

UNIVERSITY OF MISSOURI EXTENSION

Mississippi County 2024

Annual Report

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MISSOURI.

DELIVER
MIZZOU.



Extension
University of Missouri

an equal opportunity/ADA institution



December 2024

Dear county commissioners, elected leaders and friends of MU Extension and Engagement,

As we reflect on the past year, I want to express my deep gratitude for your support of MU Extension and for your partnership in enhancing the lives of Missourians.

Your support for MU Extension fuels Missouri's agriculture, strengthens families, prepares our youth and promotes the health, well-being and vitality of our communities. Over the past year, our programs have focused on addressing key needs throughout the state:

- **Expanding access to 4-H:** To make 4-H more accessible, we've introduced more in-school and after-school clubs, reducing barriers and creating opportunities for young Missourians to develop essential skills and leadership abilities.
- **Supporting agriculture and land stewardship:** We're addressing critical issues such as succession planning for family farms, rural mental health, agricultural business management and land stewardship. These initiatives are helping Missouri's farmers plan for the future and preserve the health of our land for future generations.
- **Advancing health initiatives:** Our team of community health field specialists, covering every region of the state, works directly with local leaders to assess health needs and bring UM System resources and expertise to these communities, supporting healthier lives and stronger communities.
- **Promoting economic development:** MU Extension is helping to create economic opportunities by working with individuals, supporting businesses in their growth and collaborating with communities to enhance local vibrancy. Through these efforts, we help bring new jobs, skills and possibilities to Missourians across the state.
- **Providing essential training:** Our continuing education programs prepare Missouri's firefighters and health care workers to meet the demands of their roles with the latest skills and knowledge, ensuring they are well-prepared to serve our communities.

As you read through this annual report, I hope you feel as proud as I do of the accomplishments we've achieved together. The dedication and professionalism of MU Extension's faculty and staff are inspiring, and I am grateful to work alongside them—and each of you—as we make Missouri a stronger, healthier and more vibrant place. Thank you for your continued support and partnership. Together, we are serving Missouri by delivering the University *for* Missouri.

Warm regards,

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

Who we are

Faculty and staff



Amber Childers
Extension Engagement Specialist

Sherrie Crossfield
Administrative Assistant

Audrey Johnson
Human Development

Paula Cates
Nutrition Program Associate

Lakeisha Dugan
Nutrition Program Associate

Taylor Clark
Community Development

Susan Haney
Community Health

Jennifer Hall
4-H Educator

Robyn Mulloy
Agronomy

Kyleigh Branch
High Obesity

Anthony Ohmes
Agronomy

Sara Denkler
Regional Director

Council members

Jonathan Holley, Chairman
Kathy Carter, Vice-chairman
Laura Beth Whittington, Secretary
Scott Mainord, Treasurer
Jamie Conn
Keith Hall
Sharman Kavan
Cyndi Norton



County commissioners

James D Conn, Presiding Commissioner

Mitch Pullen, Commissioner 1st District

Darrell Jones, Commissioner 2nd District

Budget and more

Appropriations budget

Income

County Appropriations	42,000.00
Total Income	42,000.00

Expenses

Salaries/Benefits	30,420.95
Travel	3,324.00
Telephone	480.00
Office Supplies/Service	220.09
Publishing	1,200.00
Utilities	4332.00
Insurance	2,022.96
County Appropriations	42,000.00
Total Expenses	42,000.00

Return on investment

University System	100,000
Donations	14,000
Program Revenue	4,087

For every dollar invested by the county, MU invests \$3.40.

MU Extension is a unique 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.



Local Support

Did you know you can donate directly to *(name of county)* 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.

Key Outcomes



4-H Youth Development

132 Participants

- 3 Community Club Membership
- 129 In-School Participation



Health and Human Sciences

46,670 Contacts

- 45,446 Nutrition & Health Contacts



Agriculture and Environment

72 Contacts

- 72 Plant Production & Technology Contacts



First Responder Education

Fire Rescue Training Institute (FRTI)

- 1 Number of Students



Business and Community

465 Contacts

- 5 Business Development Contacts
- 460 Community Leadership Development Contacts

Mississippi County

Missouri 4-H

Local Impact and Stories



The Clover Patch Community Garden sponsored by Mississippi County 4-H was started in 2024. 4-H participants learned how to till, plant, water, and harvest a garden. On gardening nights, we covered topics like Perfect Plants vs. Pesky Weeds, Get Wiggly: Bugs of Missouri Gardens, & Feeding the World with Missouri Farmers. They were able to try fruits, vegetables, and herbs that were grown in the garden. We even made fresh garden salsa from our harvest!



4-H Game Night was designed to get volunteers and 4-H participants communicating and enjoying each other's company. We are working to bridge the age gap in our community and through interactive game play and conversation topics, we helped our senior volunteers connect with our 4-H kids. They learned to associate and understand one another.

Camp BLAST! was held in June at the Charleston Middle School. Campers were eager to complete STEM projects while learning about pre-historic science theory, chemistry, space exploration and environmental sciences. We incorporated lessons on character building, safety, and physical activity. We partnered with Fresh Start in Charleston to offer lunch to each participant in the three-day camp. 100 percent of students who attended stated that they learned something they didn't know before and would love to return to camp next summer!





MU EXTENSION **Serves MISSOURI and Delivers MIZZOU**

through credible statewide programs

Business and Community

Estate Planning: What's the Worst That Can Happen???

Jennifer R. Williams, JD
University of Missouri Extension

 Extension
University of Missouri

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This class uses the fictional family pictured above to demonstrate the consequences of not having an estate plan.

Jennifer R. Williams taught an estate planning class in Mississippi County to **5 adults**, educating them on the importance of completing an estate plan.

“I now understand how long-term care is paid for, especially if Medicaid is involved, and I intend to plan better in case I need long-term care.”



Economic
Opportunity

Mississippi County

Health and Human Sciences

Nutrition and Health Activities

- **Diabetes Research (Scott, Mississippi, New Madrid, Pemiscot, Dunklin, and Stoddard Counties)** Face to face interviews with type 2 African American Diabetic participants studying self-management and stress. Poster session at Gerontology Society Scientific Meeting.
- **Stay Strong, Stay Healthy** structured exercise program for older adults that includes a variety of exercises to help build muscle and increase bone density. Classes are held twice per week for 8 weeks.
- **Crunch Off:** The Missouri Crunch Off is a statewide event to celebrate Farm to School Month by crunching any Missouri grown food anytime between October 1 through October 31.
- **Virtual Diabetes Self-Management Program:** interactive group workshop delivered via Zoom and is taught each week for six weeks.
- **Women's Conference:** The 19th Annual Multicounty Women's Health Estimate approximately 120 participants and approximately 28 exhibitors with at least two representatives at each table.
- **Food Preservation workshop:** Hands on workshop teaching basics of home food preservation based on current USDA canning guidelines.
- **Matter of Balance:** Reviews information to help reduce the fear of falling and increase activity levels among older adults. 8 two-hour sessions.
- **Community Garden in Sikeston:** Produce used for food preservation workshops, fresh vegetables donated to residents, and gardening education.
- **Tai Chi for overall Health and Fall Prevention:** 16 sessions

Ongoing Efforts in Scott County and Surrounding Area: USDA Garden Grant Distribution, Health Fairs, County Fairs, Local Producer Product Distribution Events, Annual Women's Conference, ECHO Outreach and Education Group, Eat Smart in Parks Initiatives, High Obesity Grant Team Initiatives, MU Extension Resilience Team Initiatives
Actively participating in council meetings, planning meetings, boards, coalitions, committees and community events.
Currently serving: Scott County Transit Board, Bootheel Behavioral Health, Health in the Heartland, SEMO Health Educators Coalition, and the Retired Senior Volunteer Board

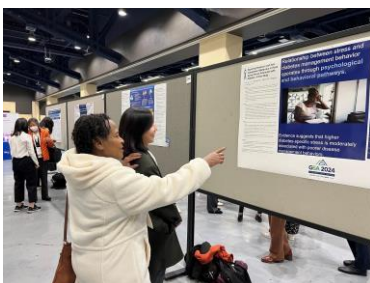
Maude Harris, EdD
Field Specialist in Nutrition and Health



Community Garden.



Food Preservation classes: Water Bath Canning and Steam Canning



Annual October Crunch Off Event to promote local foods
Poster Session Gerontological Society of America (GSA) 2024 Annual Scientific Meeting



Senior Planet Computer Training

Mississippi County

Community and Professional Health Education

UM System County Impacts

COMMUNITY HEALTH ENGAGEMENT AND OUTREACH

Mississippi County 2024

Engagement Work and Accomplishments:

The Southeast Regional Needs Assessment and the VOICES Survey have been completed, identifying the following key priority areas: Chronic Disease: Focus on Heart Disease; Infectious or Emerging Diseases: Focus on Sexually Transmitted Incidences; Cancer: Focus on Lung Cancer.

- Key Takeaways for Mississippi County: Of the six county regions, Mississippi County has one of the lowest life expectancies at 70.9 years and is the most rural county in the Bootheel.
- Mississippi County has a high smoking rate, at 29% of adults who are smoking.
- Mississippi County For the 2019-2020 academic year, reported the lowest graduation rate 88.6 %, a notable decline potentially influenced by the COVID-19 pandemic, given that it previously maintained one of the highest rates in the Bootheel.
- Mississippi County is the 2nd highest county in the 6-county area, exceeding the state and US rate for heart disease mortality.
- Mississippi County has significant incidences of Chlamydia and Syphilis that are higher than the state and U.S. rates, but the HIV incidences are the highest for the 6-county region from 2015-2018.

Susan Haney

Field Specialist in Community Health



Strategic Plan for Southeast Region Summer 2024



The Brain and Disease of Addiction:

- I hosted the Brain and Disease of Addiction in June, and local health department staff participated.

Camp Soar Life Skills Camp

- 64 Mississippi County Youth participated in this Life Skills Camp and learned sewing, crafting, prevention, mental health techniques and teamwork! Partnering with the Drug Coalition, Caring Communities, Health Department, and many more for this awesome camp.



Key Outcomes and Actions Taken:

- Poster Presentation at the National Health Outreach Conference in South Carolina in May with my 3 CHEO partners on Exploring Innovative Extension Based Approaches for Community Health Equity.
- I've actively collaborated with community partners through the Drug Coalition for Mississippi County. Additionally, I attended key events like the Missouri PQC: Community Forum on Maternal Rural Health and participated in the Suicide Prevention Conference.
- I attended the Rural Health Research Summit in Columbia, engaging in conversations about improving services in rural areas and overcoming related barriers.
- I also attended Extension and Engagement Week and obtained much-needed Professional Development and CHEO Strategic Planning Sessions to assist me in serving Mississippi County.
- I've begun offering the Brain and the Disease of Addiction and the Layperson Naloxone Administration Presentations. I have also conducted two virtual sessions of We Can Prosper Resilience Training. Most recently, I was trained in COMET Training (Changing Our Mental & Emotional Trajectory).



NHOC Poster Presentation



CHEO Strategic Planning

Mississippi County

Health and Human Sciences

SNAP Education

The Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program Education (SNAP-Education or SNAP-Ed) brought \$11,145,237 in federal funds to Missouri. The funds support engagement with 74,864 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 1,164,143 indirect educational contacts through newsletters, health fairs, food pantries, and the Show Me Nutrition helpline.

2,311 direct and 8,082 indirect contacts were made in Mississippi 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.



Success Story

Mississippi County Activity Center always enjoy planting their buckets every year and learning about gardening. From Getting Healthy Through Gardening. Many times, we use the vegetable for our recipes and participants can take home vegetables. Many participants live in apartments and can only have buckets for their garden. Always a success.

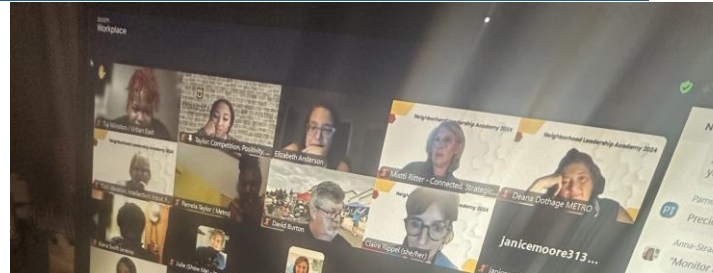


NPA Paula Cates teaching Getting Healthy Through Gardening @Mississippi County Activity Center.

Mississippi County

Local Impact

- ❖ Neighborhood Leadership Academy (Facilitator)
- ❖ Connecting Entrepreneurial Communities Conference (State Team Member)
- ❖ Propel Program w/ Sikeston Regional Chamber
- ❖ Women's Conference
- ❖ Missouri Drug Coalition
- ❖ Missouri Telehealth Network: Building Healthy Communities (Hub Team Member)
- ❖ Senior Planet: Chrome Essentials/Smart Phones (Facilitator)
- ❖ Missouri Eats Southeast Region (Team Member)
- ❖ Non-Profit Technical Assistance (Team Member)
- ❖ The Missouri Crunch Off
- ❖ MBRC Low Birth Weight Conference



SNAP Education

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Success Story

I conducted programming at the Shining Light Food Pantry in Mississippi County during their weekly food distribution. As I approached one of the participant's vehicles, she greeted me with smile and said that she was truly thankful for the cooking items and informational brochures I have provided to her when I am at Shinning Light. She said the utensils provided along with the recipes of healthy eating have been lifesavers as she hasn't been able to work because of her disability and raising her grandchildren. She said it takes a true hero to brave the 30-degree weather when they could be inside warm. On this day, I was providing participants with, "Tips on Stretching Your Food Dollars" so to hear that made me feel like I was doing what I was supposed to be at the right time despite the weather.

NPA: Lakeisha Dugan at the Shining Light Food Pantry Drive-thru Distribution



Jason Morris

Regional Ag Business Specialist

Mississippi County

Agriculture and Environment

Local Impact and Stories

Annie's Project

A new program was delivered in the Southeast Region which involved women in agriculture. More than nine On My Own programs were scheduled throughout the 18 county Southeast Region.

Ag Lenders Seminar

The Ag Lenders Seminar is a multi county programming effort to educate those who work in the field of agriculture finance and those who desire knowledge. This program consists of marketing outlooks, weather forecasts as well as past and current trends related to farming.

Farm Lease Classes

Many questions related to farm leases from producers and landlords are addressed yearly by MU Extension agricultural business specialists. As a relatively new program, several throughout Southeast Missouri participated in this program on-line and in-person. The two primary topics covered were items in a lease and terminating a farm lease. Estimates have 33 percent of farm leases in Missouri are still oral and oral lease termination is complicated and somewhat unique to the state. This program continues to draw participants, and elderly landowners appreciate the in-person option greatly.

Farm Tax Workshops

MU Extension hosted and taught Farm Tax Workshops for farm businesses and farm and ranch families. The content included Corporate Transparency Act, TCJA, estate & gift tax sunset, conservation tax issues, managing high/low-income years, Section 179 and depreciation, sales & exchanges and retirement and social security planning.

Online participants planned to take some action before the end of the year. The planned actions included: reviewing farm records (70%), meeting with tax preparer before the end of the year (67%), communicate with family members (50%) and fifty percent plan to review resources before purchasing begins in 2025.

Beef Producers

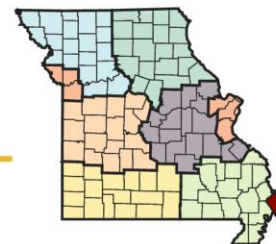
One of the greatest impacts for 2024 was addressing issues and needs which faced Southeast Missouri beef producers. Extension and Ag Business hosted several meetings throughout the year to educate producers regarding weather conditions, marketing options, financial directives and more. MU Extension was involved in or participated in no less than eight cattle related meetings.

Some of the questions and comments were:

"How can I get Dr. Evans to my farm?"
"Will and can he come back next year?"
"Why have we not done this before?"



Missouri Grand Challenges: Local Solutions



MISSISSIPPI COUNTY

Knowing Missouri's Needs

MU Extension asked Missourians to share the greatest challenges they and their communities face.

We heard that feedback and made big changes in the way we work with council and local partners to improve lives. Locally, a network of county engagement and subject matter specialists now share MU's knowledge, research and engagement, targeting programs, information and assistance in:

- agriculture and environment
- youth and family
- business and community
- health and safety

For each grand challenge, MU Extension and Engagement targets a specific gain by 2023:



Economic opportunity

Increase MU Extension and Engagement's economic impact to the State of Missouri from \$1 billion to \$1.5 billion overall, and from \$88 billion to \$100 billion in agriculture, the top economic sector



Educational access and excellence

Increase participation in postsecondary education from 66% to 70%



Health and well-being

Improve Missouri's health ranking from 40th to 35th in the nation

Knowing Local Challenges



CHALLENGE 1: Economic Opportunity: *Labor Market*

Average Earnings per Job

Average earnings per job can reflect the type of economy, skill of employees, and availability of jobs and workers in an area. Average earnings is calculated by dividing total full-time and part-time employment by total earnings. Earnings is the sum of three components of personal income--wages and salaries, supplements to wages and salaries, and proprietors' income. Full-time and part-time jobs are counted at equal weight. Both employment for wages and salaries and proprietors employment are included, but the employment of unpaid family workers and volunteers is not included. Average earnings per job is a measure of the wages paid at jobs in the county not the earnings of people who live in the county. The dollar figures shown are not adjusted for inflation.

2022 Average Earnings (\$)

\$53,001

Mississippi



Missouri \$62,528 🙄

Data Source: US Department of Commerce, [US Bureau of Economic Analysis Regional Economic Accounts](#). 2007-2022.

Labor Force Participation

The labor force participation rate is a measure of an economy's active workforce and includes people who are employed and those seeking employment. According to the 2015 – 2019 American Community Survey, of the 9,765 persons of working age in the report area, 47.89% are included in the labor force. This rate falls short of the Missouri labor force participation rate of 63.12%.

Labor Force Participation Rate

47.89%

Mississippi

Missouri 63.12%

Data Source: US Census Bureau, [American Community Survey](#). 2019-23.

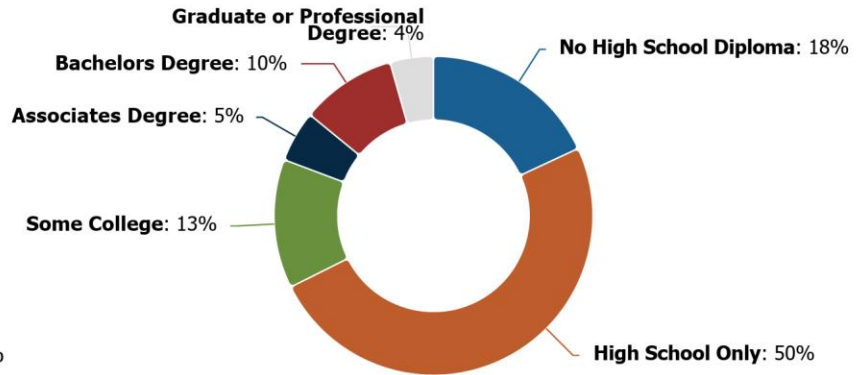


CHALLENGE 2: Educational Access and Excellence: *Educational Attainment*

Adult Educational Attainment

Educational attainment shows the distribution of the highest level of education achieved in the report area, and helps schools and businesses understand the needs of adults, whether it be workforce training or the ability to develop science, technology, engineering, and mathematics opportunities. Educational attainment is calculated for persons over 25 and is an estimated average for the period from 2017 to 2021.

In the report area, 13.1% of adults have at least some college education and 14.9% of adults have an associate's level degree or higher. However, 49.6% stopped their formal educational attainment after completing high school, and 18.1% of adults did not complete high school.



No High School Diploma

18.08%

Missouri 8.41%

Mississippi

Data Source: US Census Bureau, [American Community Survey](#). 2019-23.

Data Source: US Census Bureau, [American Community Survey](#). 2019-23.



CHALLENGE 3: Healthy Futures: *Mental Health*

Deaths of Despair

Untreated mental health conditions, substance abuse, and stress have caused an epidemic of "deaths of despair" across the United States. Research shows that deaths due to suicide, alcohol-related disease, and drug overdose have caused the first decreases in U.S. life expectancy in the 21st century. Within the report area there were an estimated 42 deaths of despair, or 41.11 deaths per 100,000 population between 2011 and 2017. This rate is lower than the state rate of 52.01 per 100,000, and represents an increase of 19.16% since the 2001-2007 report period.

Poor Mental Health Days

Self-reported mental health status is a widely used measure of health-related quality of life. In 2018, adults in the report area averaged of 5.9 mentally unhealthy days per month, which is higher than the state average of 5.3. This measure of mental health status has worsened since 2014, when adults in the report area averaged 5.0 mentally unhealthy days per month.

Average Poor Mental Health Days per Month, 2018

Mortality Rate,
2014-2020
41.11

Missouri 52.01 😞

Mississippi

Mississippi

5.9

Missouri

5.3 😞

Mississippi



Mississippi



Data Source: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, [Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System](#). Accessed via [County Health Rankings](#). 2021.

Data Source: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, [CDC - National Vital Statistics System](#). Accessed via [CDC WONDER](#). 2014-20.



CHALLENGE 4: Agricultural Growth & Stewardship: *Soils Testing*

Recent public initiatives and USDA programs are putting a focus on producers to improve the health of their soil. The USDA-NRCS defines soil health as the continued capacity of the soil to function as a vital, living ecosystem that sustains plants, animals and humans. A variety of practices can improve soil health, including regular monitoring, sampling and testing protocols. The MU Soil and Plant Testing Laboratory provides testing and unbiased, research-based recommendations for economically viable and environmentally safe nutrient management practices across Missouri.

Report Area	Agriculture	Home and Garden	Community Areas	Research	Total
Mississippi	9	5	3	0	17
Missouri	13,742	4,773	421	6,406	25,342

Data Source: [University of Missouri Extension Soil and Plant Testing Laboratory Annual Summary](#). 2022.