



UNIVERSITY OF MISSOURI EXTENSION

# Laclede County 2025

Annual Report



186 N. Adams Ave Suite A  
Lebanon, MO 65536

**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

## Faculty and Staff



**Leslie Lawson**

4-H Youth Development Educator

**Della Miller**

Field Specialist in Human Development

**Teresa Bell**

Nutrition Program Associate

**Ashley Blain**

Nutrition Program Associate

**Allison Gunter**

Extension Engagement Specialist

**Ashley Allen-Brown**

Field Specialist in Regional Economic  
Development

**Wayne Prewitt-Retired**

Regional Director - West Central Region

**Elaine Anderson**

Extension Engagement Specialist; Interim  
Regional Director - West Central Region

**Ramón Arancibia**

Field Specialist in Horticulture

**Rudra Baral**

Agronomy Specialist

**Joni Harper**

Field Specialist in Natural Resources

**Andrew McCorkill**

Field Specialist in Livestock

**Crystal Degand**

County Office Support Staff

## Council Members

### Elected

Ed O'Connor, Chairman

Monica Broner, Vice-Chairman

Karen Brown, Secretary

Dixie Krisher-Davidson, Treasurer

Jeff Smith

Anna Maria Desipris

### Appointed

Randy Angst, Commissioner

Mac Bobbitt, Master Gardener Representative

Colton Nesbitt, Extension Council Youth Liaison

Jamie Johansen, Farm Bureau Representative

## County Commissioners

Randy Angst, Presiding Commissioner

Erik Lindsey, Eastern Commissioner

Joe Wasmer, Western Commissioner

# BUDGET AND MORE

## Appropriations budget

Income	
County Appropriations	50,000
Total Income	50,000
Expenses	
Salaries/Benefits	32,069.08
Travel	4,229.19
Telephone	798.80
Office Supplies/Service	3,738.27
Utilities	0
Insurance	1,820.00
Capital Repairs	0
Total Expenses	42,655.34

## Return on investment

University System	13:1
Donations	3,250.00
Program Revenue	11,868.11

## Laclede County partners

L-Life  
Laclede County  
Laclede County Record  
Lebanon Art Guild Studio  
Laclede County Library  
Kenneth E. Cowan Civic Center  
Cackle Hatchery  
Matt Young  
Heritage Bank  
Letterman Feed  
Laclede Seed & Fertilizer (Black Family Enterprises)  
Live 2 Give Hope  
Sound House  
Joel E. Barber  
Lebanon Middle School  
Early Childhood Center  
Lebanon Head Start  
Communion Chapel Bible Church  
Seventh Day Adventist Church  
YMCA  
Hughes Senior Center

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

## Local support

Did you know you can donate directly to Laclede 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 Laclede Community Impact Report

This report offers a detailed overview of how MU Extension positively impacts Laclede 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.](#)



# 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 Laclede 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 Laclede is addressing these challenges. Each section breaks down county-specific statistics compared to state averages.

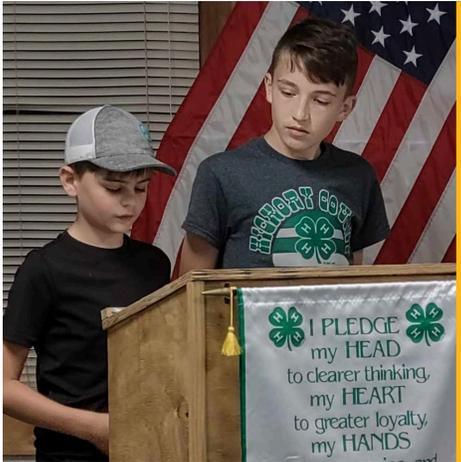
[Access your county's Grand Challenges Report.](#)





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through credible statewide programs

## Missouri 4-H for Ages 8 – 18



**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.

Missouri 4-H Agriculture programs give youth hands-on experiences in areas such as animal science, veterinary science, plant science, and agronomy. Members explore the biology, care, and management of animals and crops while developing problem-solving, critical thinking, and leadership skills.

Youth can also put their knowledge into practice through statewide competitions, including **Livestock Judging**, **Meat Judging**, **Hippology**, the **Missouri 4-H Equine Tour** and more. These experiences help participants apply what they've learned, gain confidence, and prepare for future careers in agriculture and related fields.



Missouri 4-H Natural Resources programs engage youth in hands-on learning across climate science, environmental sustainability, renewable energy, sportfishing, and wildlife conservation. Programs like the **4-H Sportfishing Contest** and **Sportfishing SLAM** give young people practical experience while building teamwork, problem-solving skills, and a love of the outdoors.

The **4-H Shooting Sports** program teaches marksmanship, safe firearm use, hunting, and archery principles, demonstrating how 4-H encourages holistic youth development and responsible citizenship. Supported by caring adult leaders, these programs help youth cultivate life skills, self-worth, and conservation ethics while exploring the natural world around them.

### Legend



Agricultural Growth & Stewardship



Economic Opportunity



Educational Access & Excellence



Health & Well-Being

### 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.

#### 4-H Community Club Members

103 youth were reached through the 4 community clubs in Laclede County during the 2024-2025 4-H Year.

**Barn Bums Club** – met 3<sup>rd</sup> Thursdays at 6:30 pm

**Country Kids 4-H Horse Club** – met 2<sup>nd</sup> Saturdays at 10:00 am

**Friendship 4-H Club** – met 1<sup>st</sup> or 2<sup>nd</sup> Saturdays at 10:00 am

**Show Barn Club** – met 1<sup>st</sup> Thursdays at 6:30 pm

- Over 80 4-H members were engaged in science related projects and experiences.
- Collectively, youth participated in over 1,000 hours of documented community club work and 500 hours of community service in Laclede County.

#### 4-H SPIN Clubs

8 youth participated in 4-H through the SPIN Club model which is a short-term 4-H club focused on a specific topic. The SPIN Club offered in Laclede County for 2024-25 focused on Martial Arts. This group met at the MU Extension office on Monday evenings from 6:00 – 8:00 pm.

### Local Impact

#### 4-H Programming Participation

Laclede County members enrolled in a combined total of 72 projects during the 2024-2025 4-H Year. The top project areas included:

- Archery (34)
  - Horse Riding (34)
  - Beef (23)
  - Shooting Sports Safety (22)
  - Outdoor 2 Camping- outdoor cooking (17)
  - Breads (17)
  - Air Pistols (17)
  - Shotgun (16)
  - Cake Decorating (15)
  - Poultry (15)
- 
- 21 youth served in a leadership role within their club or council.
  - 24 youth demonstrated their public speaking and communication skills by participating in the Achievement Night Event held in Laclede County this year.
  - Youth showcased what they learned in their projects this year with 40 indoor exhibits by 15 youth shown at the Laclede County Fair along with many other livestock projects.
- 
- Laclede County was represented by 17 youth exhibiting in the 4-H Building and Livestock Shows at the Missouri State Fair in 2025.
  - 4 youth showcased their public speaking skills by presenting demonstrations in the 4-H Building at the Missouri State Fair.

### Local Impact

72 Laclede County youth 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.

- 10 youth competed in the Missouri 4-H State Shoot events this year.



A few of the Laclede County 4-H members at a state shotgun shoot. Jocelynn Newell qualified to be part of the Missouri State shotgun team for the 25-26 year!

4 youth learned more about civic engagement and the Missouri Legislature by participating in 4-H Day at the Capitol.



Laclede County 4-H members in Jefferson City visiting with Rep. Jeff Knight.

### Local Impact

#### 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)
- Youth who earn a bachelor's degree increase their annual earnings by \$2 million over their lifetime. (U.S. News and World report, 2011) If 50% of the 14 County youth participating in 4-H events on a college campus receive a Bachelor's degree, 4-H would help young people acquire \$ 1,400,000 more in lifetime earnings.

### Local Impact

Youth also took their 4-H experience beyond the county lines participating in the following events:

- State 4-H Equine Tour
- State 4-H Congress
- State Horse Judging Contest
- State Livestock Judging Day
- State Poultry and Rabbit Day
- State Public Speaking
- National Eastern Roundup- horse judging contest



State Horse Judging



Equine Tour



State Public Speaking- 3<sup>rd</sup> place in extemporaneous!

# Laclede County

## Missouri 4-H

### Profiles and stories



Members of the Barn Bums club collected donations of dog food, cat food, and kitty litter for Claws & Paws, our local animal shelter.



Members of the Country Kids Club organized a pet parade at two of the local nursing homes in June. This is an event they have been doing for several years, and residents always look forward to visiting with the kids and seeing their animals!

Members of Friendship 4-H Club participate in different community service activities each month. Here, they are working at a local food pantry.



### Profiles and stories



Martial Art SPIN Club meeting- practicing their punching technique.



A Laclede County 4-H member learns to palpate a cow from the sale barn vet at Mid Missouri Stockyards during the Ag Education Initiative.

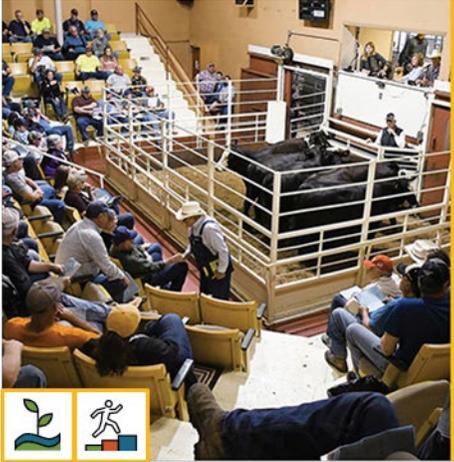
Members of the 4-H beekeeping project with their fearless leaders!





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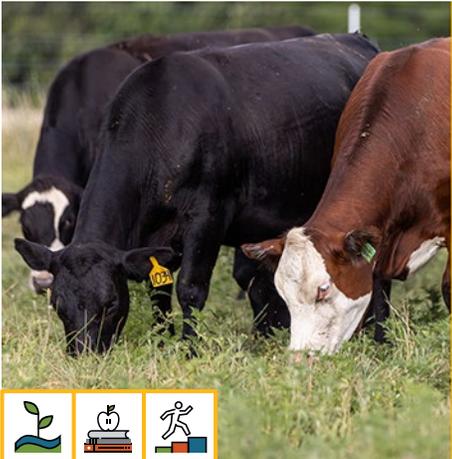
## Agriculture and Environment



**The Missouri Show-Me-Select Replacement Heifer Program** strives to enhance beef herd reproductive efficiency, boost farm income and establish dependable sources of quality replacement cows in Missouri. The program brings in the power of animal genomics through an enhanced DNA-option, Show-Me-PLUS.



**Since its inception more than 900 FARMS have enrolled, with an estimated statewide impact of \$200 MILLION.**



**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**

**“A lot of veterans come right out of the service and may feel disconnected and may be struggling with finding job opportunities. The Heroes to Hives program offers a diversion as well as opportunities.”**

**Eric Work, Heroes to Hives participant**

**Heroes to Hives** offers free professional training in beekeeping to veterans, promoting financial and personal wellness through community development. Missouri’s Heroes to Hives group has trained more than 1,200 veterans since 2021. It is the nation’s largest agriculture training program for U.S. military service members.



## Legend



Agricultural Growth & Stewardship



Economic Opportunity



Educational Access & Excellence



Health & Well-Being

## Agriculture and Environment

### Local Impact

#### Extension Tax Schools

University of Missouri Extension coordinated and offered tax education through one summer and three fall tax schools. The summer school was in person and live online. Fall schools were in Columbia and 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, installment sales, tax benefits of home ownership, retirement tax issues, and individual tax issues.

The schools were approved for up to 16 hours of continuing education credit by the IRS, Missouri Bar and for CFP continuing education. Total continuing education hours reported to IRS for the schools was 4,024 hours.

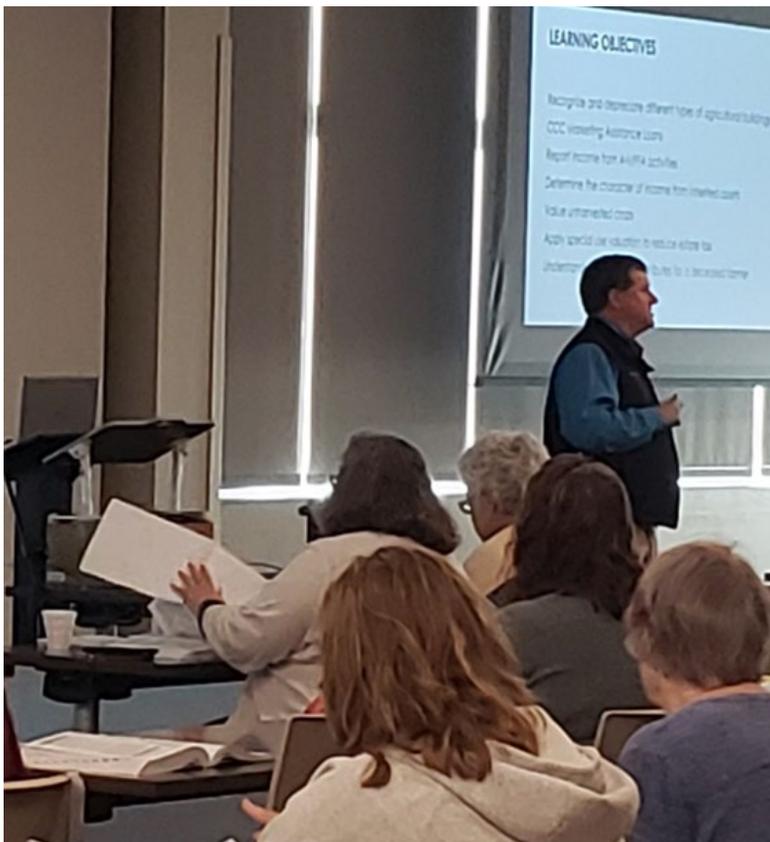
The teaching teams included CPAs, a former IRS stakeholder liaison, an IRS certified retired ag economics professor, an attorney, a certified financial planner, Missouri Department of Revenue, MU faculty and extension ag business specialists.

The evaluations had many positive comments and helpful suggestions. One comment from an online participant was “The video was outstanding — best I’ve seen on any CPE I’ve done live.”. Planning is underway to offer trainings in 2026. Local county residents benefit when local tax preparers have the opportunity to gain knowledge, which benefits their clients and communities. The tax schools are a program of the ag business and policy program of MU Extension, coordinated by Mary Sobba with help from a team of ag business specialists throughout the state.

The resources for the schools included the IRS, 2025 National Income Tax Workbook from the Land Grant University Tax Education Foundation, and materials written by the instructors.

The 2025 school attendance totaled three hundred eighty-nine people, which was an 11% increase from 2024. The participants were from throughout Missouri and two from out of state.

Laclede County had six participants in the fall course.



## Agriculture and Environment

### Agronomist Report

#### 2025 Annual Report — Agronomy Program

**Rudra Baral, Agronomy Specialist, University of Missouri Extension** Serving Cole, Miller, Pulaski, Osage, Maries, Gasconade, and Laclede Counties

#### Executive Summary

2025 was a year of impact and growth for MU Extension's agronomy program in the East Central Region. Through research-based education, innovative tools, and strong partnerships, we advanced MU Extension's core principles:

#### Educate, Create, Connect.

- **226** producers engaged in direct educational programs
- **2.2 million** reached indirectly via media and outreach
- **1,830** soil samples analyzed with tailored recommendations
- **71** producers received technical assistance
- **21** forage producers benefited from free nitrate testing
- **15+** farm visited to solve field related problems
- **12** educational materials created (2 articles for MU Extension Publication, 4 newspaper articles, 1 peer-reviewed article, 1 graphic motion video and 4 workshops materials)
- **1** producer received Grassland Partnership Program and
- **6** producers received grant writing assistance

#### EDUCATE: Learning & Access

##### Workshops & Training (16 programs, 226 participants):

- **Private Pesticide Applicator Training:** 4 sessions, 40 producers certified
- **Soil Health Workshops:** 4 sessions + virtual program (134 participants)
- **Hay Quality Management:** 3 workshops, 28 producers
- **Warm Season Grass Management:** Miller County workshop (5 participants)
- **Grazing School:** Gasconade County (12 participants)
- **Master Gardener Program:** 7 active members trained

##### Soil Testing Services:

- **1,830 samples reviewed** across 7 counties

##### Nitrate Poisoning Testing Service:

- **21 forage producers** received free qualitative nitrate testing service

##### Media Reach:

- **2,186,736 readers** via newspaper articles
- **1,039** reached through Extension publications
- **292 viewers** watched the educational video on nitrate poisoning



## Agriculture and Environment

### Agronomist Report Cont.

#### CREATE: Innovation & Opportunity

- Research Publication: “Cropping Potential of Forage Soybean” in Frontiers in Agronomy
- Extension Publications: 2 articles at MU Extension publication and 4 newspaper articles at local newspaper
- Manual Development: Developed evidence-based new workshop manuals and training resources for Hay Quality Management Workshop, Soil Health Workshop, Warm & Cool-Season Grass Management
- Grant Writing Assistance: Assisted 7 producers with successful grant applications
- Forage Quality Testing: Launched quantitative hay quality testing service in partnership with Ward Lab Nebraska

#### CONNECT: Engagement & Partnership

- Attended 13 County Extension Council meetings and 12 SWCD board meetings
- Conducted 15+ farm visits
- Engaged 100+ community members through events like Farm & Fest and Taste of Osage
- Strengthened partnerships for conservation and producer support
- Displayed MU Extension Information Desk at Eldon Farmers Market (3 times)

#### Impact Summary

- Direct Reach: 269 participants, 71 producers assisted
- Indirect Reach: Over 2 million through media
- Community Engagement: Farmers markets, open houses, and local events

#### Looking Ahead: 2026 Priorities

- Private Pesticide Applicators Training
- Utilizing Drones in Missouri Agriculture Workshop
- Pasture Fertility Management Workshop
- Forage Options for Winter Grazing Workshop
- Hay Quality Management and Forage Testing
- Understanding Your Soil Needs Workshops
- Grazing School Program
- Lake Area Master Gardening Program Coordination
- Ongoing services: soil testing, nitrate testing, farm visits

#### Conclusion:

MU Extension’s agronomy program continues to deliver evidence-based education, foster innovation, and build partnerships that strengthen Missouri agriculture.

# Agriculture and Environment

## Horticulture Report

Ramón Arancibia ([raa522@missouri.edu](mailto:raa522@missouri.edu))

Horticulture Specialist, West Central Region

2025 Annual Report

MU Extension Specialist based in Bates County to service 12 counties in the West Central Region. As the Field Specialist in Horticulture, the priority is to address the concerns of specialty crop growers in the west central region and statewide in collaboration with other regional specialists. In addition, contribute with seminars and presentations to stakeholders such as farmers communities, Marster gardener chapters and clubs, on-line webinars, etc.

Face to face farm visits were the main direct contact method with Amish/Mennonite growers since they don't have access to computers or social media. However, face to face visits as well as phone and emails were contact methods with other producers and homeowner (see contacts in table below). In addition, assisted as board secretary of the Soil and Water Conservation District in Bates and Vernon Co.

Contributed with presentations to farmers and other stakeholders to assist them in their operations at:

1. The Great Plain Growers Conference in St Joseph, MO (<https://www.greatplainsgrowersconference.org/>)
2. Two webinars on production of vegetable crops (MU Extension)
3. Food Safety training at Clark Co.
4. Master Gardener chapters and garden clubs in Camden, Hickory, Laclede, St. Clair, and Kansas City.
5. Little Roots Big Harvest Programming (Bates Co. and others)
6. Garden Hour (on-line), <https://ipm.missouri.edu/townHalls/>
7. Career Exploration Field Day at the SWREEC, micro-irrigation

### Contacts 2025

County	Farm/property visits	Phone consultations	Email consultations	Attendees (ppt no.)
Bates	2	10	8	8+16 (2)
Benton	1	3	9	5 (1)
Camden	8	17	37	11+23 (2)
Cedar	1	3	9	2 (1)
Dallas	9	4	0	25+1 (2)
Henry	8	3	17	
Hickory	6	5	11	
Laclede	1	10	25	10+1 (2)
Morgan	11	7	18	11 (1)
Polk	0	1	3	1 (1)
St. Clair	8	5	16	7+18+4 (3)
Vernon	11	14	15	7+12 (2)
Other	9		98	801 (37)

## Agriculture and Environment

### Horticulture Report Continued

#### Additional activities

Contributing and conducting experiments on a funded grant: Management of Fusarium and other soil-borne diseases in high tunnel tomato production.

Contributing to update Chapter 13 of the Master Gardener Core Course and presentation: Identification and management of plant diseases.

Contributed as reviewer/editor and Spanish translator of research and extension articles/books:

<https://extension.missouri.edu/publications/gs411>

<https://extension.missouri.edu/publications/gs6222>

<https://extension.missouri.edu/publications/gs648>

<https://extension.missouri.edu/publications/gs647>

Views of videos created over five years that are posted in the YouTube MUIPM channel:

[https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLLUfLEphtKwu5F9\\_S7XfM7SvXH2Ak6RYd](https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLLUfLEphtKwu5F9_S7XfM7SvXH2Ak6RYd)

Video	views
Plastic Mulch Color & Soil Temperature	4.79K
Strawberry Frost/Freeze Protection	1.8K
Early Season Watermelon in MO	848
Sweet Potato Harvest, Curing and Storage	739
Increase Sweet Potato Yield with Early Planting	681
Growing Watermelons for July 4th.	422
2021 Sweet Potato Slip Production Trails	410
Fall/winter short period crops in high tunnels	404
Greenhouse and high tunnel sanitation	300
Sweet potato slip production for field planting	228
On-farm sweet potato slip production trials	199
Cucurbits: Flower types and fruit production	181
Protected production for fall/winter Vegetable crops	173
High tunnel steamers	166
Sweet potato planting	163

## Agriculture and Environment



2024 Century Farm  
Bobbie and Tracie Archer



2024 Century Farm  
Walnut Valley Farm  
Fulkerson Family



2024 Farm Family: The Ryan Hill  
Family



Jennifer Lutes  
Field Specialist in Agricultural Business

**SW-REEC Poultry Processing Demonstration** trained 7 Laclede County producers in small-scale poultry processing, including safe handling, sanitation, workflow design, and regulatory compliance. Participants gained skills to support on-farm or direct-market poultry enterprises.

# Laclede County

## Master Gardener Program

### Local Impact

Number of Volunteers — 35  
Number of Volunteer Hours — 1,372  
Dollar Value of Volunteer Hours - \$47,731.88  
(\*[Independent Sector](#) at \$34.79/hour)

Number of Continuing Education Hours — 207  
Number of Advanced Training Hours — 20

Number of Chapter-led Education Events — 8  
Number of Participants in Education Events — 51



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 2025, 2,125 Missouri Extension Master Gardeners completed over 112,713 VOLUNTEER HOURS throughout the state, a value of \$3.9M dollars.**

## Master Gardener Program

### Local Impact

January: Meeting and Presentation: Growing Lavender/uses by Tammy Leigh  
Milkweed seeds workshop with 4Hers led by Teresa Sugden  
February: Meeting and Presentation: Creative Landscape Designs by Abby Jackson/ Faithful Spring Farm, Elderberry propagation workshop with 4Hers led by Teresa Sugden  
March: Meeting and Presentation: Raised Bed Designs by Kris Hopkins, Master Gardener Library Section reorganized and inventoried by Tracy Bobbitt and Kelly Hicks  
Workdays at our gardens for Spring spruce up  
April: Meeting and Favorite Missouri plants shared by members, Public Q&A at Lowes Garden Center (1 Saturday), Workdays at gardens: weeding and mulching, Extension Open House  
May: Meeting and Presentation: Missouri Native Pollinators by Sadia Luallen-Blattert, Pollen to Petal Horticulturist, Public Q & A at Lowes Garden Center (2 Saturdays)  
Workdays at gardens, Trip to Missouri Wildflower Nursery for tour, Elderberry plant sale by Loretta and Teresa Sugden from starts planted in February and fostered by MGs. Sales from this day and others totaled \$448.00  
June: Meeting only. Discussion and planning for the Laclede county fair horticulture exhibits, led by Mac Bobbitt, New landscape design project/partnership with courthouse by Mike Horton, Route 66 Festival Booth to promote MG/course sign ups, Flower Arranging Class by Abby Jackson, open to the public,  
July: No Meeting. Fair Days, Senior Day Promo Booth, Catalpa Tree Health review and advice from Justin Holmes, MDC Urban Tree forester, Watering schedules planned for garden project teams/bedheads on gardens during dry months.  
August: Meeting and Presentation: Missouri Trees for Landscape by MDC foresters: Michael Hartman and Taylor Kennemer, Orientation Night for the New Trainees

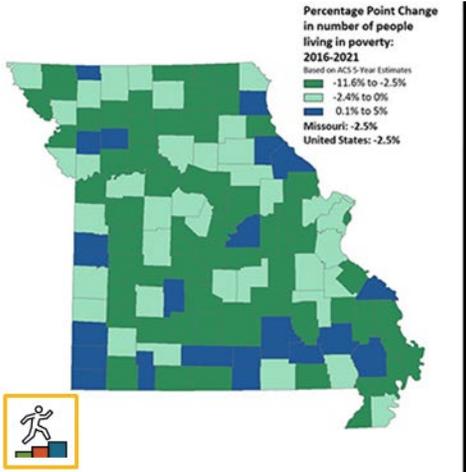
September: Meeting and Annual picnic potluck at the Route 66 park where most of the gardens are located. Finding Milkweed pods, caterpillars and butterflies with 4Hers, led by Teresa Sugden, MG Training Course begins, Perennial Plant Sale organized and led by Loretta Lucas. Sales totaled \$516.00  
October: Meeting and Presentation: Growing and Uses of Herbs by Karen Wilson, fall cleanup/ workdays in the gardens, planting and mulching around Catalpa tree at the courthouse  
November: Meeting and Graduation for the New Fall 2025 Trainees, tulips planted at the Joy Cabin  
December: Short Meeting and Christmas Potluck- Recap of our busy year!  
Other activities not listed: several meetings with 4H garden kids by mentors Mac Bobbitt and Kelly Douglas teaching lessons for their 4-H garden projects.





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through credible statewide programs

## Business and Community



The **Missouri Economy Indicators (MEI)** series explores business, industry and workforce topics that affect Missouri's economy. The data is shared through newsletters and on social media. MU Extension faculty and staff receive talking points and collateral to share with local stakeholders.

**In 2022, MEI published 15 issues, and MEI online resources were accessed MORE THAN 5,000 TIMES. Two out of five MEI newsletter recipients reported using the information to help guide policy or decision-making in their work.**

AMERICA'S SBDC MISSOURI **CLIENT HIGHLIGHT**

LOCS OF GLORY

The **Missouri Small Business Development Centers (SBDC)** provide professional training and customized one-on-one counseling to small business across the state. Working with the Missouri SBDC helps business owners make confident decisions.

**FY2020-2022, Missouri SBDC ASSISTED 878 STARTUPS and helped Missouri small businesses earn more than \$440 Million.**

Citizens Memorial HOSPITAL Bolivar, Missouri

CITIZENS MEMORIAL HOSPITAL

**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.**

## Legend



Agricultural Growth & Stewardship



Economic Opportunity



Educational Access & Excellence



Health & Well-Being

## 2025 SUMMARY

## Business and Community

2025 marked a year of growing interest and engagement around economic development conversations in **Laclede County**, driven in part by momentum in manufacturing and increased attention to agricultural entrepreneurship as engines of local growth. As these sectors continue to evolve, MU Extension experienced a noticeable increase in requests for insight, participation, and discussion related to workforce development, youth engagement, agribusiness innovation, and entrepreneurship—particularly as community leaders and employers sought strategies to support talent pipelines and business sustainability.

These interactions reflected a strengthening appetite for **regional economic development perspectives** that connect Laclede County's manufacturing and agricultural assets to practical, data-informed strategies. The momentum built in 2025 underscores the value of relationship-driven, accessible engagement that meets communities where they are and supports informed dialogue that leads to action.

As interest continues to grow, **2026 presents an opportunity to deepen strategic engagement in Laclede County**, positioning MU Extension as a trusted partner in strengthening manufacturing capacity, supporting agricultural entrepreneurs, and building long-term workforce readiness and community vitality through collaborative, regional approaches.



Ashley Allen-Brown, Ed.D.  
Regional Economic Development Specialist  
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**Total Direct Contacts**

**1726**

**Total Program Participants**

**2809**

**Total Indirect Reach**

**157,413**

## Regional Economic Development (RED) Programming Impact: Depth and Reach (2025) Laclede County



**Direct Contacts: 197** residents interacted or contacted MU Extension B&C RED in Laclede County for assistance.



**Program Participants: 89** individuals participated in B&C RED programming.



**Indirect Reach: 26,936** residents reached through articles, hard copy educational materials, community events, and social media engagement

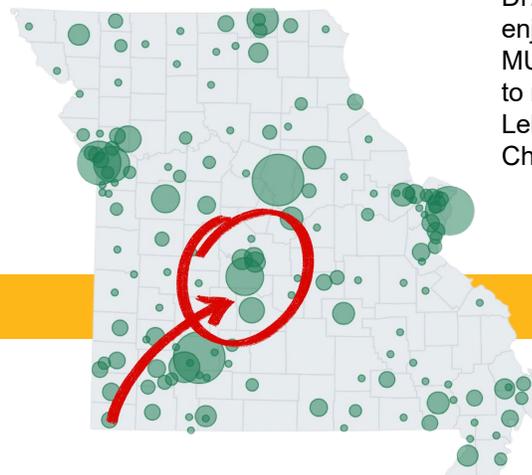


Dr. Ashley Allen-Brown enjoyed presenting on MU Extension progress to members of the Lebanon Second Baptist Church in 2025.

## Did You Know?

MU Extension Business and Communities' Economic and community development programming for the Lake of the Ozarks region is led by one Regional Economic Development Specialist, yet the region continues to exceed engagement goals and deliver measurable impact across multiple counties.

*\*The image to the right demonstrates B&C-specific activity heatmap across all Missouri counties. The red circle with arrow denotes heavy concentration of activity in Camden County and the Lake of the Ozarks Region.*



**Extension**  
University of Missouri

# Business and Community Tackling the Grand Challenges through Regional Economic and Community Development Programming

# Laclede County

## Four-County Recovery Friendly Workplace Learning Luncheon 2025

Organized by Dr. Ashley Allen-Brown and co-hosted by the Laclede and Camden County Councils of MU Extension. The Four-County Recovery Friendly Workplace Learning Luncheon was underwritten in part by a grant from the Community Foundation of Lake of the Ozarks, and the program allowed employers, decision-makers, healthcare practitioners, and concerned community members the chance to hear from labor and workforce development experts regarding the Recovery Friendly Workplace program. This was designed to approach the workforce crisis topic currently plaguing Missouri. Dr. Doug Swanson and Dr. Rob Russell presented strategies to reduce stigma and provide recovery resources. In addition to the program, attendees will enjoy a delicious buffet lunch and interact with key resource providers. **There were 24 individuals in attendance from across the state.**



### RECOVERY FRIENDLY WORKPLACE LEARNING LUNCHEON AND ROUNDTABLE DISCUSSION

MEET YOUR LABOR AND WORKFORCE  
DEVELOPMENT EXPERTS



DR. DOUG SWANSON



DR. ROB RUSSELL

11:30 AM  
UNTIL  
2:00 PM



WEDNESDAY  
APRIL 9,  
2025



THE LODGE OF FOUR SEASONS  
VALENCIA ROOM  
315 FOUR SEASONS DRIVE - LAKE OZARK, MO

COMMUNITY  
FOUNDATION  
of the LAKE  
Connecting People With Purpose



Above: Dr. Doug Swanson provides key information while community leaders and stakeholders listen and engage.

Camden County attendees = 8  
Laclede County attendees = 4  
Miller County attendees = 5  
Hickory County attendees = 1

## Crisis to Collaboration: Tackling the Child Care Challenge

Held November 12 in Sunrise Beach, this meaningful program addressed the region's childcare shortage as a critical workforce, economic development, and community sustainability issue. Organized by Dr. Ashley Allen-Brown and hosted by the Camden County Council of MU Extension in partnership with CO-MO Connect, the Community Foundation of Lake of the Ozarks, the Lake West Chamber, and Lake TV, the solutions-focused panel and asset-mapping workshop moved the conversation from awareness to action. Forty-five participants from across Missouri—including educators, community leaders, and practitioners—engaged in identifying root causes, sharing promising practices, and mapping local assets to support collaborative, community-driven solutions for strengthening the Lake of the Ozarks workforce and economy. **There were 45 in attendance from across the state.**



Presents

## Crisis to Collaboration Tackling the Childcare Challenge



Expert Panel Discussion - Luncheon - Asset Mapping Workshop

A FREE Community Service in partnership with



[bit.ly/ChildcareSummit25](https://bit.ly/ChildcareSummit25)



Left: An expert panel moderated by Jennifer Presberry, Economic Development Specialist for CO-MO Connect, kicked off this day of meaningful engagement.

Photo courtesy of Lake TV.

Camden County attendees = 16    Morgan County attendees = 3  
Miller County attendees = 1    Laclede County attendees = 1  
Hickory County attendees = 1



Above right: Camden County Council of MU Extension member and childcare expert, Shayla Veile, listens as Good Shepherd Learning Center director, Cyndy Andrews shares her experience as a childcare provider.

Photo courtesy of Lake TV.

# Business and Community Regional Economic and Community Development (RED) Programs of Significance



## Lake Area Regional Agribusiness Expo 2025

The **Lake Area Regional Agribusiness Expo 2025** was developed by University of Missouri Extension in direct response to producer feedback calling for greater visibility, networking, and direct-to-consumer opportunities for small agribusinesses. Hosted on March 29, 2025, at The Exchange at Wall Street Cattle Company, the cost-free event reduced barriers to participation and created meaningful engagement between local producers, consumers, and MU Extension partners. With agriculture contributing nearly \$395 million in output and supporting more than 3,000 jobs in Laclede County, the Expo strategically strengthened the region's agribusiness ecosystem by increasing visibility of small and value-added enterprises, facilitating peer-to-peer collaboration, and anchoring agribusiness activity locally. Through coordinated promotion, vendor support, and on-site management, MU Extension positioned itself as a catalyst for rural agribusiness growth—helping producers connect, collaborate, and expand in ways that strengthen the regional economy and long-term sustainability. **There were nearly 200 attendees.**



Laclede County Extension Council Chair, Ed O'Connor and his wife, Leslie, participated in the Lake Area Regional Ag Expo.

Camden County attendees = 3 Laclede County attendees = 54

## Build Your Board Online Training

Hosted a Build Your Board live Zoom to help nonprofit professionals gain essential board leadership skills, covering topics like board operations, fundraising, conflict resolution, and marketing—all in engaging, one-hour sessions. **There were 24 in attendance from across the state.**

Camden County attendees = 2      Dallas County attendees = 1  
Laclede County attendees = 1      Miller County attendees = 1  
Morgan County attendees = 1

**BUILD YOUR BOARD**  
Training for nonprofit board members

**Tuesday, April 29 - Session 9: Promoting Your Organization**

Our ninth session of Build Your Board will cover the topic of promoting your organization, including developing a marketing plan, using social media and traditional media.

**Session 9 Facilitator**

**Ashley Allen-Brown**  
Regional Economic Development Specialist  
University of Missouri Extension

**BYB Zoom Link**

Meeting ID: 917 2901 5294  
Passcode: 610981

## Turning Data Into Civic Muscle

Led by MU Extension's Regional Economic Development Specialist, Dr. Ashley Allen-Brown, this session will show you how to identify meaningful data, ask the right questions, and use what you discover to guide community conversations and drive impact. Whether you're a civic leader, nonprofit changemaker, or just passionate about your hometown's future, you'll walk away with tools to build civic muscle and make informed, inclusive decisions—one data point at a time. Two sessions were held in 2025 for Chambers of Commerce in both Dallas and Laclede Counties. **A total of 42 people attended both programs.**

Dallas County Program Attendees = 20 Laclede County Program Attendees = 22



## NONPROFIT TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

INFORMATION, REFERRALS, AND SUPPORT FOR MISSOURI'S NONPROFIT ORGANIZATIONS

Our regional economic and community development team will answer introductory-level questions and make referrals to other programs, services, and organizations, when applicable. Ashley Allen-Brown, West Central Region, provides expertise in fundraising, marketing, membership development and communication, legislative and grassroots advocacy training.

Counties and number of individuals assisted through NPTA:

Camden County = 5  
Dallas County = 3  
Hickory County = 1  
Laclede County = 1  
Miller County = 1  
Morgan County = 2

## Building Momentum: The 2025 CEC Conference Strengthens Missouri's Entrepreneurial Ecosystem

The **Connecting Entrepreneurial Communities Conference**, hosted annually by University of Missouri Extension, delivers immediate and long-term economic benefits to Missourians and host communities alike. By drawing entrepreneurs, business leaders, and civic stakeholders from across Missouri and beyond, the conference generates direct local economic activity as attendees invest in lodging, dining, shopping, and unique attractions not available in their home communities. **In 2025, the conference brought 164 attendees from 48 Missouri counties and four states to Excelsior Springs**, significantly increasing visitor spending while showcasing local businesses, venues, and cultural assets. Beyond short-term tourism impacts, CEC strengthens Missouri's economic development pipeline by equipping participants with practical tools, peer networks, and actionable strategies they take back to their communities—multiplying the conference's impact through improved entrepreneurship support, workforce development, and civic capacity across the state.

### MEASURABLE IMPACT

The 2025 CEC Conference demonstrated measurable learning impact and intense participant satisfaction:

- ✓ **Pre-conference understanding:** 77% rated their knowledge as average to high.
- ✓ **Post-conference understanding:** 91% rated high to very high — an **18% gain in applied learning effectiveness**.
- ✓ **Educational relevance:** 55% reported they could apply what they learned directly in their communities.
- ✓ **Value perception:** 67% rated the conference a good value for the cost.
- ✓ **Presenter effectiveness:** 100% of respondents rated presenters as Effective or Highly Effective.

### WHY THIS MATTERS

Communities across Missouri—rural, micropolitan, and urban—continue to seek practical tools and strategic insights to strengthen local economies. The CEC conference delivers both **tactical, ready-to-use frameworks** paired with the **inspiration and storytelling** that build momentum and civic muscle. Participant feedback confirmed that this blend is essential to moving from ideas to implementation, especially for communities working to diversify their economies, support small businesses, and grow their workforces.

### 49 Missouri Counties and 4 States Represented

Andrew = 2	Cole = 2	Johnson = 3	Phelps = 1	Worth = 1
Atchison = 1	Cooper = 1	Lafayette = 1	Platte = 2	
Barton = 2	Dade = 1	Lincoln = 2	Putnam = 1	
Bates = 2	Dekalb = 2	Macon = 3	Saline = 2	
Boone = 14	Douglas = 1	Marion = 2	Scott = 2	
Butler = 5	Gasconade = 1	Mississippi = 4	St. Charles = 4	
Callaway = 2	Gentry = 2	Moniteau = 2	St. Clair = 1	
Camden = 1	Greene = 3	New Madrid = 1	St. Louis City = 4	
Cass = 2	Grundy = 1	Nodaway = 4	St. Louis County = 8	
Chariton = 1	Howard = 1	Osage = 1	Taney = 2	
Clay = 22	Jackson = 14	Perry = 1	Vernon = 2	
Clinton = 1	Jefferson = 2	Pettis = 2	Washington = 1	

## Business and Community



Ashley Allen-Brown, Ed.D.  
Regional Economic  
Development Specialist  
**2025 CEC Conference Chair**  
allen-browna@missouri.edu



Above: Members of the MU Extension and Excelsior Springs 2025 CEC Conference Planning Committees with several conference attendees.



Above: Conference attendees enjoyed 25 Breakout Sessions held in the quaint storefronts located in Downtown Excelsior Springs.



Connecting  
Entrepreneurial Communities  
*University of Missouri Extension*

**Join us in Maryville – Sept. 15-17, 2026**



MU Extension **Serves MISSOURI and Delivers MIZZOU** through credible statewide programs

## Continuing Education



LETI's **National Animal Cruelty Investigations School** provides training on investigating abuse and neglect of animals. Multi-level courses prepare future animal care workers to handle most types of incidents. Several jurisdictions throughout the country require the National Animal Cruelty Investigations School's training for employment as animal cruelty investigators.



The **Aircraft Rescue and Fire Fighting (ARFF)** program provides specialized fire training for Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) certificated airports. The program uses a Mobile Aircraft Fire Training simulator to provide realistic on-site fire and rescue training at airports, which are required to provide recurring ARFF training for their airport firefighters.



MU **Continuing Education for Health Professions (CEHP)** provides evidenced-based, relevant and responsive learning activities designed to narrow professional practice gaps with respect to knowledge, competence, and performance of the healthcare team. A commitment to lifelong learning, in partnership with those we serve, contributes to excellence in practice and improved health outcomes.

**CEHP provided 169 LEARNING ACTIVITIES which reached over 53,000 PROFESSIONAL across all Missouri counties.**

### Legend



Agricultural Growth & Stewardship



Economic Opportunity



Educational Access & Excellence



Health & Well-Being



MU Extension **Serves MISSOURI and Delivers MIZZOU**  
through credible statewide programs

## Health and Human Sciences



### Show-Me Nutrition

**Programming for preschool through junior high**

An engaging way to demonstrate the benefits of nutrition, health, and physical activity. Meets Missouri's Show-Me Health and Physical Education standards and the state's School Wellness Policy.

**"We have struggled with our daughter's picky eating for years and have tried so many techniques to try and get her to eat new foods. Your influence on her has worked magic this year. She has come home so excited about trying new foods and has now become not only willing but excited to try new things."**

**Parent of a Show-Me Nutrition participant**



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."**



### Cooking Matters

**Make quick, tasty, and affordable meals everyone will enjoy.**

Learn valuable tips for stretching your food dollars and how to prepare a recipe and sample easy, low-cost, nutritious and delicious dishes.

**"We prepared barley jambalaya in class and one participant mentioned she had never tried barley before. She tried the jambalaya and really enjoyed it. A few days later she excitedly said she made the recipe at home and her whole family enjoyed it."**

**Cooking Matters facilitator about a class participant**

## Legend



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Health & Well-Being

## Health and Human Sciences

### Public Value

#### SNAP-Ed Public Value Statement 2025

The Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program Education (SNAP-Education or SNAP-Ed) brought \$11,419,598 in federal funds to Missouri. The funds support engagement with 70,722 Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) recipients and eligible citizens of Missouri who learned about being active and healthy eating on a budget. This year we had 970,939 indirect educational contacts through newsletters, health fairs, and food pantries.

3,370 direct and indirect contacts were made in Laclede County.

Participants in SNAP-Ed learn the importance of making healthier meals and snack choices, eating breakfast more often, are more willing to try new foods, increase their physical activity, and make healthier food choices. Those who practice healthy eating and are physically active are more likely to contribute to a healthy labor force and enjoy a high quality of life throughout the lifespan.

This vital programming effort also reduces healthcare costs over the participant's lifetime, saving taxpayer money in reduced public healthcare benefits and insurance premiums.

#### EFNEP Public Value Statement 2025

The Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program (EFNEP) brought \$1,624,777 federal funds to Missouri. These funds were used to enroll 424 limited-resource families in nutrition education and meal preparation classes, representing 1,550 family members. Additionally, 2,942 youth were enrolled in EFNEP classes.

Zero of these youth and adult participants reside in Laclede County.

Participants in EFNEP learn the importance of making healthier meals and snack choices, eating breakfast more often, trying new foods, increasing their physical activity, and making healthier food choices. Those who practice healthy eating and are physically active are more likely to contribute to a healthy labor force and enjoy a high quality of life throughout the lifespan.

This vital programming effort also reduces healthcare costs over the participant's lifetime, saving taxpayer money in reduced public healthcare benefits and insurance premiums.

## Health and Human Sciences

**Ashley Blain- Nutrition Program Associate**

### Schools

- Boswell
- Early Childhood Center
- Joel E Barber
- Lebanon Middle School

### Partnerships

- Communion Bible Church
- Free Store Ministry
- Hughes Senior Center
- L-Life Food Pantry
- Lebanon Farmers Market
- Life-Point Food Pantry
- Live 2 Give Hope
- Sound-House

### Community Events

- Health Fair- Hughes
- OTC Fall Fest
- Project Homeless-Free Store
- Senior day at the Fair

### 2025 Recap

**Participants- 2,141**  
**Sessions- 390**  
**Programming Hours- 355**  
**SNAP Applications-19**



Fuel For Life- Laclede County Extension Office



Health Fair- Hughes Senior Center



Boswell Elementary Fruit Kabobs- Kids In The Kitchen



Live 2 Give Hope- Pave The Way Program- Kids In The Kitchen



Kids In The Kitchen- Laclede Extension Office