meets their needs and interests, while focusing on multiple skills including public speaking, leadership, exploring sparks (or interests), developing life skills, responsibility, group decision making, and exploring college and career pathways.

4-H Enrollment by Delivery Mode



Bates County

Missouri 4-H

Local Impact

4-H Community Club Members

- 206 youth reached through the 11 community clubs in Bates County during the 2024-2025 4-H Year.

4-H School Enrichment, In-school and Afterschool Clubs

- 971 youth were reached by school enrichment programs in Bates County in 2024-2025.
- 18 classrooms across the county were reached through the Embryology: Hatching Chicks in the Classroom program culminating in 1200 hours of learning about development, agriculture and sanitation, in addition to responsibility.
- 971 youth were reached through 4-H youth development programming through in-school and afternoon school programs focusing on topics including embryology, SNAC, SMQA training, and STEM.



Butler High School 8th grade participated in On My Own.



Adrian students participating in the Embryology program

Bates County

Missouri 4-H

Local Impact

4-H Programming Participation

- 4 youth served in a leadership role within their club or council.
- 3 youth demonstrated their public speaking and communication skills by participating in the Achievement (Major Events) Event held in Bates County this year.
- Youth showcased what they learned in their projects this year with 427 exhibits by 94 youth shown at the Bates County Fair.
- Bates County was represented by 20 youth exhibiting in the 4-H Building and Livestock Shows at the Missouri State Fair in 2025. 27 youth also had their exhibit selected as a Best of Show in the 4-H Building. 3 youth also showcased their public speaking skills by presenting demonstrations in the 4-H Building at the Missouri State Fair.
- Bates County youth also sited in on their future through their shooting sports projects which strives to teach them focus and safety while honing their skills and developing sportsmanship. 5 youth competed in the Missouri 4-H State Shoot events this year.
- 4 state level recognition forms were completed by members. Completing these forms allow members to reflect on the things they have done and learned throughout the 4-H year and how they can apply what they have learned in the upcoming year.
- 10 youth learned more about civic engagement and the Missouri Legislature by participating in 4-H Day at the Capitol.
- 3 youth participated in MOVE Across Missouri, where youth and adults are encouraged to track their physical activity and fitness in their daily life, learning about healthy lifestyles.
- Youth also took their 4-H experience beyond the county lines participating in the following events:
 - State 4-H Teen Conference
 - State Livestock Judging Day



Bates County

Missouri 4-H

Local Impact

206 County members enrolled in a combined total of 280 projects during the 2024-2025 4-H Year. The top project areas included: arts and crafts, photography, woodworking, gardening, poultry, beef, sewing and cake decorating.



Rabbit meeting showmanship practice



Woodworking table at the project frenzy day

4-H Programming Impact

- 4-H members are twice as likely to go college compared to their non 4-H peers and they tend to pursue careers in STEM fields (Lerner & Lerner, 2011).
- 4-H also prepares youth for the workplace. Youth must be prepared to live and work in a world we cannot completely envision- competing for jobs that do not yet exist, using technologies that have yet to be identified. 4-H is the only youth development program with direct access to technological advances in agriculture, life sciences, and social sciences from the university system. This brings relevant science content and hands-on learning that helps youth thrive (Arnold, Bourdeau, & Nott, 2013).

Bates County

Missouri 4-H

Local Impact

4-H Volunteers

4-H Volunteers are the true muscle of the 4-H program, extending the reach of 4-H professionals and making a difference in the lives of youth by connecting them with a caring adult to support them in their development.

- Bates County 4-H members were supported by 41 enrolled, screened and oriented adult volunteers supporting the development of youth in the 2024-2025 4-h Year.
- Adult volunteers serve as mentors for our youth, helping them transition into caring, healthy adults who contribute back to their communities, which is priceless.



Bates county volunteer Cheryl Mohr received the Frank Graham volunteer award

Resources

- Arnold, M., Bourdeau, V., & Nott, B. (2013). Measuring science inquiry skills in youth development programs: The Science Process Skills Inventory, *Journal of Youth Development*, 8(1).
- Arnold, M. E. (2018). From Context to Outcomes: A Thriving Model for 4-H Youth Development Programs. *Journal of Human Sciences and Extension*, 6(1), 11. <https://doi.org/10.54718/NBNL5438>
- Independent Sector. (2023). *Value of Volunteer Time Report | Independent Sector Resources*. Independent Sector. <https://independentsector.org/resource/value-of-volunteer-time/>
- Lerner, R.M., Lerner, J.V. (2011). The positive development of youth: Report of the findings from the first seven years of the *4-H Study of Positive Youth Development*. Retrieved from <http://www.4-h.org/about/youth-development-research/>.
- U.S. News and World Report (2011). How Higher Education Affects Lifetime Salary. Retrieved from <https://www.usnews.com/education/best-colleges/articles/2011/08/05/how-higher-education-affects-lifetime-salary>

Bates County

Missouri 4-H

Local Impact



Members participated in 4-H Day at the Capitol



Participants in Bates County fashion revue



Bates County 4-H members sewed bears for community service project



SMQA training



Hudson elementary embryology program



MU Extension **Serves MISSOURI and Delivers MIZZOU**

through credible statewide programs

Health and Human Sciences



Stay Strong, Stay Healthy supports older adults in maintaining strength, balance, and mobility to fully engage in the activities that matter most to them. The program combines safe, effective exercises with practical information on nutrition and wellness, helping participants build confidence, connection, and **well-being** for lifelong health.

After eight weeks, participants in the Stay Strong, Stay Healthy program showed significant improvement in their STRENGTH, BALANCE and SLEEP QUALITY.



Policy, systems, and environmental (PSE) changes encourage residents to improve community health by making healthy choices easier and more accessible. Residents design strategies around local needs, assets, and interests.

HELPING HANDS FOOR PANTRY leaders decided pantry clients needed access to healthier foods. Review of food procurement and display practices led to a new policy allocating \$1,000 of pantry discretionary spending for **LOW-FAT DAIRY OR FRESH PRODUCE**



Home Food Preservation

Preserve the season's bounty in a safe and delicious way.

Learn safe techniques for pressure canning, boiling water bath canning, steam canning, dehydration, and freezing.

Understand the importance of using safe food preservation and storage methods to avoid cross-contamination and food-borne illnesses.

"This course made me more self-sufficient and improved my family's access to quality food."

Legend



Agricultural Growth & Stewardship



Economic Opportunity



Educational Access & Excellence



Health & Well-Being

Bates County

Health and Human Sciences

2025 Year in Review- Sara Bridgewater, Nutrition and Health Field Specialist

“2025 was a year of significant growth, achievement, and momentum in Bates County. Numerous programs were successfully delivered, expanding access to health, wellness, and educational opportunities for residents across the county and beyond. The AmeriCorps Grant was successfully renewed, strengthening capacity for community-based service and outreach. This year also focused on innovation and future-focused program development, with intentional effort devoted to shaping sustainable, responsive initiatives.”

“Professionally, 2025 marked several major milestones. I successfully completed the non-tenure track review process and was promoted to Associate Extension Professional. In December, I graduated with a PhD in Learning, Teaching, and Curriculum with an emphasis in Science Education. I was honored to receive both team and individual awards at the state and national levels, reflecting the strength of collaborative Extension work and the continued support of colleagues and community partners.”

Awards and Recognition

National Extension Association of Family and Consumer Sciences (NEAFCS)

- **2025 Central Region – 3rd Place, Florence Hall Award**

From Sidewalks to Solutions (Team)

University of Missouri Extension Association (UMEA)

- **2025 Outstanding Programming Award – 1st Place**

Little Roots, Big Harvest: Homesteading Together (Team)

National Health Outreach & Engagement Conference

- **2025 Jeanne M. Priester Extension Health Award – Community Award (Team)**

Well-being Across the Lifespan Conference (University of Missouri Extension Health and Human Sciences)

- **Built Environment Team Poster** – Tips of the Trade Track Winner
- **AmeriCorps Service Projects Poster** – Community Collaboration Track Winner
- **2025 Regional Specialist of the Year Award**



Bates County

Health and Human Sciences

Local Impact

Program Highlights

Stay Strong, Stay Healthy

Stay Strong, Stay Healthy is an 8-week (16-session) evidence-based exercise program offered through MU Extension, designed for older adults to improve strength, balance, and flexibility. In 2025, Sara Bridgewater served as the instructor for multiple offerings. Tammy Roberts partnered with Sara Bridgewater to offer the program in collaboration with SNAP-Ed.

Program Reach:

- **Level I**
- Number of Programs: 2
- Total Participants: 38
- **Level II**
- Number of Programs: 4
- Total Participants: 30

Program Outcomes:

- 100% of participants would recommend the program
- 100% of participants completing pre- and post-assessments increased flexibility

Participant Feedback:

- “My back feels so much better.”
- “I used to be in so much pain—now it doesn’t hurt. I look forward to the class.”

Real Colors

Real Colors is an interactive workshop that uses a personality assessment to enhance team building and professional development. Participants gain insight into human behavior, identify personal motivators, and strengthen communication skills. In 2025, Real Colors workshops were delivered to students at Hume R-8 School and staff at West Central Agency during professional development sessions.

Program Reach:

Total Participants: 110



Bates County

Health and Human Sciences

Local Impact

Little Roots, Big Harvest: Homesteading Together

Little Roots, Big Harvest: Homesteading Together is a comprehensive program blending traditional homesteading skills with modern health, wellness, and safety practices. Delivered through a combination of statewide virtual sessions and summer in-person workshops, the program emphasized research-based methods for growing food, raising animals, preserving food, and building sustainable home systems.

Wellness practices—including mindful cooking, natural remedies, and stress reduction—were integrated to support balanced, healthy lifestyles. Expert instructors reinforced safety through guidance on proper tool use, animal care, and food handling.

Program Reach:

- 132 virtual participants statewide
- 18 participants engaged in hands-on workshops held in Bates County

Hands-On Workshop Topics Included:

- Pressure canning
- Freezer jam preparation
- Homemade cleaner creation
- Beeswax products
- Egg candling
- Bread making

Program Outcomes:

- 100% of participants reported they had never made beeswax prior to the program
- 100% of participants reported confidence in making beeswax following the program
- Average program rating: **10 out of 10**

Overall, Little Roots, Big Harvest strengthened participant confidence, practical skill development, and readiness to safely apply homesteading and wellness practices at home—supporting healthier, more sustainable households across Missouri.



Bates County

Health and Human Sciences

Local Impact

WHOLE YOU Challenge

The WHOLE YOU Challenge is a year-long wellness initiative focused on mind, body, and spirit for individuals and families. In 2025, the program reached **118 participants statewide**, offering monthly, participant-driven challenges designed to support sustainable behavior change.

The program reinforced healthy norms, built individual and family capacity, and strengthened home and community environments that make healthy choices easier and more routine. By embedding wellness practices into daily schedules and family routines, the challenge supported systems-level change through increased access to practical strategies for movement, mindfulness, nutrition, and stress management.

Participant Reflections:

- “The challenge made me stop and really think about changes that needed to be made in my life.”
- “The reminders and tips helped me prioritize health and movement for myself and my family.”
- “It encouraged me to slow down, be more present with my kids, and get outside more.”
- “I loved the monthly challenges because they weren’t just about exercise—they encouraged spending time outside, gardening, and connecting with family.”
- “I became more intentional about how I was living, and that increased my overall happiness.”
- “Even when I wasn’t consistent, I became more aware of simple ways to improve my health and well-being.”

Chair Yoga (Pilot Program)

In 2025, I completed specialized training in chair yoga and launched a pilot program in Rich Hill. The program was offered twice weekly for a total of 24 sessions. The pilot was highly successful, generating strong participation and interest, and plans are in place to continue piloting and expanding the program. Total Participants: 12

The successes of 2025 highlight the power of collaborative, research-based programming to strengthen individual well-being and community resilience.

Building on this momentum, future efforts will continue to expand innovative programming, deepen partnerships, and support policy, systems, and environmental approaches that improve health and quality of life in Bates County and across Missouri.

Bates County

Health and Human Sciences

Local Impact

AmeriCorps RSVP

