



UNIVERSITY OF MISSOURI EXTENSION

Nodaway County 2025

Annual Report



403 N. Market, Room 308
Maryville, MO 64468
660-582-8101

**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

108 Whitten Hall
Columbia, MO 65211

PHONE 573-882-2394

EMAIL cchiggins@missouri.edu

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

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

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

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

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

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

With appreciation,

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

WHO WE ARE

Faculty and Staff



- Debbie Bennett
Field Specialist in Nutrition and Health
- Rachel Brown
Field Specialist in Community Health
- Jim Crawford
Director of Graves Chapple Extension and Engagement Center & Field Specialist in Ag Systems Technology
- Annette Deering
Field Specialist in 4-H Youth Development
- Randa Doty
Extension and Engagement Specialist
- Denice Ferguson
Field Specialist in Agricultural Business
- Wayne Flanary
Field Specialist in Agronomy
- Gwenlyn Funk
Field Specialist in Horticulture
- Katie Pemberton
Field Specialist in Human Development
- Valerie Pickering
Nutrition Program Associate
- Amie Schleicher
Field Specialist in Livestock
- Amanda Smith
Office Manager
- Jackie Spainhower
Field Specialist in Community Development
- Stacey Steffens
Northwest Regional Director
- Amee Wilmes
Youth Program Associate

Council Members



- Charyti Jackson, Chairman
- Nick Freeman, Vice-chairman
- Matt Bax, Secretary
- Scott Walk, Treasurer
- Allison Blackford, Member
- Kristan Barman, Member
- Nicole Honan, Member
- Garrett Louiselle, Member
- Erin Mullins, Member
- Necama Parman, Member
- Steve Schniedermeier, Member
- Lori Spire, Member
- Leon McIntyre, Member

County Commissioners

- Bill Walker
Presiding Commissioner
- Chris Burns
North District Commissioner
- Scott Walk
South District Commissioner

BUDGET AND MORE

Appropriations budget

Income

County Appropriations	33,000
County Direct Pay	547
Messick Trust Funds	2,591
Total Income	\$36,138

Expenses

Programing	817
Salaries/Benefits	20,163
County Paid Phone	532
YPA Expense	5,479
Travel	3,329
Advertising	127
Publishing/Printing	909
Office Supplies/Service	1,948
Insurance	2,043
Repairs	714
Council Election	77
Total Expenses	\$36,137

Contact us:

**University of Missouri Extension in
Nodaway County**
Nodaway County Administration Building
403 N. Market, Room 308
Maryville, MO 64468
660-582-8101
NodawayCo@Missouri.edu

Dear Nodaway County Commissioners and Residents,

We are pleased to share the 2025 Annual Report from the Nodaway County Extension Council, which highlights key educational programs delivered by MU Extension specialists to Nodaway County residents. We sincerely appreciate the support of the county commissioners, partner organizations, and dedicated volunteers, whose contributions make our work possible and help us uphold the MU Extension mission of bringing research-based knowledge and practical resources from the University of Missouri System to communities across Missouri. We invite you to review this year's report and remain committed to helping Nodaway County citizens lead healthy, productive, and engaged lives.

Sincerely,
Charyti Jackson
Nodaway County Extension Council Chair
Randa Doty
MU Extension Northwest Region Extension
Engagement Specialist

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



Local support

Did you know you can donate directly to Nodaway 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 to earn interest forever, 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 Nodaway County](#)



UM SYSTEM COUNTY IMPACTS

MU Extension in Nodaway County Community Impact Report

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

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





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

Missouri 4-H for Ages 8 – 18



What is 4-H?

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

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



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

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



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.

Legend



Agricultural Growth
& Stewardship



Economic
Opportunity



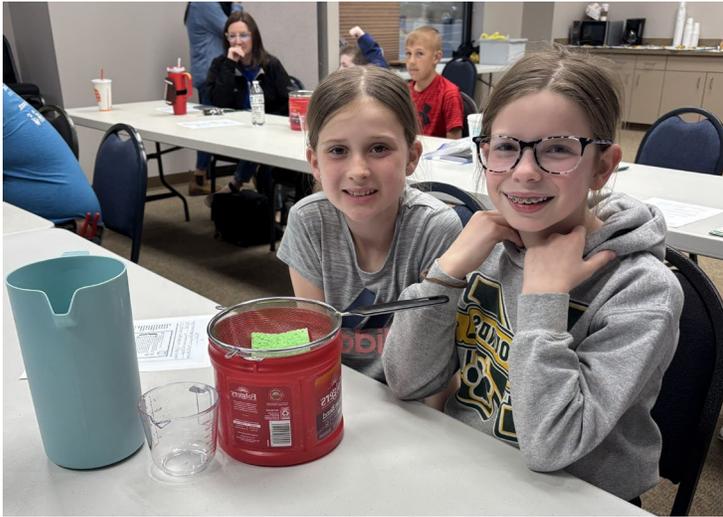
Educational
Access &
Excellence



Health
& Well-Being

Nodaway County

Missouri 4-H



Advancing Agriculture & Animal Science Knowledge

Agriculture remains a foundational learning area for Nodaway County 4-H. Early in the year, the county held its 4-H/FFA Market Beef Weigh Day, where 13 youth brought 16 market beef projects for official weighing, and DNA was collected from 19 projects. These steps prepared youth for rate-of-gain contests at the county fair and livestock shows at the Missouri State Fair.

Education in livestock care and food safety also remained a priority. Through Show-Me Quality Assurance (SMQA) trainings offered on March 27 and April 3, a total of 23 Nodaway County 4-H members earned certification, making them eligible to show food-animal projects at county fairs. Youth learned about animal health, proper management practices, and food safety through hands-on activities such as:

- Drug withdrawal time simulations using colored water, sponges, and strainers.
- Demonstrations of how antibiotics act on bacterial vs. viral infections.

During Nodaway County 4-H Achievement Day (July 7), 69 youth exhibited 341 projects, with 140 exhibits selected for the Missouri State Fair. Fair-week activities continued July 9–12 with livestock shows, demonstrations, fashion revue, ag-tivities on the square, and public exhibits, showcasing youth learning to the broader community.

Participation & Enrollment

Nodaway County experienced strong growth and engagement during the 2024–2025 4-H year:

- 154 youth enrolled in community clubs (an increase of 30 from the previous year).
- 241 total youth served through clubs, school enrichment, special interest programs, and events.
- 32 adult volunteers, adding 10 new volunteers to support positive youth development.



Nodaway County

Missouri 4-H



Growing Skills Through Hands-On Learning

Nodaway County 4-H youth participated in a wide variety of educational experiences that strengthened communication, confidence, problem-solving, and leadership. 4-H Special Activities Night offered youth the opportunity to present speeches, demonstrations, and fashion revue entries.

All participating youth earned Danish placings, and several were selected to present at the Missouri State Fair. Activities included:

- 2 public speeches — both received blue ribbons.
- 7 fashion revue entries — all received blue ribbons.
- 4 working demonstrations — all received blue ribbons.
- 8 general demonstrations — all received blue ribbons.

Youth also expanded academic and career readiness through Youth Futures: College and Careers Within Reach, delivered to 36 Upward Bound high school students at Northwest Missouri State University. Participants explored self-awareness, careers, financial literacy, and college planning, helping them better understand future pathways.

The Eating From the Garden school-enrichment program reached 20 Horace Mann summer school students, who learned about gardening, plant growth, nutrition, and fruits and vegetables. Students planted seeds, observed growth, and integrated math by building planter boxes—applying science and problem-solving skills in real time.



Strengthening Community Engagement & Civic Leadership

Nodaway County youth demonstrated strong community engagement and leadership throughout the year.

On 4-H Day at the Capitol, five local youth joined hundreds of Missouri 4-H members in Jefferson City to meet legislators, practice civic advocacy, and learn about state government.

Across the county, 4-H clubs contributed to community events and public outreach:

- Free Seed Library Project: Nodaway County 4-H clubs helped distribute more than 600 packets of free vegetable, fruit, and flower seeds across multiple sites, gaining customer-service and communication experience.
- Downtown Maryville Market — Spring Into Fun Day: Youth volunteered in children's activity areas during an event attended by more than 1,500 community members, strengthening teamwork and public-facing skills.
- Graham Farmers Market: Nodaway County's oldest 4-H club staffed registration tables, assisted vendors, set up market spaces, and even operated their own booths. Youth practiced entrepreneurship, financial decision-making, and community service while supporting a weekly gathering place for local families.



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

Agriculture and Environment



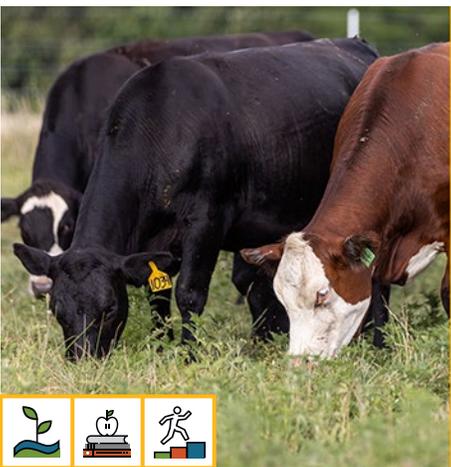
The **Missouri Master Gardener** program enables people of all ages to get in-depth horticultural training and apply what they've learned to improve their communities and educate others about gardening.



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



The **Missouri Agriculture, Food and Forestry Innovation Center** (MAFFIC) provides dedicated technical assistance to help value-added agricultural producers launch or expand their businesses. Through personalized support in marketing, product development, business planning and financial analysis, MAFFIC business counselors equip producers with the knowledge and tools needed for success. Each year, these free services reach more than 150 producers, driving innovation and growth in Missouri agriculture.



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

Legend



Agricultural Growth & Stewardship



Economic Opportunity



Educational Access & Excellence



Health & Well-Being

Agriculture and Environment

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.

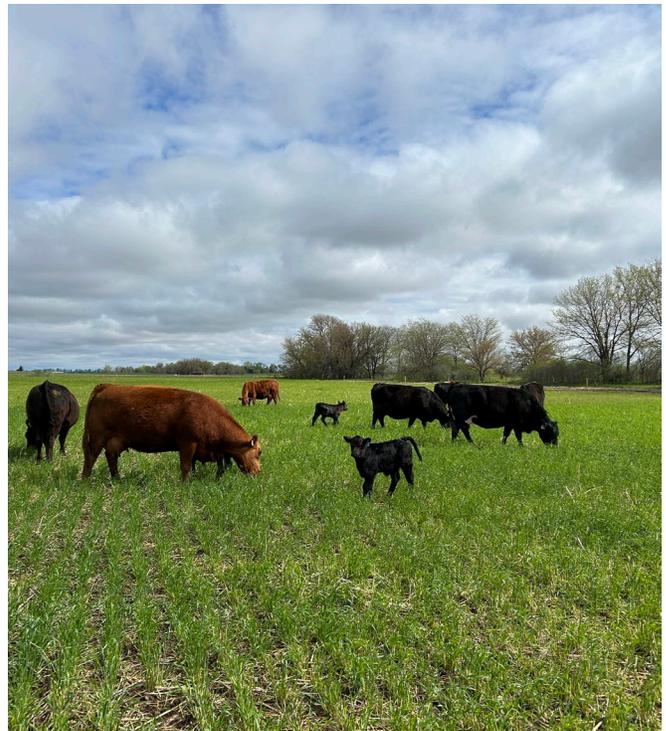
Following Private Applicator Training, Extension agriculture staff expanded learning through “hot topic” sessions addressing emerging issues and innovations in horticulture, agricultural engineering, agronomy, livestock production, and agricultural business. Additional specialized training was also provided 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.

Pasture-Based Livestock Production Series

A three-night training series in Maryville engaged five producers from Nodaway and Gentry Counties in deep, practical learning on pasture management. Participants explored how to assess and improve pastures, identify desirable and undesirable forage species, set appropriate stocking rates, implement grazing rotations, and make reseeding decisions. The final session focused on drought management, critical knowledge for northwest Missouri producers, covering strategies to maintain pasture productivity and stretch forage supplies during challenging seasons.

Hands-on elements such as live forage identification, grazing stick demonstrations, and herbicide label review helped producers build confidence in applying these practices at home. The skills gained support long-term pasture health, improved forage utilization, and more resilient livestock operations across the region.



Agriculture and Environment



Three-State Beef Conference

The 40th annual Three-State Beef Conference continued to be a major educational event for local beef producers, drawing 37 participants in Maryville and reaching another 72 producers in Iowa and Nebraska. Attendees learned about the genetics of calving, yearling bull management, and the latest research on pinkeye (all topics that directly influence herd health and profitability). Producers also worked through practical bull-buying exercises using EPDs, helping them confidently apply genetic tools to real-world decisions.

The conference strengthened the local beef industry by improving producers' ability to manage herd health challenges, make informed breeding selections, and respond to emerging livestock issues. Its multi-state format also enhanced networking and knowledge-sharing, creating stronger regional connections that benefit farms across Atchison, Holt, and Nodaway Counties.



Women in Agriculture Programs

Women producers across Atchison, Holt, and Nodaway Counties continued to benefit from a mix of in-person and virtual learning opportunities. The Atchison, Holt, and Nodaway Women in Agriculture event was held in August, which featured demonstrations, a keynote presentation, vendors, and networking opportunities.

Participants also attended the year-round "Pixels of Production" webinars, which covered topics such as small-ruminant health, the use of artificial intelligence in marketing, and nutritional strategies for pregnant beef cows.

These programs strengthen participants' confidence, technical knowledge, and leadership presence within the agricultural community. With consistent positive feedback and strong multi-agency collaboration, Women in Agriculture programming continues to enhance the visibility and capacity of women working in agriculture throughout the region.

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 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.



Advancing Precision Agriculture and Innovation

Eighteen producers and agricultural professionals participated in the Utilizing Drones in Missouri Agriculture Workshop at Graves-Chapple. Attendees represented multiple counties and engaged in both classroom instruction and hands-on training focused on safe, legal, and effective drone use. Community impacts from this programming include:

Improved understanding of drone regulations and licensing, reducing risk and liability for producers

Increased capacity for precision application of pesticides and cover crops, supporting environmental stewardship

Enhanced decision-making related to technology adoption, saving time and input costs for farm operations

By supporting informed adoption of emerging technologies, this program helped producers remain competitive while protecting both natural resources and public trust in agriculture.



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

Business and Community



The annual **Connecting Entrepreneurial Communities** conference is designed for stakeholders, economic developers, businesses, local government, educators and nonprofits interested in increasing their communities' potential for entrepreneurship. In 2023, the conference offered breakout sessions in Benton County's shops and businesses, providing firsthand insight into the world of entrepreneurial communities.

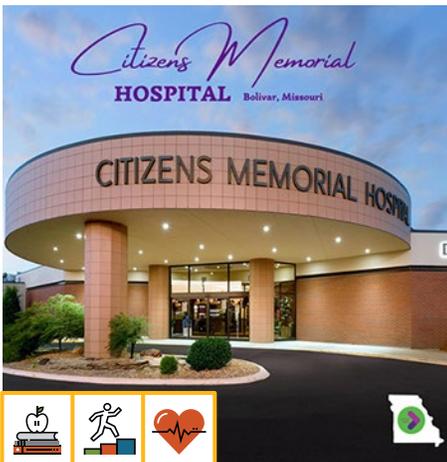
The conference drew 104 ATTENDEES, generating an estimated initial economic impact of around \$33,000 for Benton County.



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.

Legend



Agricultural Growth & Stewardship



Economic Opportunity



Educational Access & Excellence



Health & Well-Being

Business and Community

Workforce Development

In 2025, MU Extension advanced a statewide workforce development initiative through a series of regional summits to strengthen Missouri's workforce ecosystem. As part of this effort, MU Extension hosted a Northwest Region Workforce Summit in Maryville in October and assisted with the Virtual Workforce Summit in November. These events brought together stakeholders from public, nonprofit, and private sectors to review regional workforce data, identify gaps, and explore collaborative solutions. Across seven summits held statewide, 263 individuals participated in presentations and roundtable discussions, fostering meaningful dialogue and capturing real-time insights into workforce challenges and opportunities. Many participants were new to MU Extension, expanding our reach and fostering new partnerships. In Northwest Missouri, key education and training providers partnered with the summit, including Northwest Missouri State University, North Central Community College, Missouri Western State University, and MU Extension, ensuring strong representation from Northwest Missouri higher education and workforce training organizations.

The summits produced actionable findings that will shape future programming and policy efforts. Feedback highlighted increased use of workforce data dashboards, greater awareness of available resources, and strong interest in addressing employment barriers and retention strategies. For Northwest Missouri, the most significant impacts included:

- Raising awareness of workforce resources and data tools for planning and recruitment.
- Strengthening partnerships among employers, nonprofits, and higher education institutions.
- Identifying critical workforce gaps and training needs to guide future MU Extension programming.
- Increasing engagement in strategies to overcome employment barriers.
- Positioning the region as a key contributor to statewide workforce development efforts.

Looking ahead, MU Extension will build on this momentum by analyzing and sharing summit findings in early 2026, conducting follow-up visits to deepen stakeholder engagement, and aligning training programs with identified needs. This will ensure that the insights gained from the summits translate into tangible workforce development outcomes for Missouri and the Northwest region.



Business and Communities

Community Development



Strengthening Food Systems and Food Access

Food access and local food systems were a major focus of community development efforts in 2025, particularly in Nodaway and Harrison Counties.

In Nodaway County, more than 50 residents and community partners participated in the MO EATs Community Forum, where four key priorities were identified to address local food access:

- Building a community food support network
- Establishing new and expanded markets for local food
- Expanding farmers' markets
- Creating a starter farmer program

These priorities spurred ongoing subcommittee work and focus groups, laying the groundwork for coordinated, long-term food system improvements.

In November, food pantries, meal programs, and community partners from across Nodaway County gathered for a Local Food Network Roundtable. Participants identified shared challenges—including transportation barriers, stigma, limited access to fresh produce, and chronic health conditions—and explored collaborative solutions such as joint food drives, volunteer sharing, coordinated transportation, and future grant partnerships. Each participating pantry received a complementary food box to support immediate community needs.

Together, these efforts strengthened relationships, improved coordination among service providers, and positioned communities to respond more effectively to growing food access needs.

MU Extension's Community Development Programming

In 2025, MU Extension's community development work in Northwest Missouri focused on strengthening people, places, and systems to foster belonging, build leadership, and support long-term community vitality. Serving ten highly rural counties, this work emphasized facilitation, capacity building, and collaboration. As a result, connecting residents, organizations, and institutions through intentional, place-based efforts.

Belonging & Contribution

Nodaway County demonstrated strong civic engagement through food systems work:

- 32 participants in the Missouri EATs Public Forum
- 22 participants in a Missouri EATs Focus Group
- 9 participants in a Local Food Forum

These efforts strengthened trust, collaboration, and shared understanding of food access needs.

Leadership

Leadership capacity was expanded through participation in the CEC Conference (4) and the Northwest Missouri Workforce Summit (29 participants), addressing workforce and economic challenges through collaboration.

Vitality

Economic resilience was strengthened through Digital Marketing Workshops (16 participants) and CEC Exchange Webinars (9), improving business support, nonprofit capacity, and food system coordination across the county.



Nodaway County

Business and Communities



Supporting Community Vitality and Economic Collaboration

Community vitality was advanced through systems-level work that strengthened organizations, encouraged cross-sector collaboration, and improved access to resources.

The **Connecting Entrepreneurial Communities (CEC)** initiative continued to be a cornerstone of regional economic development. In 2025:

165 people attended the **CEC Conference** in Excelsior Springs

Participants represented **46 Missouri counties, 81 ZIP codes, and 18 individuals from outside the state**

Attendees reported a **55% increase in knowledge**, with many expressing enthusiasm to apply new strategies for entrepreneurship, youth engagement, and neighboring in their communities

Monthly **CEC Exchange Webinars** engaged **34 Northwest Missouri participants**, sharing real-world examples of collaboration and community-driven economic growth.

In addition, **digital marketing workshops** were delivered in **five Northwest Missouri counties**, with **over 30 participants** learning how to integrate digital and traditional marketing tools to strengthen businesses, nonprofits, and community initiatives.

The 2026 CEC conference will be held in Maryville!

Regional Impact and Momentum

Throughout 2025, MU Extension Community Development served as a trusted convener and connector across Northwest Missouri by bringing together residents, organizations, and institutions to address local challenges and build on community strengths. Whether supporting nonprofit governance, improving food access, strengthening leadership, or fostering collaboration, these efforts helped rural communities build the capacity, confidence, and relationships necessary for long-term success.

MU Extension Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA)

The VITA program hosted at the Nodaway County Extension Center provided free tax preparation for individuals and families with low to moderate incomes, ensuring access to refunds and credits that might otherwise go unclaimed. From February to mid-April, volunteers contributed 139 hours, filing 82 returns for 102 individuals, resulting in estimated savings of \$20,500 in client preparation costs. Services also included assistance with identity protection through IRS PINs.

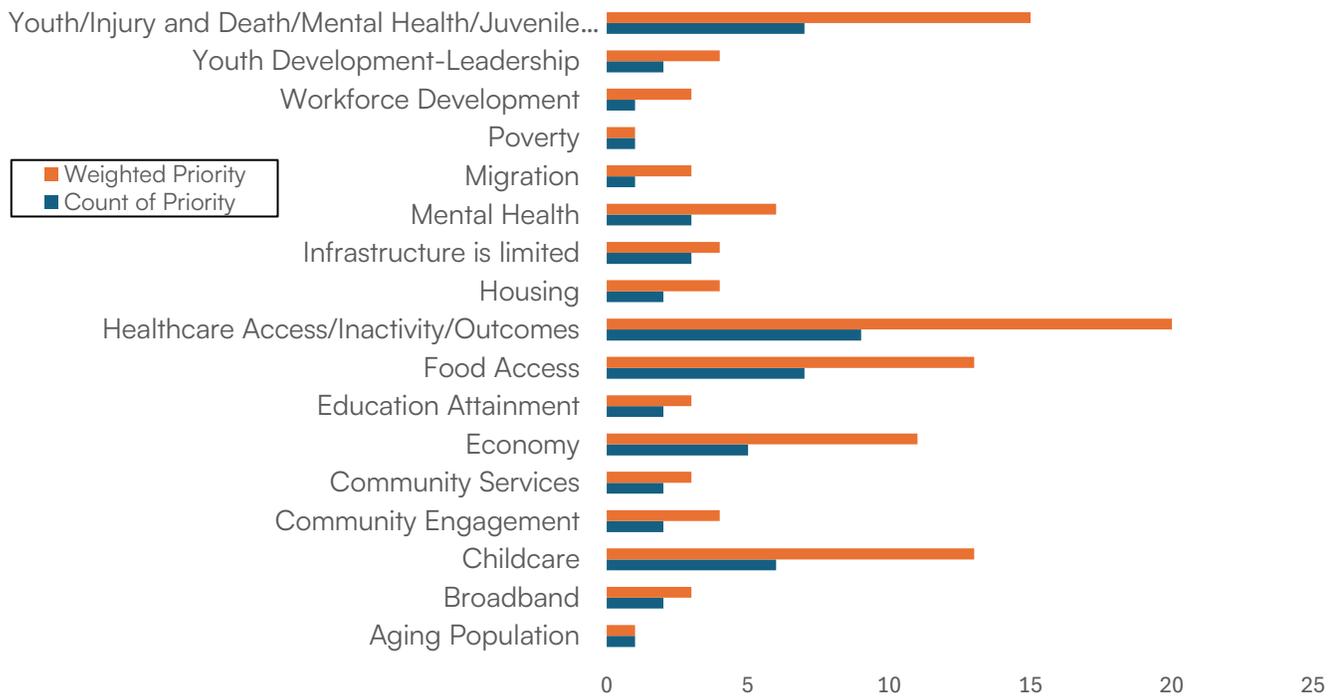
Fifty-four Nodaway County residents participated in the VITA program.

Key Impacts:

- Free tax preparation for 82 returns
- \$20,500 in tax preparation cost savings for individuals
- Identity protection for compromised taxpayers
- The VITA program continues to strengthen financial stability for residents of Northwest Missouri through volunteer-driven support.

Council Strategy Focused Collaboration

Northwest Region Data Review and Issue Prioritization



Council Strategy Focused Collaboration

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.

This initiative enabled councils to utilize data more strategically, thereby strengthening decision-making and enhancing local impact. By blending statewide data with community insight, councils identified top needs, set clear priorities, and plan to deliver programs that directly address local concerns. The Northwest EES team gathered information across the region, which was shared with stakeholders and legislators.





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

Health and Human Sciences



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



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.



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

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

Legend



Agricultural Growth & Stewardship



Economic Opportunity



Educational Access & Excellence



Health & Well-Being



Strengthening Mobility, Balance, and Independence for Older Adults

Across the region, Tai Chi for Arthritis & Fall Prevention and Stay Strong, Stay Healthy programs played a key role in helping older adults maintain independence, reduce fall risk, and improve strength and balance.

In Nodaway County, more than 85 residents participated in Tai Chi and Stay Strong, Stay Healthy Level 1 and Level 2 classes offered at the Maryville Community Center. Ages ranged from the early 60s to the late 90s. Post-course assessments showed that the vast majority of participants improved balance, strength, flexibility, and mobility, with many reporting increased confidence in continuing exercises independently. Several classes documented improvements on standardized fitness measures such as the 10-meter walk test, chair stands, and balance holds—key indicators of functional independence. Class fees for adults aged 60 and older were covered through partnerships with Young at Heart Resources, removing a significant financial barrier to participation.

Collectively, these programs supported safer aging in place, reduced fall risk, and encouraged continued physical activity across multiple rural communities.



Strengthening Community Health: 2025 SNAP-Ed & EFNEP Impact in Nodaway County

In 2025, SNAP-Ed and EFNEP continued to improve nutrition security and community health across Nodaway County through school-based education, university partnerships, and outreach at health fairs and food pantries. These programs equipped youth, adults, and families with practical skills to make healthier food choices, increase physical activity, and manage limited food budgets.

SNAP-Ed provided 5,765 educational contacts throughout the county, reaching students at Eugene Field and Northeast Nodaway schools and supporting food-insecure college students through partnerships at Northwest Missouri State University. EFNEP enrolled eight youth and adult participants, helping limited-resource families build foundational skills in meal planning and preparation.

Key Impacts

- 5,765 SNAP-Ed contacts delivered through classes, health fairs, and pantry outreach.
- Eight EFNEP participants completed youth or adult nutrition education.
- Show Me Nutrition reached 136 Eugene Field students and 69 Northeast Nodaway students across Pre-K—2nd grade.
- Continued outreach at the Nodaway County Health Department and Bearcat Food Pantry expanded access to research-based nutrition education.

Together, SNAP-Ed and EFNEP strengthened community well-being, supported healthier daily habits, and contributed to long-term improvements in quality of life for Nodaway County residents.



Improving Nutrition Security and Food Skills Across the Lifespan Nutrition Education in Correctional and Recovery Settings

In **Nodaway County**, nutrition education at the **Maryville Treatment Center**, a Missouri Department of Corrections facility serving individuals in substance use disorder treatment, reached **more than 40 residents** across multiple four-lesson series. Participants gained practical skills in understanding food groups, reading nutrition labels, managing chronic disease risk, and shopping wisely. Residents shared that improved nutrition knowledge helped them make healthier, lower-sodium food choices, supporting recovery and long-term well-being. Nutrition education was integrated into the facility's broader **Reentry 2030 goals**, which aim to reduce recidivism and improve successful reentry.

Reducing Food Waste and Stretching Food Dollars

The **Freeze It!** program, newly developed by MU Extension, was delivered in **Maryville (Nodaway County)** at Northwest Technical School. Nine participants attended four sessions focused on food safety, freezing techniques, meal planning, and food storage. Participants reported increased confidence in freezing meals, milk, meat, and sauces, and shared that they planned to use pre-planning and proper storage strategies to reduce food waste. The program fee was fully covered through grant funding, ensuring access regardless of income.

Maternal and Family Nutrition Education

A statewide **Cooking Matters Maternal Nutrition Education Program**, delivered virtually and supported through Missouri Medicaid Managed Care Organizations, reached pregnant individuals at risk for food insecurity. Participants received groceries delivered to their homes and prepared meals alongside nutrition specialists via Zoom. In 2025, Debbie Bennett co-taught a cohort serving eight participants, with feedback highlighting improved confidence in cooking healthy meals and incorporating nutrition knowledge into family routines.

In addition, **Eating Healthy on a Budget** sessions at the Maryville Public Library helped participants learn cost-saving strategies while preparing healthy recipes at home, further supporting household food security.

Nodaway County

County Highlights



2025 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. In 2025, the Leaders Honor Roll recipients are Don Laughlin and Bridget Kenny.

Missouri Century Farm Award

Madden Farms—owned by Raymond Madden and his sons, Jeff and Scott—has been in the family since 1923. The 80-acre farm near Graham marks over a century of continuous family stewardship, reflecting the Maddens' long-standing commitment to their land and community.

2025 Missouri State Fair Farm Family

The McGary family of Maryville (Brian, Jayla, Kollin, and Addysin) was honored as the 2025 Nodaway County, Missouri, Farm Family during the 68th annual Missouri Farm Family Day at the Missouri State Fair on August 11. Selected by University of Missouri Extension and the Nodaway County Farm Bureau, the family was recognized for their involvement in production agriculture, strong community engagement, and participation in youth development programs such as 4-H and FFA.



Nodaway County

County Highlights



2025 Ag Hall of Fame Inductees — John L. and Sue Schenkel

John L. and Sue Schenkel were inducted into the 2025 Nodaway County Agriculture Hall of Fame for their lifelong dedication to farming and their deep family roots in Nodaway County. For more than six decades, they operated a diverse livestock and crop farm while prioritizing soil conservation and mentoring agriculture students. John served in several agricultural and community leadership roles, and Sue supported both the farm and local youth through her work in schools, the church, and community groups. Their greatest pride is the continuation of their multigenerational family farm, now carried on by their son, daughter-in-law, and grandson.



2025 Ag Hall of Fame Inductees — Tom Zweifel

Tom Zweifel was inducted into the 2025 Nodaway County Agriculture Hall of Fame for his lifelong commitment to agricultural education and his impact on generations of students. Over a 34-year career at Northwest Missouri State University, he taught a wide range of crop science courses and advised the Agronomy Club, helping support FFA chapters statewide through educational materials and fundraising efforts. His excellence as an educator earned him national and state honors, including the Delta Tau Alpha National Outstanding Teacher Advisor Award and an Honorary State FFA Degree. Today, he continues sharing his passion for agriculture through garden research and by inspiring his grandchildren to appreciate the natural world.

