



UNIVERSITY OF MISSOURI EXTENSION

Buchanan County 2025



Annual Report

4125 Mitchell Avenue
St. Joseph, MO 64507
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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,

Chadwick C Higgins

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

WHO WE ARE

Faculty and Staff



Jim Crawford

Field Specialist in Agri Systems Technology

Charissa Dodge

County Office Support Staff

Randa Doty

Extension Engagement Specialist

Danielle Ferguson

County Office Support Staff

Laura Evans

Field Specialist in 4-H Youth Development

Denice Ferguson

Field Specialist in Agricultural Business

Wayne Flanary

Field Specialist in Agronomy

Todd Higgins

Field Specialist in Horticulture

Jim Humphrey

Field Specialist in Livestock

Rachel Livesay

Field Specialist in Nutrition and Health

Katie Pemberton

Field Specialist in Human Development

Rawne Pierce

4-H Youth Program Associate

Stacey Steffens

Regional Director, Northwest Region

Andrea Walsh

Nutrition Program Associate

Council Members

Tona Williams, Chairman

Jim Lower, Vice-chairman

Emily Lindsay, Secretary

David Jordan, Co-Treasurer

Rhanda Shreve, Co-Treasurer

Jim Barnett

Susan Barton

David Callaway

Pam Dexter

Travis Dodge

Devin Ferguson

Chris Grable

Joe Hamera

Karen Hauser

Ron Hitchings

Ron Hook

Joannie Jordan

Mark Jordan

Daniel Ramming

Larry Werthmuller



County Commissioners

Scott Nelson, Presiding Commissioner

Ron Hook, Western District Commissioner

Scott Burnham, Eastern District Commissioner

BUDGET AND MORE

Appropriations budget

Income

County Appropriations 91,200

Total Income 91,200

Expenses

Salaries/Benefits 53,237.63

Programming 5,825

Travel 5,504.16

Postage 745

Telephone 2,218.92

Advertising 1,600

Rent/Lease Space 100

Copy Services 4,200

Supplies/Services 1,560.27

Hospitality 194.49

Professional Services 187.50

Utilities 2,400

Other Contract Service 506

Insurance 515

Ext Council Election 125

Dues and Subscriptions 703.98

Repairs/Maintenance 1,153.70

Credit Card Processing 374.76

Furniture/Equipment 141.04

Total Expense 81,292.45

Contact Us:

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

Local support



Did you know you can donate directly to Buchanan 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.



[Invest in MU Extension in Buchana County](#)

UM SYSTEM COUNTY IMPACTS

MU Extension in Buchanan Community Impact Report

This report offers a detailed overview of how MU Extension positively impacts Buchanan 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 Buchanan County's 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 Buchanan 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 Buchanan County is addressing these challenges. Each section breaks down county-specific statistics compared to state averages.

[Access Buchanan County's Grand Challenges Report.](#)





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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.



4-H's Leadership and Civic Engagement programs foster understanding, confidence, and decision-making skills to empower young people to become informed and active citizens. These initiatives prepare youth to become future leaders by engaging them in programs where they have voice and influence.

Statewide programs such as the **Missouri State 4-H Council** and **Civic Engagement Ambassadors** give youth opportunities to represent their peers, advocate for issues that matter, and build connections with leaders across Missouri. These experiences help young people grow as confident communicators and thoughtful problem solvers, ready to lead wherever life takes them.



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
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Health
& Well-Being

Buchanan County

Missouri 4-H



Growing Stronger Youth. Building a Healthier Community.

In 2025, the Buchanan County 4-H Program continued to serve as a cornerstone of positive youth development—reaching youth where they are, building meaningful partnerships, and creating learning experiences that prepare young people for life, work, and citizenship.

Through hands-on learning, caring adult partnerships, and real-world application, Buchanan County 4-H engaged thousands of youth across schools, clubs, camps, and community settings. The impact of this work is visible in stronger life skills, increased confidence, expanded career awareness, and deeper community connection.

2025 Program Reach

- Over 2,500 youth impacted through 4-H programs, events, and school-based initiatives
- 1,600+ youth participated in 4-H Embryology programs delivered by local educators
- 253 Buchanan County youth completed the On My Own financial literacy simulation
- 38 Clover Kids (ages 5—7) served through camps, clubs, and themed day programs
- 150+ youth exhibits showcased at Buchanan County Achievement Day
- Nearly 1,000 community members and families engaged through large-scale outreach events



Life Skills & Workforce Readiness

4-H programming in 2025 emphasized practical skills youth need to succeed as adults—decision-making, financial literacy, communication, and responsibility.

Key impacts included:

On My Own Financial Literacy Simulation

- 253 Buchanan County youth (grades 8—12) participated
- Delivered in partnership with Central High School, Benton High School, and the homeschool community
- Youth practiced budgeting, career decision-making, and managing unexpected expenses
- One student reflected: *“I kind of understand my parents now.”*

Public Speaking, Leadership, and Civic Engagement

- Youth participated in county contest days, demonstrations, and leadership roles
- **30 youth and 10 adults** attended **4-H Day at the Capitol**, meeting legislators and learning how government works in action
- Youth gained confidence sharing their voices in public and professional settings

Impact: Youth left these experiences better prepared to manage money, speak with confidence, and navigate adult responsibilities.

Buchanan County

Missouri 4-H



STEM, Agriculture & Environmental Education

Hands-on STEM and agriculture experiences remained a cornerstone of Buchanan County 4-H, connecting youth to science, food systems, and natural resources. Highlights:

4-H Embryology Program

- Delivered by 63 local educators
- Reached over 1,500 Buchanan County youth
- Students gained understanding of animal science, responsibility, and biology
- Teachers reported high engagement and strong educational value

Garden-Based Learning

- Garden 'N Grow served 15 youth with over 44 hours of hands-on instruction
- Youth learned plant science, problem-solving, and food systems
- School-based Eating From the Garden programs reached nearly 100 middle school students
- One student's experience extended home when she was allowed to plan her family's garden

STEM & Science Outreach

- Super Science Saturday reached 936 community members
- Youth explored coding, electricity, robotics, and virtual reality
- Partnerships with Missouri Western State University strengthened academic pathways

Impact: Youth didn't just learn science—they experienced it, building curiosity, confidence, and career awareness.



Belonging, Connection & Youth Well-Being

Buchanan County 4-H prioritizes inclusion and a sense of belonging—especially for youth who may lack stability or consistent support elsewhere.

Notable outcomes:

The Noyes Home 4-H Club

- Served 60 youth
- Focused on community service, STEM, gardening, and patriotism
- Created a consistent space of belonging for youth in transitional living situations
- Youth participated in a unique educational outing with the 139th Airlift Wing

Clover Kids Growth

- Participation doubled, serving 38 youth ages 5–7
- Programs included day camps, farm tours, and urban homesteading
- Early exposure built confidence, curiosity, and positive feelings about learning

Camps & Social Connection

- 175 campers and 25 teen counselors participated in 4-H Camp in the northwest Region
- Youth built independence, friendships, and resilience
- Teen counselors strengthened leadership and mentoring skills

Impact: Youth found safe spaces where they felt seen, valued, and capable—key foundations for long-term success.

Buchanan County

Missouri 4-H



Civic Engagement & Community Involvement

4-H youth played an active role in the life of Buchanan County—giving back, participating in civic experiences, and contributing to community events.

Community engagement highlights:

- Touch-A-Truck & Community Outreach
 - Connected with 30 new families
 - Introduced 4-H to new audiences through hands-on engagement
- Safety & Health Education
 - Farm safety programming reached 350 regional youth
 - Youth learned how to stay safe around equipment, ATVs, and rural hazards
- Recognition & Achievement
 - 151 exhibits and 48 exhibitors at Buchanan County Achievement Day
 - Youth demonstrated skill development across agriculture, arts, STEM, and leadership
 - Multiple youth earned top Missouri 4-H recognition honors

Impact: Young people practiced active citizenship while strengthening the communities they call home.



Partnerships Multiply Impact

Buchanan County 4-H expanded its reach through strong partnerships with:

- Local school districts and homeschool organizations
- Missouri Western State University
- Museums, libraries, and community organizations
- Master Gardeners, volunteers, and civic leaders

These relationships allowed 4-H to reach new audiences, expand program quality, and respond to real community needs.

Looking Ahead

As Buchanan County 4-H moves into 2026, the focus remains on:

- Expanding access to youth programming
- Strengthening volunteer leadership
- Growing school and community partnerships
- Creating meaningful opportunities for youth voice and leadership

The success of 2025 demonstrates that when youth are supported with education, opportunity, and trust, they rise to meet the challenge.



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Agriculture and Environment



Missouri Grazing Schools teach management-intensive grazing by dividing large fields into smaller paddocks and systematically rotating livestock among them. Producers who attend the grazing schools learn how to reduce costs through Improved livestock grazing and pasture management while getting insights into fencing, watering systems and grazing system design.

The annual impact of management-intensive grazing is estimated to be \$125 MILLION per year in Missouri



The **Missouri Master Gardener** program enables people of all ages to get in-depth horticultural training and apply what they've learned to improve their communities and educate others about gardening.



In 2023, almost 4,000 Missouri Extension Master Gardeners completed over 149,000 VOLUNTEER HOURS throughout the state.



The Agricultural Business and Policy (ABP) program drives the growth of Missouri's agriculture economy by equipping farmers, ranchers, landowners and agribusinesses with the knowledge and tools to make sound farm management decisions. ABP provides interactive programming and tailored resources such as enterprise budgets and farm accounting tools and valuable executive education through its annual Agricultural Lenders School and seminars. These programs deliver key insights, market outlooks, policy updates and practical tools to help lenders and their clientele navigate volatile farm economies. ABP conducts unbiased comprehensive surveys on farmland values, custom farming rates and cash rental rates. These surveys for farm operators, ag lenders, government agencies and industry stakeholders provide valuable insights into trends and indicators of farm financial health.

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Agriculture and Environment

Livestock Production



Livestock Production, Innovation, and Farm Viability

In 2025, livestock programming serving Buchanan County placed strong emphasis on evaluating virtual fencing technology in beef cattle systems. Through grant-supported regional projects, GPS-enabled collars were used on more than 120 replacement heifers to better understand how this technology performs under real-world conditions in northwest Missouri. The project focused on grazing efficiency, labor savings, and management flexibility, providing producers with unbiased information before adoption.

Although pilot projects were conducted regionally, impacts extended directly to Buchanan County through Extension meetings, field days, and producer discussions. Information shared from this work helped area producers evaluate virtual fencing as a potential tool to:

- Improve forage utilization and grazing distribution
- Reduce reliance on physical fencing and labor
- Support long-term pasture and facility planning

In addition to technology evaluation, producers benefited from continued education on ration development, forage and silage sampling, and supplemental feeding strategies. These efforts supported efficient production decisions during a period of strong cattle markets and high input costs, contributing to the economic stability of farm families and the county's agricultural sector.

Grazing Management, Stewardship, and Community Impact

Improving grazing management and stewardship remained a cornerstone of livestock programming in 2025, with virtual fencing strengthening conversations around adaptive grazing systems. Educational efforts emphasized improved utilization of cool-season and native warm-season forages, allowing producers to better manage grazing pressure, protect sensitive areas, and extend pasture productivity.

Regional initiatives such as the Northwest Missouri Management Intensive Grazing School and native warm-season grass demonstrations provided Buchanan County producers access to research-based practices that support:

- Soil health and water quality
- Long-term pasture resilience
- Environmentally and economically sustainable livestock systems

Youth education further expanded the community impact of livestock programming. Regional FFA events, safety trainings, and hands-on livestock demonstrations reached hundreds of students, providing accurate information about modern livestock production, animal care, and food safety while helping build skills and awareness that support the future agricultural workforce in Buchanan County.

Agriculture and Environment



Youth Safety Education and Injury Prevention

In 2025, a strong emphasis was placed on preventing injuries and fatalities through early, evidence-based safety education.

Across Nodaway County (Maryville), Buchanan County (St. Joseph), Livingston County (Chillicothe), and Atchison County, more than 990 youth from Northwest Missouri participated in structured safety education programs, including:

- Safety Acres Day Camps in Maryville reached approximately 500 third—fifth-grade students from 19 schools
- Progressive Agriculture Farm Safety Day in Chillicothe, serving approximately 140 fourth-grade students
- Safety Acres St. Joseph, engaging approximately 350 students

Youth received instruction in tractor and PTO safety, ATV safety, grain bin hazards, and emergency awareness. Pre- and post-program evaluations documented increases in safety knowledge, which directly contribute to reduced accident risk, fewer family disruptions due to injury, and long-term community health benefits.

Preventing farm-related injuries strengthens communities by keeping families healthy, reducing medical and emergency response costs, and maintaining a productive future workforce.



Pesticide Safety and Applicator Training

MU Extension delivered comprehensive training to educate crop producers on the safe handling and application of restricted-use pesticides, strengthening regulatory compliance and environmental stewardship across the region. Participants gained critical knowledge in pest identification, economic thresholds and injury levels, emergency planning procedures, and the environmental ramifications of improper pesticide application.

As a result of this program, 127 producers initiated or renewed a private applicator license, directly supporting continued agricultural productivity and compliance with state and federal regulations. Participation by county included 19 producers from Andrew County, 15 from Holt County, 20 from Atchison County, 21 from Nodaway County, one from Clinton County, 17 from Caldwell County, 13 from Daviess County, and 21 from Platte and Clay Counties.

Following Private Applicator Training, Extension agriculture staff expanded learning through “hot topic” sessions addressing emerging issues and innovations in horticulture, agricultural engineering, agronomy, livestock production, and agricultural business. Additional specialized training was also provided for aerial application and non-soil fumigation, ensuring applicators were certified to safely apply pesticides in grain bins and utilize drones when needed.

Together, these efforts enhanced producer knowledge, supported safe and efficient pesticide use, and reinforced Extension’s role in promoting sustainable and responsible agricultural practices.

Buchanan County

Agriculture and Environment

Master Gardeners



Tomato Fest Variety Tasting

Participants sample and rank tomatoes and peppers grown by Buchanan County Extension Master Gardener volunteers in home gardens and at the Extension Center. This hands-on activity provides education on flavor, variety selection, and local food production using research-based practices. Events like Tomato Fest demonstrate how Extension Master Gardeners serve Buchanan County by promoting sustainable gardening and local food knowledge.



Growing Community at Tomato Fest

Tomato Fest in Buchanan County connects Extension Master Gardeners with the community by sharing garden-based food samples, education, and practical recipes. Their participation reflects the Extension Master Gardener mission of providing research-based horticultural education in engaging, accessible ways. Community partnerships like this expand educational opportunities and support healthy, sustainable living in Buchanan County.

Garden 'n Grow Youth Program

A Buchanan County Youth Program Associate works with youth as they observe caterpillars in the Garden 'n Grow garden, a partnership between 4-H and Extension Master Gardeners. This project helps youth build gardening skills, environmental awareness, and an understanding of where food comes from. By supporting youth-focused programs, Extension Master Gardeners strengthen Buchanan County through education, mentorship, and service.





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Business and Community



"I highly recommend this incredible program to any community looking for focus and direction."



Strategic Doing participant

Strategic Doing is a one-day workshop that guides community stakeholders through an inclusive, problem-solving approach to developing high-impact projects to address local development issues.

The city of Risco, Mo., lacked retail options for food. Risco's Strategic Doing workshop and follow-up activities resulted in a GROCERY STORE OPENING in the community.



The **Neighborhood Leadership Academy** provides in-depth leadership training that emphasizes community-building principles, project planning, organizational leadership and personal leadership skills.

"The overall knowledge that I have gained through this course has been amazing. From how to engage stakeholders in the community, to planning events and hosting meetings, these are all tools that I will fully utilized going forward."

2022 NLA graduate



Recovery Friendly Workplaces (RFWs) foster a workplace culture that promotes employee safety, health and well-being through strategies that support managers and employees, including reducing stigma and providing recovery resources related to the challenges surrounding substance use disorders. The framework was developed in partnership with MU Extension's Labor and Workforce Development Program.

As of 2024, 41 Missouri businesses have been designated recovery friendly workplaces, and 2,651 EMPLOYEES have been trained on addiction, stigma and naloxone distribution.

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Buchanan County

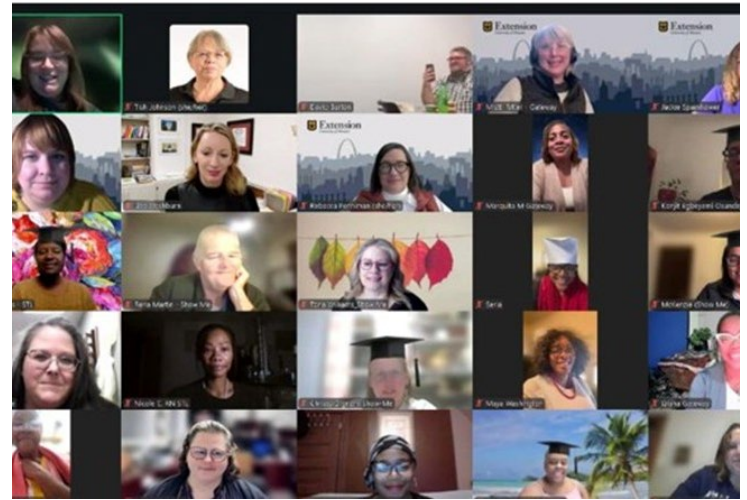
Business and Community



Missouri Tax School

University of Missouri Extension coordinated and offered tax education through one summer and three fall tax schools. The summer school was held both in person and online. Fall schools were in Columbia, Springfield, and an online school. The schools were designed for those who prepare taxes, including enrolled agents, tax preparers, CPAs, individuals, and attorneys.

The training included updates on legislation, rulings, and cases; individual taxpayer issues; agricultural and natural resources topics; ethics; trusts and estates; agriculture and natural resource tax issues; business tax issues; business entity tax issues; IRS issues; and more. The schools were approved by the IRS and the Missouri Bar for up to 16 hours of continuing education credit, and by CFP for continuing education. 13 Buchanan County residents participated.



Neighborhood Leadership Academy

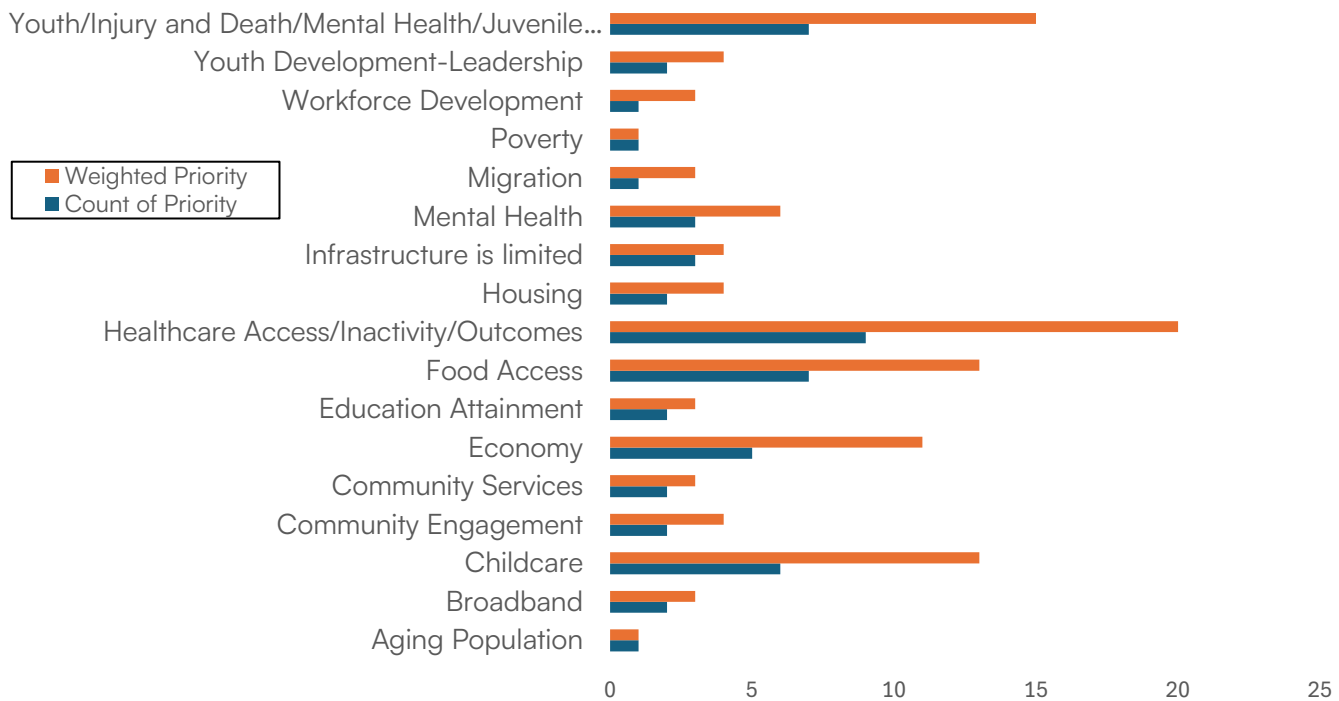
In 2025, MU Extension's community development efforts in Northwest Missouri centered on strengthening local leadership as a foundation for belonging and long-term community vitality. Serving ten very rural counties, the Neighborhood Leadership Academy (NLA) remained a key strategy for building neighborhood-level capacity and supporting resident-led change.

Four Northwest Missouri residents participated in NLA, including one participant from Buchanan County. Through the program, participants developed practical skills in collaboration, effective meetings, and engaging neighbors across differences. Learning was applied through community-based projects focused on strengthening shared spaces, improving food access, and fostering neighborhood connection.

Participant evaluation data demonstrated a meaningful impact, with a 42% increase in knowledge reported, reflecting greater confidence and readiness to contribute to community improvement. The involvement of a Buchanan County participant further expanded leadership capacity and strengthened MU Extension's reach within the county.

Key Outcomes:

- Leadership skill development at the neighborhood level
- Application of learning through resident-led community projects
- Increased confidence and capacity to support local change



MU Extension Councils guide local programs, manage resources, and support community needs. For their work to be effective, decisions must draw on both data and local knowledge. MU Extension's statewide mission focuses on Missouri's grand challenges in Agriculture, Health, Economy, and Education — issues that are especially varied and complex in Northwest Missouri.



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Health and Human Sciences



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."



Chronic Disease Self-Management programs offer evidence-based information for individuals and their caregivers to boost self-confidence in managing symptoms, enhancing quality of life and even reducing health care expenses.

These programs have undergone rigorous evaluation and are proven to be effective tools for individuals dealing with chronic conditions like arthritis, fibromyalgia, depression and diabetes.



Divorcing or separating parents encounter distinct challenges when living apart. **Focus on Kids** guides parents in fostering effective co-parenting strategies to support their children through this process.

"Understanding that divorce doesn't ruin children, but parents can significantly influence positive outcomes through good communication, was invaluable."

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Health and Human Science



Food Access and Nutrition Security

The Senior Farmers Market Nutrition Program significantly expanded access to fresh, local foods for older adults in Buchanan County. In 2025, 286 seniors were enrolled—continuing a multi-year increase in participation. Seniors received either \$50 in farmers market benefits or a one-time \$50 produce bag delivery, resulting in \$14,300 issued and an 88% redemption rate. This high utilization reflects strong community engagement and improved access to nutritious foods, supporting food security and healthy eating among older adults across the county.



Food Preservation Education

Food preservation education in Buchanan County focused on increasing general knowledge and awareness of safe, research-based home food preservation practices. Educational outreach included participation in Tomato Fest, where Extension provided information and resources related to food preservation methods. This community event offered an opportunity to connect with residents, share trusted educational materials, and support skills that help extend the use of locally grown foods, reduce food waste, and strengthen household food security.

Strength, Chronic Disease, and Caregiver Support

Health and nutrition programming in Buchanan County supported older adults and caregivers in building strength, managing chronic conditions, and improving confidence in daily life. Stay Strong, Stay Healthy Levels 1 and 2 reached participants through SNAP-Ed funded programs, with participants reporting improved strength, balance, and control of their bodies. These evidence-based programs contribute to long-term health outcomes, with an estimated annual medical cost savings of \$1,024 per participant. In addition, the Powerful Tools for Caregivers program resulted in meaningful behavior change, with 75% of participants reporting reduced caregiver strain and increased self-efficacy.



Buchanan County

Health and Human Science



SNAP-Ed and EFNEP Impact

Through SNAP-Ed and the Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program (EFNEP), University of Missouri Extension delivered practical, research-based nutrition and physical activity education to Buchanan County residents in 2025. SNAP-Ed programming reached 4,528 direct and indirect participants through classes, educational displays, health fairs, food pantries, schools, and senior housing sites, while 82 youth and adults participated in EFNEP's in-depth, hands-on education. Together, these programs helped participants build skills to plan meals on a budget, prepare healthier foods, increase physical activity, and make informed choices that support long-term health. These efforts strengthen families, improve quality of life, and reduce the risk of chronic disease and lower healthcare costs over time.

One EFNEP participant in Buchanan County shared that before enrolling, her family relied heavily on fast food and sugary drinks due to time and budget constraints. After completing the program, she began planning meals in advance, cooking more at home, and involving her children in food preparation. She reported serving more fruits and vegetables, drinking more water, and saving money on groceries each month. Her children became more willing to try new foods, and the family started taking evening walks together. Stories like this reflect how SNAP-Ed and EFNEP empower local families with practical skills that lead to lasting behavior change and healthier futures for Buchanan County.



Pony Express Therapy Dogs

In 2025, Pony Express Therapy Dog teams completed more than 700 visits to nursing homes, schools, libraries, and special events across Northwest Missouri and Northeast Kansas. The program includes 17 handlers and 22 registered therapy dogs and conducts monthly visits at 15 community sites.

This year, Cipher, a 9-year-old Whippet owned and handled by Bill and Sharon Luce, earned the AKC Therapy Dog Distinguished title for completing 400 therapy visits. Cipher was also nominated for the American Whippet Club's Willow Award for Therapy Whippet of the Year.

Pony Express Therapy Dogs continues to grow, holding evaluations twice each year to welcome new teams.



Buchanan County

County Highlights



MU Extension Leaders Honor Roll

Each year, county extension staff are given the opportunity to name outstanding community leaders to the University of Missouri Extension Leaders Honor Roll. The award recognizes individuals who have gone above and beyond their Call of Duty on behalf of extension. The Leaders Honor Roll recipients were Emily Lindsey and Libby Owens.



Missouri 4-H Hall of Fame Inductee

Joan Turner Hickman of Buchanan County was recently recognized by Missouri 4-H for her outstanding volunteer service and dedication to youth development. She was honored as a Missouri 4-H Hall of Fame inductee, joining more than 690 individuals statewide whose commitment has made a lasting impact on the 4-H program.

2025 Missouri State Fair Farm Family

Doug and Ronetta Walkup and their children, Colby and Cobin, from Agency, represented Buchanan County as the State Fair Farm Family during the 68th annual Missouri Farm Family Day on August 11th at the Missouri State Fair.

