



UNIVERSITY OF MISSOURI EXTENSION

# Vernon County

# 2024 Annual Report



**SERVE  
MISSOURI.**

**DELIVER  
MIZZOU.**

University of Missouri Extension –  
Vernon Co.  
100 W. Cherry, Ste. 2  
Nevada, MO 64772

417-448-2560



## 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  
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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

Vernon County 417-448-2560

Mikayla Neil, Extension Engagement Specialist  
Diane Blankenship, Youth Program Associate  
Thabena Bower, 4-H Youth Program Associate  
Mellissia Butler, Nutrition Program Associate  
Linda Clinton, Field Specialist in 4-H Youth Development  
Paul Gray, FNEP Program Manager  
Jo Lynne Crowe, Secretary

Bates Co. support for Vernon Co. 660-679-4167

Ramon Arancibia, Horticulture Specialist  
Sara Bridgewater, Nutrition/Health Ed. Field Specialist

Cass Co. support for Vernon Co. 816-380-8460

Kyleigh Sullivan, Field Specialist in Human Development

Cedar Co. support for Vernon Co. 417-276-3313

Patrick Davis, Livestock Specialist

Phelps Co. support for Vernon Co. 573-882-7441

Travin Shelton, Field Specialist in Business Development

MSSU support for Vernon Co. 417-625-9557

Lisa Robinson, Director, MSSU SBDC  
Ken Surbrugg, Business Development

## Council members

### Officers

Mike Buehler, Chairman  
Mary Tippie, Vice-chairman  
Sheree Gayman, Secretary  
Scott Pritchett, Treasurer

### Members at Large

Amanda Ast  
Ganga Fernando  
Lindsey Lechman  
Shelby Lightwine  
Missy Wehmeyer  
Kevin Williams  
Frank Wilson  
Hazel Wilson

### Area Representation

Cindy Thompson, County Commission  
Jim Bell, Farm Bureau

### State Legislators

Dane Diehl, Representative  
Sandy Crawford, Senator

## County executives

### Vernon County Commissioners

Joe Wilson, Presiding Commissioner  
Cindy Thompson, Northern Commissioner  
Everett Wolfe, Southern Commissioner

# Budget and more

## Appropriations budget

### Income

County Appropriations	55,500.00
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>64,031.93</b>

### Expenses

Salaries/Benefits	41,721.31
Travel	4,777.96
Telephone	774.79
Office Supplies/Service	6,534.15
Insurance	1,962.58
Tests/Resales/4-H	4,930.65
<b>Total Expenses</b>	<b>60,697.44</b>

## Vernon County partners

### Area Schools

Bronaugh Schools

NEVC Schools

Sheldon Schools

Community Center

Home Schools

Farmer's Market

Girl Scouts

MO-KAN Square Dancers

Nevada Schools

Benton

Middle School

Neil Senior Center

United Way of Vernon County

Vernon County Youth Fair

Vernon County Youth Fair Board

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

## Local Support

Did you know you can donate directly to Vernon 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.



# Vernon County



University of Missouri System

COLUMBIA | KANSAS CITY | ROLLA | ST. LOUIS

## UM System Footprint in the county in 2024



### FY24 county students

**25 students**

- 17 Undergraduates
- 8 Graduate and professional students
- 20 Full-time students
- 5 Part-time students



### County employees and retirees

**14 people employed by UM**

- 13 Campuses
- 1 MU Health Care (includes additional employees gained via the recent integration of Capital Region Medical Center)

8 UM retirees and beneficiaries

UM salary and retirement income:

\$845,420

UM state tax revenue: \$25,115

UM federal tax revenue: \$107,674



### County alumni

**Selected school alumni**

- 8 Medicine
- 13 Nursing
- 14 Health Professions
- 5 Dentistry
- 10 Pharmacy
- 4 Optometry
- 6 Veterinary Medicine
- 56 Agriculture
- 33 Engineering
- 16 Law

**Alumni teaching K-12**

- 15 teachers
- 6.1% of all district teachers
- 1 principal or administrator
- 7.1% of all district principals and administrators



### County breakdown

**MU**

- 16 students
- 192 alumni
- 12 employees

**UMKC**

- 6 students
- 76 alumni
- 1 employee

**Missouri S&T**

- 3 students
- 29 alumni
- 0 employees

**UMSL**

- 0 students
- 12 alumni
- 0 employees



### County properties and offices

MU Extension in: Vernon County



County population: 19,713



### County services provided

**Health care (FY24)**

- 53 in-state patients seen at MU Health Care, with \$103,496 of uncompensated care
- 16 in-state patients seen at UMKC School of Dentistry with a statewide average of \$52.57 per patient in uncompensated care
- MU Health Care's Missouri Telehealth Network recorded 37 visits to 19 patients having ZIP codes associated with the county

**Extension (2023)**

- 6,672 Total educational contacts from MU Extension to residents of the county, including:
  - 252 contacts related to productive farming, better gardening, and managing natural resources
  - 6,272 contacts related to healthy eating and aging, strengthening families, personal finance, or youth development
  - 22 contacts related to starting businesses, developing community leaders, or renewing the local economy

# Vernon County



# University of Missouri System

COLUMBIA | KANSAS CITY | ROLLA | ST. LOUIS

## UM System Statewide Footprint

### Economic and Community Development Highlights

- In FY23, Business Development Specialists worked with small businesses and entrepreneurs statewide to create or retain 98,527 jobs.



For every dollar invested from 2019 to 2021, the MU Extension Business Development Program has returned \$133 in economic impact for its clients by increasing sales more than \$1.6 billion. For a total impact of \$3.1 billion, the program has generated more than 37,000 jobs and attracted nearly \$451 million in capital investments and \$1.5 billion in government contracts.

- Between FY18 and FY23, UM System brought Missouri more than \$1.58 billion in federal and private research funds, funded primarily from outside the state, but spent within the state.



In FY24, UM System was issued 29 patents and filed 69 new U.S. patent applications.

- In FY24, the UM System awarded 707 design and construction project contracts throughout Missouri, for a total investment of \$287.3 million in the state.



In FY24, to improve access to medical and health related services, MU Health Care's Missouri Telehealth Network's Show-Me ECHO program provided 16,687 hrs of case-based instruction to 3,113 learners located in 105 of 114 Missouri counties and the city of St. Louis.

### Education and Training Provided



40,542 police, fire fighters, and medical professionals attending continuing education (2023)



Agriculture and natural resource programs served 369,077 farmers and related businesses (2023)

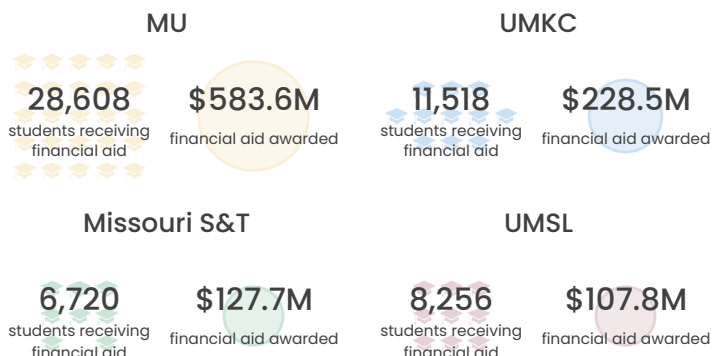


210,577 youth and stakeholder educational contacts in 4-H clubs, schools, camps and other programs (2023)

### Education Highlights

#### FY24 Financial Aid Awards

In FY24, 69.7% of the UM System's 79,014 students received financial aid totaling \$1.048 billion



UM System's MOREnet (Missouri Research and Education Network) provides internet connectivity, access, support and training to 58 higher education institutions (230,000 students), 484 K-12 school districts (830,000 students) and 134 public libraries (serving nearly 3 million Missourians) in 2023.

- UM System awarded 50.5% of the 31,689 Bachelor's or higher degrees awarded by Missouri four-year public institutions in 2023-24.
- UM System awarded 35.0% of the 1,776 research doctorates and 26.8% of the 3,796 professional doctorates awarded by Missouri public and not-for-profit private institutions in 2023-24.
- In FY24, UM System's \$30.7 million in National Science Foundation (NSF) grants represented 96.9% of all NSF grants made to Missouri public colleges and universities.
- In 2024, over 12,400 Missourians accessed mobroadband.org, part of the UM System Broadband Initiative which helped the statewide build-out of high-speed internet infrastructure.

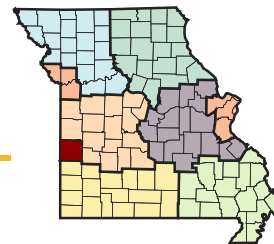
Supporting the University of Missouri is an investment in the future of Missouri.

The university advances Missouri citizens and communities through its mission of teaching, research, public service, and economic development across our four campuses and University of Missouri Extension.

Prepared in December 2024, based on the best available and most recent data. Data Sources include: Missouri Office of Administration • UM IR • MU Institute for Public Policy • Center for Applied Research and Engagement Systems (CARES) • MU • UMKC • Missouri S&T • UMSL • UM System • UM Health Care • MU Extension • US Census Bureau • US Dept. of Health and Human Services • National Science Foundation



# Missouri Grand Challenges: Local Solutions



VERNON 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

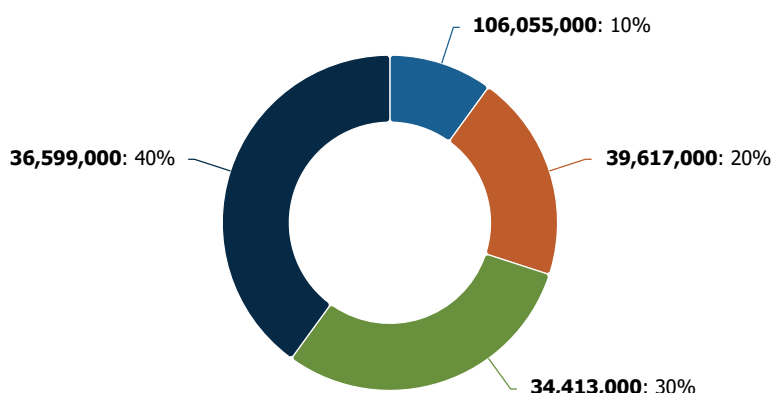
## Knowing Local Challenges



### CHALLENGE 1: Economic Opportunity: *Agricultural Economics*

## Leading Agricultural Products

Total Rank (Sales): \$10



Data Source: US Department of Agriculture, National Agricultural Statistics Service, [Census of Agriculture](#). 2022.

## Net Farm Income

Net farm income (total sales, government payments, and other farm-related income minus total farm expenses) reflects the strength of the local agricultural community and can be an important measure for lenders and policy makers. The report area had a combined net farm income of \$96,331,000 in 2017, an average of \$77,623 per farm. This compares favorably to the statewide average farm income of \$56,606.

Report Area	Total Farms	Average Farm Income
Vernon	1,241	\$77,623
Missouri	87,887	\$56,606

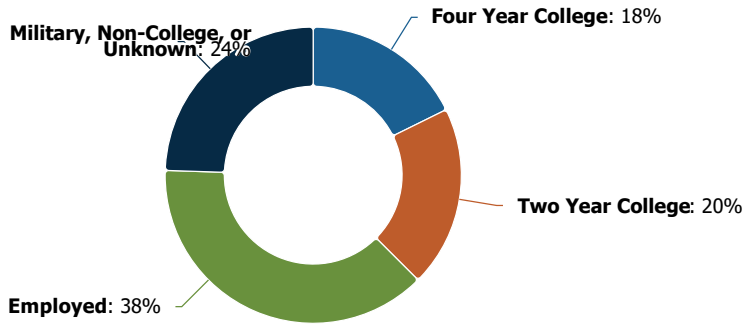
Data Source: US Department of Agriculture, National Agricultural Statistics Service, [Census of Agriculture](#). 2022.



## CHALLENGE 2: Educational Access and Excellence: *College and Career Readiness*

### Post High School Report

The 12-month post-graduation activity of recent high school graduates can inform communities about postsecondary education, career readiness, and characteristics of the future workforce. In 2022, of 192 graduates surveyed in the report area, 34 went to a four-year college, 38 to a two-year college, 73 directly entered the job market. The remaining 47 are reported as in the military, not in college, or unknown.



Data Source: [Missouri Department of Elementary & Secondary Education](#). 2022.



## CHALLENGE 3: Healthy Futures: *Healthy Aging*

### Fall Injuries

Falls are the leading cause of injury-related fatality and hospitalization among older adults in the United States. Between 2013 and 2015, adults over age 65 in the report area had 798 hospital or emergency room admissions for fall and jump-related injuries. The rate of these injuries was 6,508 per 100,000 population, which is higher than the state rate of 5,396. Falls hospitalizations have increased since the 2001-03 time period when the rate was 5,697.

#### Rate per 100,000, 2019-2021



Data Source: US Department of Health & Human Services, [Missouri Department of Health & Senior Services](#). 2019-2021.

### Primary Care Providers

Older adults make up a historically large percentage of the U.S. population, and meeting the healthcare needs of an aging population can be challenging. In the report area, there are approximately 5 primary care physicians (MDs and DOs) to serve the area's 4,033 residents over the age of 65. The patient-provider ratio in the report area is 807:1, which means there is 1 provider for every 807 older adults. The ratio of adults to providers in the report area is higher than the state average of 250:1, which means there are fewer providers per person in this area.

#### Rate per 100,000 Seniors



Data Source: US Department of Health & Human Services, Health Resources and Services Administration, [HRSA - Area Health Resource File](#). 2021.



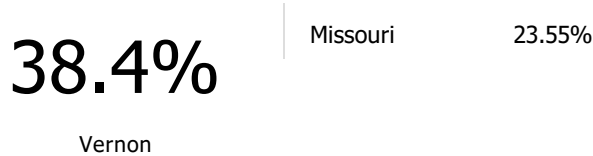


## CHALLENGE 4: Agricultural Growth & Stewardship: *Agricultural Economy*

### Jobs Derived

Missouri has a diverse agriculture industry, strong in crops and livestock, as well as food and forestry processing industries. These industries remain a significant part of Missouri's economy, supporting more than 1 in every 10 jobs, on average. In 2021, agriculture, forestry, and related industries in Missouri were estimated to contribute: 456,618 jobs, \$93.7 billion in output and \$31.8 billion in household income. [Learn more about Missouri Agriculture's Economic Impact.](#)

#### Percent of Jobs Derived from Agriculture

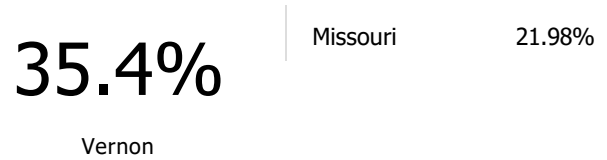


Data Source: Missouri Department of Agriculture, [Missouri Agricultural and Small Business Development Authority](#). 2021.

### Value Added

Value-added agriculture refers to production, manufacturing, marketing or other services that increase the value of primary agricultural commodities. In 2021, the total value-added derived from agriculture, forestry and related economic activity was an estimated \$34.9 billion. Meat processing, food processing, animal and pet food manufacturing, and crop production and related industries are Missouri's top value-added products: \$9.5 billion and 155,425 jobs from livestock production and related industries alone. [Learn more about Missouri Agriculture's Economic Impact.](#)

#### Percent of Total Value Added from Agriculture



Data Source: Missouri Department of Agriculture, [Missouri Agricultural and Small Business Development Authority](#). 2021.



# MU EXTENSION **Serves MISSOURI and Delivers MIZZOU**

through credible statewide programs

## Missouri 4-H for ages 8 – 18



**Community clubs** are organized by volunteer club leaders and teams of recognized volunteers. Members attend club meetings, elect officers, enroll in projects and plan learning and community service activities. Some clubs opt to be single-project clubs, where all members focus on the same project.



**4-H Natural Resources programs** employ hands-on activities in climate science, environmental sustainability, renewable energy, sportfishing and wildlife conservation. The **Shooting Sports program**, which teaches marksmanship, safe firearm use, hunting and archery principles, is a prime illustration of how 4-H programs promote holistic youth development and responsible citizenship. Supported by caring adult leaders, these programs offer opportunities to cultivate life skills, self-worth and conservation ethics.



**Missouri 4-H Agriculture and STEM programs** employ hands-on activities that foster problem-solving, creativity, critical thinking and exploration in engineering and technology. Agriculture programming emphasizes biology, environmental science, agri-science, veterinary science and engaging activities such as animal care and agronomy. STEM programs delve into computer science, robotics, aerospace, physics, chemistry and veterinary science.



### Legend



Agricultural Growth & Stewardship



Economic Opportunity



Educational Access & Excellence

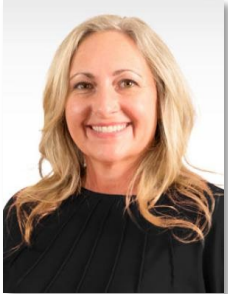


Health & Well-Being

# Vernon County

## Missouri 4-H

### Local Impact



**Linda Clinton**  
Field Specialist in 4-H  
Youth Development



**Thabena Bower**  
Youth Program  
Associate

#### Number of Vernon County residents served

- 349 4-H Members
- 128 Trained Adult Volunteers
- 440 Youth participating in 4-H Short Term Projects
- 108 Youth participating in School Enrichment

#### Accomplishments

Vernon County 4-H serves youth through 14 organized clubs. The youth of Vernon County have demonstrated learning through the following activities:

#### County Activities

- 1 State Shooting Sports Ambassador
- 92 Club Officers
- 12 County Council Officers
- 4 4-H Council Advisors
- 1163 Projects registered by members.
- 554 Projects registered by leaders.
- 4-Hers also participate in many local events such as county 4-H Council Meetings, County-Wide Fundraiser, County Lock-In at the fairgrounds, Clover Kid's Day, Vernon County Youth Fair, 4-H Expo, recognition celebration and community service activities.
- 1779 projects (livestock and non-livestock) showed at the Vernon County Youth Fair.
- 39 project records completed by 41 members.
- 43 Missouri Report Forms were completed and judged at the county level.
- 12 Missouri Report Forms were completed and judged at the regional level.
- 3 members attended National Congress for their Missouri Report Form.
- The county 4-H Expo was attended by 21 returning members and 16 potential new members, signed on 9 new members.
- A spin club for Clover Kids to meet monthly is available for the whole county.
- Spin Clubs was held for Exploring and Bikes.
- 1 council member attends the County Extension Council meetings as a Liaison from the 4-H Council.
- 8 clubs participated in the County Window Display during the state 4-H Week in October.
- Several members/clubs rang the bell at Wal-Mart as part of the Salvation Army Red Kettle Campaign.
- The 4-H Council hosted the Chamber Luncheon of 25 members at the Vernon County Youth Fair.
- The 4-H Council hosted the Rotary Luncheon of 26 members at the Vernon County Youth Fair.

# Vernon County

## Missouri 4-H

### Local Impact

#### County Activities Cont.

- 6 Projects now have County Wide Leaders.
- Several clubs participated in Lights at Spring Street Park. Donations were taken to help various organizations.
- Backroads, Bronaugh and Lone Star helped with the Vietnam Appreciation Day.
- Hustlers 4-H Club helped with Wreaths across America and the Vernon County Prom Dress Event.
- 51 members/friends attended the County Wide Lock-In at the Fairgrounds
- The Oktoberfest United Way Fundraiser Booth was attended by 73 people from the county.
- The 8<sup>th</sup> grade Bronaugh SNAC Class had 7 participants.
- The 4<sup>th</sup> grade Bronaugh SNAC Class had 17 participants.
- The 4<sup>th</sup> grade Sheldon SNAC Class had 9 participants.
- The YMCA SNAC class had 44 participants.
- The YMCA STEM class had 54 participants
- The Benton Embryology School Enrichment program had 124 participants.
- The SMQA training had 13 participants.
- The Food Preservation Class was attended by 10 participants.
- The Science Day with Cottey College was attended by 25 participants.

#### Regional and State Events

- Several members completed at regional and state shooting sports competition.
- 86 non-livestock projects submitted to Ozark Empire Fair
- 80 non-livestock projects submitted to Missouri State Fair
- 19 members received special recognition at the Ozark Empire Fair
- 1 member received special recognition at the Missouri State Fair – Best of Show
- 1 member participated in the State Fashion Review



4-H Members at the 4-H Council Lock-in

### Local Impact

*A community of 317 youth building life skills, contributing to their community, and becoming college and career ready.*

#### **Common Measures**

These are the last results we have...

Findings from a 2021-22 evaluation study shows that Missouri 4-H:

##### ***Missouri 4-H Inspires Kids to Do***

98% said they are willing to work hard on something difficult.

91% set personal goals.

97% said they try to learn from their mistakes.

98% said they treat others the way they want to be treated.

##### ***Missouri 4-H Grows True Leaders***

97% said they like to learn about people who are different from them.

93% said they think about others feelings before they say something.

75% reported feeling comfortable being a leader.

##### ***4-H Builds Leadership and Communication Skills***

95% help others reach their goals.

86% comfortable speaking in a group.

99% said they show respect for other's ideas.

85% Can work with someone who made them upset.

95% Look for ways to involve all members of a group.

##### ***4-H Builds Social and Emotional Skills***

94% said they keep trying until they reach their goals.

89% Stop to think about their choices when making a decision.

97% reported that they like to learn new things.

91% of Missouri 4-H'ers surveyed said they are willing to try something they might get wrong.



# Vernon County

## Missouri 4-H

### Local Impact

#### 4-H clubs

4-H programs are grounded in the belief that youth learn best by doing. Through hands-on projects in areas like science, health, agriculture, and civic engagement in a positive environment youth receive guidance from adult mentors and are encouraged to take on proactive leadership roles. Youth have the opportunity to concentrate on one focus area, or they can try a variety of programs throughout their 4-H experience.

Regardless of how youth participate, all 4-H programs include mentoring and career readiness as core elements.

- 4-H participants = 317
- *\*Duplicates not removed.*
- 4-H Community Clubs: offer in-depth educational experiences in which members learn life skills such as decision making, public speaking, and working with others. Members learn by doing this under the guidance of adult volunteers, who lead a wide variety of projects that support 4-H members in finding their SPARK.
- 4-H offers Community clubs, SPIN (special interest) clubs, In school and Afterschool Clubs, and school enrichment. Families and communities can choose what fits their needs.

#### Volunteers

- 4-H members are supported by 128 youth and adult volunteers
- Volunteers are the core of the 4-H Program. They help to create, support, and deliver educational programs and experiences. Missouri 4-H volunteers report contributing an average of 100 hours per year to the program. Valuing their time at \$33.49 per hour (Independent Sector, 2024), the contribution of Vernon County 4-H volunteers was worth more than \$42,8672.00 in 2024. More importantly, these individuals serve as role models and mentors for youth.

#### Reference

Independent Sector (2024). Independent sector releases new value of volunteer time of \$33.49 per hour. Retrieved from <https://independentsector.org/blog/independent-sector-releases-new-value-of-volunteer-time-of-33-49-per-hour/>



2024 Clover Kid Day



4-H members and volunteers preparing food for the annual Countywide Pulled Pork BBQ Fundraiser

### Local Impact

#### 4-H SNAC Clubs

The Student Nutrition Advisory Council (SNAC) clubs are available in various settings, including before school, during school, after school, and within community programs. These clubs empower youth to enhance their knowledge of nutrition and fitness. Participants take on leadership roles, becoming ambassadors of Healthy Living by designing and executing projects that promote nutrition education and improve fitness in their communities. In 2024, Missouri saw the establishment of 121 SNAC Clubs, engaging 2,543 youth and reaching over 7,330 others through their leadership initiatives.

#### 4-H SNAC Club Mini-grants

In 2024, the Missouri 4-H Foundation partnered with Healthy Blue to provide mini grants of up to \$500 per county, supporting 4-H SNAC clubs throughout the state in implementing their leadership projects. A total of 37 counties received funding, amounting to \$18,500 in mini grants.

#### Leadership Projects

4-H SNAC Club complete leadership project each year. This year youth created:

- Organizing canned food drives for local food pantries
- Creating student cookbooks
- Rebuilding and planting in community gardens
- Weeding and maintaining garden spaces
- Teaching younger youth soccer skills
- Providing snacks for a local nursing home
- Cooking family meals
- Hosting bingo games with healthy foods and snacks
- Making salsa for faculty and staff
- Growing lettuce for their class pet, a bearded dragon
- Presenting to younger youth
- Organizing inclusive soccer games for the afterschool program
- Launching the "Healthy Choices, Happy Faces" initiative
- Designing yard signs and posters to promote food groups and healthy eating
- Raising awareness about healthy living
- Cooking garden produce for families and staff
- Donating fresh produce to local food banks
- Replacing garden beds with new ADA-accessible ones
- Setting up a salad bar for teachers
- Collecting and packing Buddy Bags for elementary students



# Vernon County

Missouri 4-H

## Profiles and Stories



4-H member Lucas Cardenas and Clover Kid Mason Tippie at the Vernon County Youth Fair



YPA, Thabena Bower and 4-H Council members were invited to the Deerfield ADM plant for a tour and to accept a donation from their Safety Fundraiser. Vernon County 4-H was chosen as the recipient from their safety t-shirt sales. The 4-H Council representatives also received a cool 4-H/ADM t-shirt.



Vernon County 4-H Dog Project kids during the Vernon County Youth Fair





MU EXTENSION **Serves MISSOURI and Delivers MIZZOU**  
 through credible statewide programs  
**Agriculture and Environment**



MU Extension Specialists quickly respond to **emergencies and disasters** across the state. If a disease outbreak occurs in livestock, specialists are there. If a natural disaster such as flooding occurs, specialists are there. Missouri farmers can count on MU Extension to guide them through emerging issues with knowledge and expertise.

**“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.



**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

# Vernon County

## Agriculture and Environment

### Local Impact

## Patrick Davis MU Extension Livestock Field Specialist

### Programming Feeder Cattle Grading, Marketing and Feeding Workshop

- This workshop was part of the Missouri Steer Feedout Program and was provided in cooperation with Barton County MO Cattlemen's Association, Show Me Youth Ag Academy, and Missouri State University.
- This workshop educated MO Steer Feedout participants and approximately 60 people on grading, pricing and marketing feeder cattle using the 43 steers from 6 farms in the MO Steer Feedout. Furthermore, participants were educated on feeding these cattle in the feedlot. 3 people from this county attended this workshop.

### Appleton City Management Intensive Grazing School

- 2 people attended this event from this county and were educated on grazing and cattle management.
- The goal is for cattle producers to use this knowledge to more efficiently manage their cattle and forage operation.



# Vernon County

## Agriculture and Environment

### Local Impact

## Patrick Davis MU Extension Livestock Field Specialist

### Programming

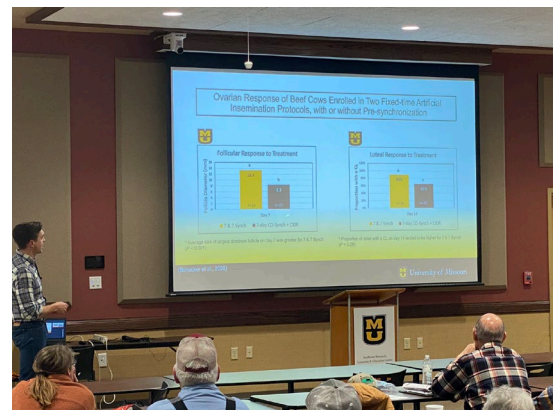
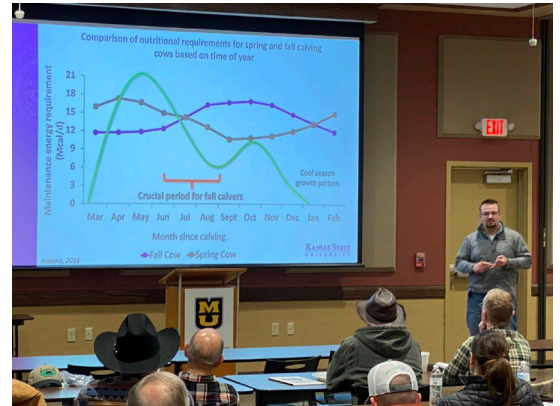
#### KOMA Beef Cattle Conference

- This was a joint effort from universities and extension services with MU, University of Arkansas, Oklahoma State University, and Kansas State University. These university extension services were involved in planning and conducting the event. Students and professors from the 4 universities provided presentations during the event. 54 people total were educated from the conference. 3 people from this county attended the conference.
- The goal is that participants will take knowledge from the conference to make their cattle operation successful.

### Programming

#### Stateline Beef Cattle Conference

- This was a virtual conference that educated cattle producers on cattle and forage management following drought. Speakers from MU Extension and Kansas State University Extension educated participants on rebuilding the cowherd, utilization of summer annuals and rebuilding the forage base following drought. 41 people were educated during the conference. 2 people from this county attended the conference.
- The goal is that conference participants will use this knowledge to help be successful in rebuilding their cattle and forage operation following drought.



# Vernon County

## Agriculture and Environment

### Local Impact

## Patrick Davis MU Extension Livestock Field Specialist

### Youth Programming Missouri Show Me Quality Assurance Program

This program educates youth and parents on best management practices for raising their youth livestock meat and milk producing animal projects. This is a requirement for the youth to exhibit their projects at local, regional, and state livestock exhibitions. 13 youth were educated at one training in the county.



## Private Pesticide Applicator Training

Hunter Lovewell, Agronomy Field Specialist taught a Private Pesticide Applicator Training on February 22<sup>nd</sup> in Nevada with 26 producers in attendance. Pesticide applicator training helps reduce the harmful effects of improper pesticide use. The University of Missouri Extension Commercial Pesticide Program provides educational outreach for individuals who wish to become licensed commercial pesticide applicators. Licensed applicators must pass an exam and participate in continuing education courses on environmentally sound uses of pesticides.

# Vernon County

## Agriculture and Environment

### Local Impact



**Ramón Arancibia**  
Field Specialist in  
Horticulture

MU Extension Specialist based in Bates County to service 11 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.

Face to face farm visits was 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 produce growers and homeowner (see contacts in table below). Direct contact with farmers and other stakeholders to assist them in their operations was also through presentations at growers' conferences (Chair of the Great Plain Growers Conference: MO, KS, NE, and IA), training on Food Safety training (commercial produce growers in Bates and Vernon Co.), meetings at specific counties (Master Gardeners and garden clubs: Camden, Hickory, Laclede, St. Clair, Livingston, Carroll, Jackson, and Clay Co.), workshops (state wide growers and industry representatives), developed an educational program on 'hydroponic production of herbs at home' with displays and presentations at County fairs (Bates, Cedar, Henry, and Vernon Co.) and at the Laclede Co Agribusiness Summit and Expo, and contributed with inquiries to the weekly Q&A sessions of the Garden Hour (Statewide, <https://ipm.missouri.edu/townHalls/>). In addition, lectured on Ag. career development to school students (Hume High School Reality Day in Bates Co., Career Exploration field day at the SWREEC), judged 4H contest at the Bates Co. fair, and assisted as board secretary of the Soil and Water Conservation District in Bates and Vernon Co.

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

- Midwest Vegetable Production Guide
- Master Gardener Core Course and presentations Increase Sweet Potato Yield with Early Planting. (354)
- Growing Watermelons for July 4th. Presenter (304)
- Plastic Mulch Color & Soil Temperature (3.9K)
- Strawberry Frost/Freeze Protection (1.6K)
- Sweet Potato Harvest, Curing and Storage (690)
- 2021 Sweet Potato Slip Production Trails (369)
- Early Season Watermelon in MO (608)
- On-farm sweet potato slip production trials (163)
- Sweet potato planting (145)
- Cucurbits: Flower types and fruit production (161)
- Sweetpotato slip production for field planting (157)
- High tunnel steamers (100)



Hydroponics  
Display at the  
Vernon County  
Courthouse

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)



# MU EXTENSION **Serves MISSOURI and Delivers MIZZOU** through credible statewide programs **Business and Community**



Missourians from all walks of life celebrated the **2023 Missouri Good Neighbor Week**, Sept. 28 to Oct. 4, by completing and reporting neighboring acts and nominating others as the most engaged neighbors in their counties.

**In 2023, the goal was to document 15,000 acts of neighboring. That goal was surpassed with 19,752 Missourians being positively affected during MISSOURI GOOD NEIGHBOR WEEK.**



The **Missouri Small Business Development Centers** (SBDC) provide professional training and customized one-on-one counseling to small businesses 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.**



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 2023 conference drew 104 ATTENDEES, generating an estimated initial economic impact of around \$33,000 FOR BENTON COUNTY.**

## Legend



Agricultural Growth & Stewardship



Economic Opportunity



Educational Access & Excellence



Health & Well-Being



# Economic Opportunity

Serving: Vernon County

## Missouri Small Business Development Center (SBDC)

The Missouri SBDC at Missouri Southern State University provides support to Vernon County entrepreneurs and small business owners through 1:1 assistance and training. Over the course of 2024, our office met with clients to discuss a wide range of topics including:

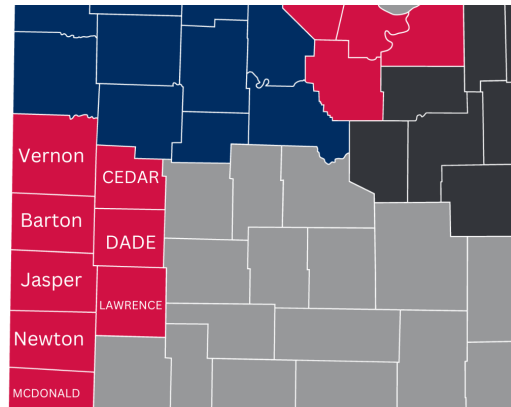
- Starting a business
- Cash flow management
- Business loan refinancing and expansion
- Business relocation
- Financial planning
- Marketing and social media strategy
- Purchasing a business
- Childcare grant application assistance
- International expansion opportunities
- Technology commercialization
- Experiential projects linking MSSU students and business owners

Through leveraging regional partnerships, we are able to offer the following:

- Innovate SOMO
- Early-Stage Boot Camp
- Government contracting assistance
- Identification of grant opportunities effecting businesses due to imports

### KEY OUTCOMES

- ✓ **29** Business owners received multiple 1:1 consulting sessions regarding their small businesses
- ✓ **60** Jobs retained
- ✓ **40** Government contracts awarded to small businesses in Vernon County
- ✓ **21** Training event attendees



The Missouri SBDC at Missouri Southern State University serves 8 counties in southwest Missouri (highlighted).

### Learn more about our latest programs and training

[sbdc@mssu.edu](mailto:sbdc@mssu.edu)

417-625-3128

[www.mssutrainning.com](http://www.mssutrainning.com)

### REGIONAL HIGHLIGHTS

**\$150,001**

Increase in sales for client companies through the assistance of the SBDC



# MU EXTENSION **Serves MISSOURI and Delivers MIZZOU** through credible statewide programs **Community and Professional Health Education**



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 PROFESSIONALS** across all Missouri counties.



**Strengthening Families Program: for Parents and Youth 10-14,** is a seven-session series for parents or caregivers and their young teens to attend together to improve family communication, resolve conflict and improve parental skills.

**A research study conducted by the Partnerships in Prevention Science Institute found a RETURN OF \$9.60** for every dollar spent implementing the **Strengthening Families Program.**



Resilience is the capacity to adapt when faced with adversity. **WeCanPROSPER Resilience Training** is a 2.5 hour training for participants to evaluate their personal resilience, tap into resources and create an action plan to enhance their resilience. Upon completing the training, participants can attend a facilitator session, enabling them to deliver the content within their communities and strengthen resilience within their networks.

**100%** of participants indicate that the skills and techniques they learned will help them become **MORE RESILIENT.**

## Legend



Agricultural Growth & Stewardship



Economic Opportunity



Educational Access & Excellence



Health & Well-Being





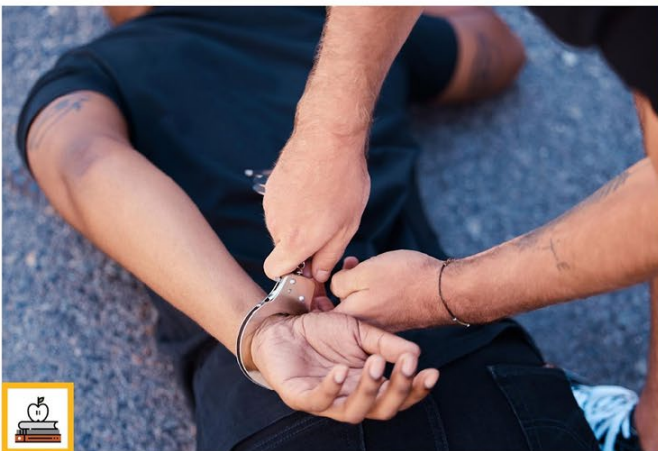
# MU EXTENSION **Serves MISSOURI and Delivers MIZZOU** through credible statewide programs **Continuing Education**



The LETI **School Protection Officer Program** provides basic training for school faculty and administrators to become school protection officers. The three-week academy typically runs during June and exceeds the hourly requirements for state recognition and certification.



The Law Enforcement Training Institute (LETI) has provided basic and advanced training for law enforcement since 1948. LETI's **Basic Peace Officer Academy** exceeds the 600 hours of training required for licensure in Missouri. From 2019 through 2023, the basic academy has licensed almost 300 peace officers, more than any other academy in the state. During that time, all but one graduate became employed by a law enforcement agency. LETI graduates come from around the state and return to their communities to serve and protect.



The **Law Enforcement Training Institute** (LETI) offers advanced training on a wide variety of topics, including defensive tactics, firearms, use of force and de-escalation. LETI offers customized programs for all required continuing education areas of concentration.

## 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**



**Building Strong Families**

Studies show that people with strong family bonds tend to have lower stress levels. Building Strong Families helps families deal with disagreements, manage stress and show their love for one another.



**Mental Health First Aid** equips people to recognize and respond to signs of mental illness and substance use challenges.

Youth Mental Health First Aid is primarily designed for adults who regularly interact with young people (ages 12-17) facing mental health or addiction challenges while the adult version focuses on adults aged 18 and older. Participants learn how to offer initial assistance and guide individuals toward the care they need.

**In Missouri, approximately 1 MILLION ADULTS and 72,000 ADOLESCENTS suffer from MENTAL HEALTH ISSUES.\***

\*Missouri Department of Mental Health 2020 Status Report



**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**



Agricultural Growth & Stewardship



Economic Opportunity



Educational Access & Excellence



Health & Well-Being

# Vernon County

## Health and Human Sciences

### Local Impact

#### Program: Reality Day

Number of Youth Involved: 104

Counties Involved: Bates, St. Clair, and Vernon

Sara Bridgewater, Nutrition and Health Field Specialist, worked with the RootEd advisor of the Hume School to coordinate a Reality Day for high school students. The event was in Bates County and schools from Bates, St. Clair, and Vernon County attended. Reality Day is a one-day event that focuses on preparing high school students on the future whether it be they go to college or straight to the work force. Students learned to budget and about financial decisions they will have to make in adulthood. This community collaboration included over 30 local employers, community resources, and post-secondary programs. Volunteers, including AmeriCorps Volunteers of Bates County, helped facilitate the programming and opening remarks were provided by Franklin Dirks owner of Dirks Construction.

Sara coordinated volunteers and AmeriCorps volunteers to help with the event along with also coordinating a food drive for this event. Ramon Arancibia, Horticulture Specialist; Melissa Stong, Bates County Youth Program Associate; Mellissia Butler, Vernon County Nutrition Program Associate; and Janet Fox, Cedar County Nutrition Program Associate assisted with the program.

#### Outcomes

- 240lbs of food was donated to the local food pantry.
- 14 Volunteers
  - Rank the communication 1-5 (1=Worse to 5=Best) = 4.8
  - Overall Experience 1-5 (1=Worse to 5=Best) =4.8
- We know at least one student was offered and accepted a job through this event.
- "Sara and Janine's Reality Day was very well put together and the day ran smooth. The check-in process and flow of events was easy for groups to follow."
- "Positive event. Very worthwhile to students and community."

Team members that were involved in this program included:

- Sara Bridgewater, Nutrition and Health Field Specialist
- Ramon Arancibia, Horticulture Specialist
- Melissa Stong, Bates County Youth Program Associate
- Mellissia Butler, Vernon County Nutrition Program Associate
- Janet Fox, Cedar County Nutrition Program Associate

# Vernon County

## Health and Human Sciences

### Profiles and Stories

## 2024 Reality Day



# Vernon County

## Health and Human Sciences

### Local Impact



**Sara Bridgewater**  
Field Specialist in  
Nutrition and Health



#### **Program: 100 Miles in 100 Days**

Number of Vernon County Participants: 15

This year's 100 Miles, 100 Days Extension initiative made a significant impact statewide, attracting over 807 participants in Missouri, including 15 in Vernon County. Throughout the 100 days of summer, participants were urged to discover their own enjoyable ways to cover the equivalent of 100 miles. The diverse activities reported ranged from hikes and bike rides to navigating wheelchairs through MO State Parks. Individuals embraced the initiative by strolling through their neighborhoods, fostering active connections with friends and family, and making the most of local parks and pools.

Our weekly motivational emails provided valuable education and fueled a friendly county competition, adding a bit of excitement into the challenge. Whether participants reached the coveted 100 miles or not, the ultimate goal of our initiative was to instill a lasting enjoyment of movement through a blend of encouragement, accountability, and motivation. Our hope is that the impact of this program will extend far beyond the 100 days, inspiring a continued commitment to a healthy and active lifestyle.

Team members that were involved included many Nutrition and Health Specialists around the state.

#### **Program: Community Garden at On My Own**

Sara Bridgewater, Nutrition and Health Specialist, partnered with On My Own to help with their community garden project that aligns with our mission to promote independent living and challenge societal perceptions of disability. The garden serves as a space for individuals with disabilities to build essential life skills, such as horticulture, teamwork, and problem-solving, while fostering social connections within the community. This initiative will empower participants by offering them a hands-on opportunity to engage in meaningful work that enhances their sense of independence and self-worth. As part of our comprehensive services—Advocacy, Peer Counseling, Independent Living Skills Training, Information & Referral, and Transitions—the garden will provide a tangible way for individuals to create positive change in their lives while contributing to the community, ultimately advancing our vision of a society where all people can live and thrive independently. Sara successfully secured funding and resources for raised beds, as well as the necessary materials and supplies to support the community garden initiative at On My Own.

# Vernon County

## Health and Human Sciences

### Local Impact

#### Research: Voices of Rural Mothers

The Rural Maternal Health Education Project, led by Sara Bridgewater, PhD candidate, centers on amplifying the voices of rural Missouri mothers to identify gaps in maternal health education that contribute to health disparities. The project utilizes a survey tool to gather both quantitative and qualitative data, offering valuable insights into several key areas: the mother's perspective on healthcare, how and where rural breastfeeding mothers seek information, the most helpful resources for these mothers, specific barriers to breastfeeding in rural areas, demographic trends related to breastfeeding initiation and duration, and the rural postpartum experience, including mental health screening and treatment. During the pilot phase, healthcare providers and others who support mothers and infants in Missouri are invited to participate in a brief survey that complements the mothers' survey. Additionally, participants from Vernon and Bates Counties were selected for follow-up interviews. These surveys and interviews serve as the foundational steps for making communities more supportive of breastfeeding and maternal health. In response to the identified needs, a local community and education intervention will be planned, focusing on maternal and infant health topics in Bates and Vernon Counties. The findings will be shared in 2025. This project has expanded into a statewide initiative in partnership with MU Extension, called MoMS Speak (Mothers of Missouri Survey).



# Vernon County

## Health and Human Sciences

### Local Impact

#### SNAP-Ed Public Value Statement 2024

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.

8833 direct and indirect contacts were made in Vernon 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.

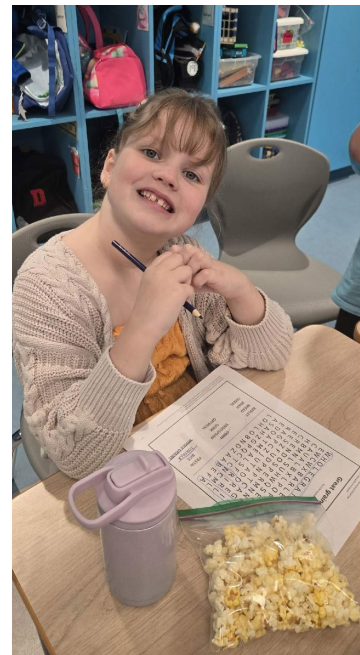
#### EFNEP Public Value Statement 2024

The Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program (EFNEP) brought \$1,624,777 federal funds to Missouri. These funds were used to enroll 559 limited-resource families in nutrition education and meal preparation classes, representing 2,068 family members. Additionally, 2,864 youth were enrolled in EFNEP classes.

648 of these youth and adult participants reside in Vernon 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.



Wrenley enjoying popcorn and an activity during the nutrition grains lesson

# 2024 Vernon County State Fair Farm Family



Robert and Amanda Lefevre of Bronaugh, MO, were selected as the Missouri Farm Family for Vernon County.