



2021 ANNUAL REPORT

Nebraska Extension in Douglas-Sarpy Counties



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Unit Leader in Douglas & Sarpy Counties

In 2021, our staff was excited to transition from virtual education back to in-person outreach and education. While we continue to navigate the changing times, our team has become more resilient and innovative in the ways we serve our community. We reach residents where they are and improve their lives in the areas of Youth Development, Community Environment, Food Safety, and Nutrition. Together we look forward to new challenges and opportunities. Wishing you a happy and healthy 2022!

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Nebraska Extension in Douglas-Sarpy Counties



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4-H Youth Development

4-H has a presence in all Douglas and Sarpy County school districts. 4-H is America's largest youth development organization, empowering youth with the skills to lead for a lifetime.

Youth participate through clubs, school enrichment, out-of-school programs, and camps. Program areas include Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math (STEM), Agriculture, Healthy Living, and Civic Engagement.



14,000

YOUTH TAUGHT BY 4-H
IN DOUGLAS-SARPY
COUNTIES

2,450

EXHIBITS SHOWN AT
SARPY COUNTY FAIR

1,200

IMAGINE SCIENCE
BIOMEDICAL ENGINEERING
CAMP PARTICIPANTS



4-H School Enrichment Squid dissection presentation at a local middle school.

4-H School Enrichment & Out-of-School programs offer experiential learning that are aligned with the Nebraska State Board of Education Content Area Standards in the areas of social studies, mathematics, and science.

Register for programs using the QR code or go to:
<https://go.unl.edu/r6cf>.



Follow 4-H on Facebook

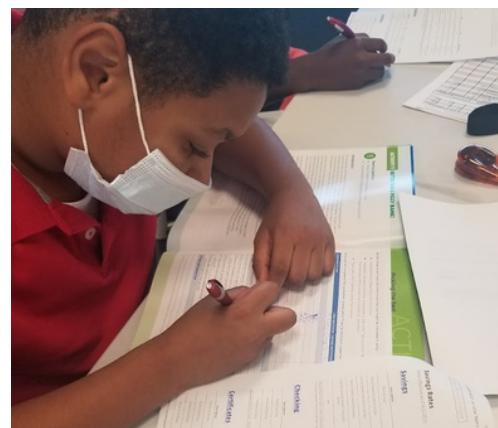
<https://www.facebook.com/douglassarpy4h>

4-H PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

4-H Smart Cents Program

336 Douglas and Sarpy County youth participated in the 4-H Smart Cents Program funded by National 4-H Council. Smart Cents is a 10-hour program that teaches youth how to make financially responsible decisions.

"4-H gave my son the tools to make his own money goals and a plan to achieve them."



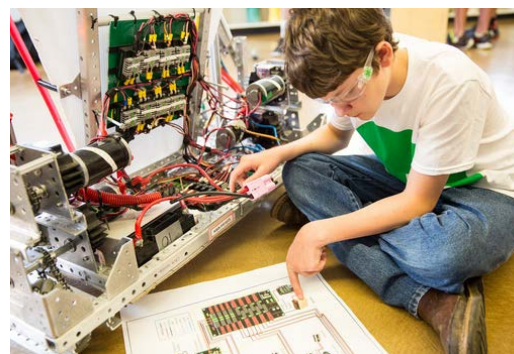
NASA Teams Up with Local Extension Educator

Extension partnered with NASA to create NASA 4-H Virtual Science resources for educators. Five lessons were developed that align with Nebraska Standards and Next Generation Science Standards. Since launching in 2021, 60 educators have used this resource and taught 2,400 youth.



Growing Future Engineers

Through 4-H's partnership with UNL's Engineering Ambassador Program, Durham School of Engineering, Facebook, and Springfield Platteview Community Schools, a total of 200 youth participated in Discover Engineering events in Elkhorn and Springfield.



Youth Participated in the 4-H Space, Robotics, and Sew & Glow Workshops



Robotics



Space



Sew & Glow

4-H Developing Leaders

"Next Chapter" College Readiness

Next Chapter at Nebraska is a college-readiness program delivered through Nebraska 4-H that helps students prepare for and succeed in college by providing the skills students need to reach their academic goals. 630 youth in school and after school participated in Next Chapter. Through the program they explored careers, colleges, academic strategies, and skill development.



Youth Mentoring Program

The Health Rocks! 4-H Mentoring Program has been active in Ralston Public Schools since 2020. Ralston High School students are trained by 4-H staff to serve as peer mentors to Ralston Elementary School students. Each week the mentors and mentees participate in activities and self-reflection. The program reaches youth at risk and helps prevent substance abuse. The mentor is an important role model that provides support and guidance to their mentee.

88% of participants indicated that because of 4-H, they are excited to pursue previously unknown career paths.

Imagine Science Teen Teachers & Mentors

Imagine Science is delivered by 4-H in partnership with other organizations to ignite the imagination of historically underrepresented youth in the area of Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math (STEM). During the summer of 2021, 1,200 Omaha youth participated in the program and were taught by a total of 6 teen teachers and intern mentors.



4-H Youth Leadership Ambassadors

4-H Youth Ambassadors serve as advocates and role-models for the 4-H Program. Through this program they strengthen their communication, leadership, and civic engagement skills.

Pictured: 4-H Youth Ambassadors lead county officials and Extension board members on a tour of the Sarpy County Fair.

EARLY CHILDHOOD

Our Early Childhood Educators teach adults that care for young children by providing high-quality professional development that sets the stage for lifelong learning, health, discovery, and success in children ages 0-8.



Early Childhood Educators is making a difference in our community. What childcare providers are saying:

"Katie is approachable, down to earth and very knowledgeable. I have been inspired to step outside my comfort zone and I have been amazed at how much I was already doing instinctively. I am empowered by taking Katie's classes and try to take her classes whenever feasible."

"I started out needing hours to renew my certification, but after I got my hours I continued taking classes because of all the great information Jaci and Katie shared. They both really understand the life and times of a childcare provider."

"Love how upbeat and common sense both presenters are. They both make one feel as if they are speaking directly to you; how do they achieve that? The ideas presented are very doable in our home childcare setting and the cost to put into action is low."

1,154

UNIQUE CHILDCARE
PROVIDERS TAUGHT

4,315

CHILDCARE PROVIDER
CERTIFICATE HOURS
AWARDED

2,877

CERTIFICATES
AWARDED

Children Thrive Outside 1000 Hours Challenge

"Thrive Outside 1000 Hour Challenge," is a new effort lead by Extension Educators. Childcare providers, teachers and families can sign up their program, classroom, or family for the challenge at: <https://go.unl.edu/ctochallenge>.

Contact our Extension office to receive a, "Children Thrive Outside 1000 Challenge," window cling and an outside time tracker.



Early Childhood Education Professional Development
Enroll for upcoming classes at <http://go.unl.edu/onlineepd>

EARLY CHILDHOOD

Nature Education - Early Childhood Health Outdoors (ECHO)

A Memorandum of Understanding was reached with Nebraska Extension and the National Wildlife Federation in 2021. This makes Nebraska one of the first expansion states for ECHO.

ECHO transforms how young children play and learn outdoors for the benefit of our kids, our communities, and our planet. ECHO facilitates the creation of nature-based outdoor play settings while providing support and resources for educators, caregivers and families to activate these spaces and advocate for policies to transform outdoor play and put best practices into common practice.



Look Who's Hatching



Look Who's Hatching is an Extension program available for childcare providers with preschool-age children. This program is very well received by childcare providers and families, with participation growing every year. Embryology is also offered through our 4-H program for K-12 graders. This project teaches youth how life develops; by observing the process of hatching baby chicks over a four-week period.

"I thought this was absolutely amazing to have this at my son's preschool! He loved the experience!"

"This was an unique and exciting opportunity for our children to learn about chicken egg development."

34 Early Childhood programs, 8 homeschool families, and 4,000 Kindergarten-12th graders hatched eggs this year.

HORTICULTURE

Communitywide Impact

The horticulture team continued to serve the community with the help of 250 trained Extension Master Gardeners.

- Participated in 40 "Ask The Master Gardener" events for the public
- Responded to 14,000 calls and 5,000 emails from the Horticulture Helpline
- Designed and maintained 15 community gardens with a teaching component
- Evaluated landscape irrigation systems for the purpose of water conservation
- Produced and donated fresh produce from HOPE Garden to underserved families



HOPE Garden is a pollinator habitat and donation garden.



Aksarben Farmer's Market



Eastern Nebraska Veterans Home

10,200
LBS OF PRODUCE
GROWN FOR
DONATION

\$321,076
EQUIVALENT COST
OF VOLUNTEERS

335
YOUTH PARTICIPATED IN
GARDEN ACTIVITIES



Discussing tree and turf management with the Nebraska Cemetery Association.

Available resources with contributions by our team:

- GRO Big Red Blog
- GRO Big Red News & Tips (subscription)
- GRO Big Red Virtual Learning Series
- PRO Hort
- Nebraska Pollinator Habitat Certification
- Backyard Farmer
- Ag Almanac Radio
- Pure Nebraska

“

"Implemented tree health and climate resilience practices."

"Followed guidelines to reduce diseases."

"Every session had good information that I could implement."

"Thanks for your advice and direction. We are so appreciative of the services that our extension service provides!"

What
people are
saying

”



Walk-in clients are always welcome.

ENTOMOLOGY

Integrated Pest Management (IPM)

A goal of the entomologist is to educate the public on how to effectively and economically reduce insect pests in urban spaces.

- Wrote and designed new *Insects* webpage featuring 122 profiles called *A Bug's Life*
- Created two bed bug brochures and distributed to 37 counties across Nebraska
- Coauthored *Cockroach Management in Nebraska*, a brochure available in English and Spanish
- Designed and coauthored a book called *Vegetable Garden Insect Pests*
- Invited as speaker for Nebraska Turf Conference and Nebraska Pest Management Conference



An example of an interactive entomology table for community events.



Garden IPM at the HOPE Garden with Masters Gardeners and Extension Board members.



Engaging presentations on many platforms.



"It was great meeting you and we will watch you on Backyard Farmer. You are a great representative of the Extension organization."

"This (A Bug's Life) is exactly what I was looking for, and it's not just a couple slides, it's an available resource."

"Her presentation was the perfect balance of science-y knowledge and practical solutions."



What people are saying

13,061

PAGEVIEWS FOR NEW INSECTS WEBPAGE

777

ARTHROPOD-RELATED QUESTIONS ANSWERED

2,888

DIRECT TEACHING CONTACTS



Arthro-pod is an insect-themed podcast built on the collaboration of three entomologist from separate universities.



- Rated #1 entomology podcast by traffic and social media followers
- Over 1,000 subscribers
- Over 104 episodes since 2014

Known for our expertise in bed bugs, termites, and native pollinators.

URBAN AGRICULTURE

Local, Regional, National, & Global Impacts

Our program creates awareness of where food comes from, demonstrates the strength of the food system, and helps people grow food in and around urban areas.

- Regular panelist and expert on Backyard Farmer and other local media outlets
- Worked across many disciplines to educate the importance of locally grown foods
- Coordinated local plots for organizations and refugee families to grow fresh produce
- Advisor and member of several program planning committees, hosting thousands of participants
- Provided consultations for home gardeners, community gardeners, and producers/growers



Helping increase the production of local foods in Nebraska.

2,200
LBS OF PRODUCE
GROWN ON
COMMUNITY PLOTS

26
GARDEN PLOTS FOR
REFUGEE FAMILIES AND
GROUPS

3,200
DIRECT TEACHING
CONTACTS



John Porter recognized as 2021 Food Day Champion for his local impact.

Programs impacted by our work:

- Nebraska Regional Foods Summit
- Great Plains Growers Conference
- FSMA Produce Safety Alliance Training
- All-American Selections Program
- Extension Master Gardeners
- Several early childhood and youth programs
- Hydroponics for Extension Workers in Trinidad
- Mandela Washington Fellowship for Young African Leaders



The Urban Agriculture Program contributes to better human health, science literacy, and economic vitality.

"Loved the garden class, learned so much!"

"Your seed starting presentation is amazing. I am a total beginner and this is SO useful and easy to understand. Thank you SO MUCH for taking the time to do this."

"I really appreciated how you took the topics that can be confusing and developed the individual steps to make the concepts easy to grasp."

What
people are
saying

FOOD SAFETY

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) reports that approximately one in six Americans get sick from a foodborne illness each year. Consequences leading to lost work, school, medical costs, long-term disability, and death directly impact those affected. Sixty-four percent of outbreaks nationwide are linked to foods prepared in retail establishments. Extension delivers research-based food safety training and certification to help individuals increase their confidence in the food available to them. ServSafe and the Cottage Food Law food safety training classes are mandated in Nebraska, with Extension being the main provider.

Cottage Food Training

With the passage of Nebraska LB304 in 2019, consumers can purchase foods prepared locally, which stimulates the local economy. Cottage food sales provide a niche market that fulfills ethnic and dietary needs of local consumers. An Extension Certification course implemented in September 2020 has taught 350 individuals through an online course.



Economic Impact of the Cottage Food Training:

61%
EXPANDED
BUSINESSES

58%
USED INCOME TO
SUPPLEMENT INCOME

57%
MAKING \$1,000
TO \$3,000 MORE
PER YEAR



A food producer that completed Extension's Cottage Food training reported she was able to put what she learned into practice and as a result her business expanded. Her product has been requested by local grocery stores and income has steadily increased.

ServSafe Food Handler Training

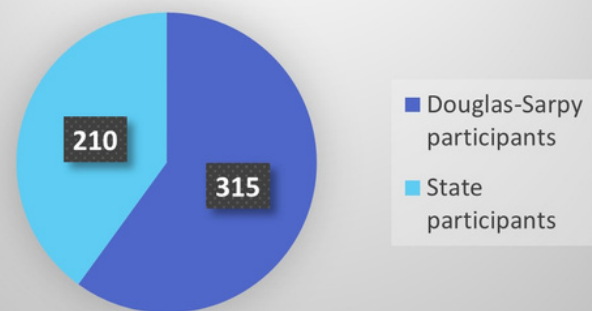
Food safety training, like those offered by Nebraska Extension, has positive effects on the knowledge, attitude, and practice of those handling food, as demonstrated by survey:

- 69% increased their knowledge regarding monitoring time and temperatures
- 64% increased their knowledge of the causes of cross-contamination
- 62% increased their knowledge involving cleaning and sanitizing
- 58% reinforced or learned more about handwashing

Participant Comments:

- "I make sure I am thawing and cooling foods correctly."
- "Now able to train employees with new knowledge."
- "I thought the training was amazing and interactive. The instructor did a great job explaining all the important information."

ServSafe Food Handler Training



Food Preservation

The pandemic and food supply concerns increased the number of residents growing produce and wanting to preserve their crop at home. Nebraska Extension was there to provide residents with accurate and up-to-date research-based information in food preservation and food safety. A variety of teaching tools were implemented and social media platforms employed to meet the needs of Nebraskans.



- As a result of virtual programming, 70% of participants indicated they would change the way they preserve food.
- "I was able to preserve some fruit and was able to share the knowledge I gained from the training with my friends."



<http://food.unl.edu/food-preservation>

NUTRITION EDUCATION PROGRAM



The Nutrition Education Program (NEP) helps families on a limited budget make healthier food choices and choose physically active lifestyles by acquiring the knowledge, skills, attitudes, and behavior changes necessary to improve their health.

1,568
ADULTS ATTENDED
NEP CLASSES

340
HOURS TAUGHT

35
PARTNERING
ORGANIZATIONS

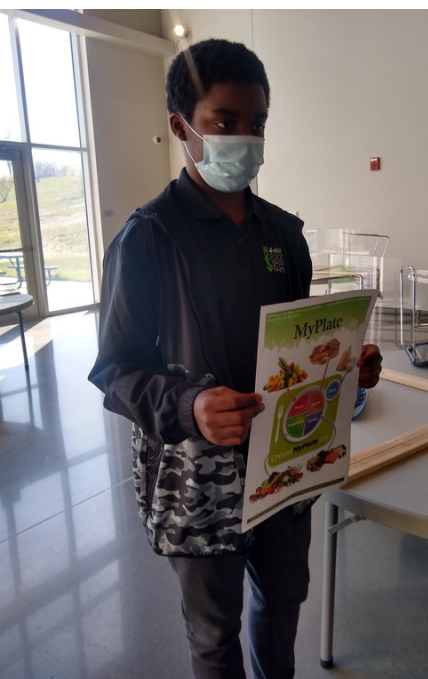
25
CHILDCARE SITES
TAUGHT

Nutrition School Enrichment Kits provide a unique and evidenced-based approach to teaching health to Nebraska's youth. The Kits provide teachers with resources to support their students' development of skills and knowledge to meet the 10 school components of the Whole School, Whole Community, and Whole Child Model for youth in K-5th grade. 10 classrooms utilized the kits in 2021

"I can see the students being more aware of the choices they are making. They are more conscious of eating healthy foods and want to exercise more!"

The strategy of childhood obesity prevention looks at how we can change the policies, systems, and environments infants and young children spend a significant amount of time in. We train early childhood professionals on healthy eating, mealtime strategies, and the importance of active play. Each site then works one-on-one with our team to implement changes in their facility. In 2021, we saw an increase from 44% at PRE to 72% at POST of the best practices being implemented. In 2021, these changes are impacting approximately 1,526 children in childcare settings.

Growing Health Leaders



NEP staff mentored 2 teen ambassadors in 2021. They gained valuable hands-on experiences and learned about a potential health career while co-teaching nutrition classes at 6 different Omaha sites.



"I will be using so many of the tips and handouts from this training, I will be working on pace feeding with infants that are breast fed. I can see from this training some of the issues we have had in our center and how to change them."

The health and wellbeing of Nebraskans is crucial for strong, healthy communities, lower healthcare costs and better lives for all. NEP is working to improve access to safe, nutritious food, and encouraging healthy decisions when it comes to eating and physical activity.

Double Up Food Bucks Increasing Access to Fruits & Vegetables



Each day, a SNAP customer can earn up to \$20 of Double Up Food Bucks when they spend \$20 on fresh produce at a participating retailer. NEP partners with 5 Omaha stores and farmer's markets to increase access to fresh produce.



Children that cook are more likely to try new foods. 83% of children and youth increased their abilities to choose healthier food options.

Community Partner of the Year Recognition

NEP Staff Member, Alyssa Wessling, was recognized for her work with Ollie Webb, Inc. in 2021. They highlighted her work stating:

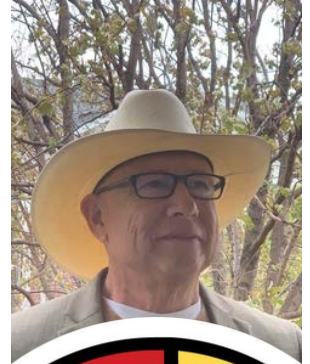
"With a virtual class format, Alyssa has facilitated activities, emphasizing the importance of nutrition and introducing participants to "MyPlate." Alyssa has shared a wealth of healthy recipes and has done live cooking demonstrations. Participant reaction to Alyssa has been overwhelmingly positive with participants completing surveys and sharing how much they've enjoyed having Alyssa in class as well as how much they have learned from her." - Ollie Webb, Inc. Education Manager



Alyssa Wessling, recognized for her work with Ollie Webb.

Native American Coalition

This year we welcomed to our office,
Ted Hibbeler, a Statewide Extension Tribal Educator



The University of Nebraska–Lincoln Native American Coalition (NAC) builds relationships and partnerships between Nebraskan Native Americans, Nebraska Extension and partnering organizations. NAC builds bridges between tribal and non-tribal communities, to facilitate community development and leadership in Native communities, providing a platform to share Native American traditions, worldviews, languages, culture and history throughout the University of Nebraska system and non-tribal communities.

UNL

**Indigenous
Food Sovereignty
Program Application**



To learn more about the work being done with food sustainability and food sovereignty through the Native American Coalition at: <https://nativecoalition.unl.edu/>

