



**UW
Extension**
Winnebago County

**We teach, learn,
lead & serve**

**UW-Extension
Values:**

- Community
- Discovery
- Inclusiveness
- Relationships
- Respect

Our Purpose:

Connecting people with the University of Wisconsin, and engaging with them in transforming lives and communities.

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Winnebago County UW-Extension: Transforming lives, organizations and communities

ANNUAL REPORT TO THE COMMUNITY, 2014

UW-Extension provides value to Winnebago County through education, unbiased research, and local partnerships transforming lives, organizations, and communities. Extension programming meets needs, tackles tough issues, and grows these entities to be more resilient and better prepared to meet challenges.

We serve the diverse population of approximately 170,000 rural, suburban and urban residents of the county. From youth development programs in the heart of Neenah and Menasha, to farm business counseling in the rural corners of the county, to families working to make ends meet, UW-Extension educators work to meet the educational needs of all county residents.

We leverage dollars to address community issues, work with a large variety of community partners and train and empower citizen volunteers to augment our work.



Because of UW-Extension

#BecauseofUWEX is a social media campaign to help share the positive impact UW-Extension has had on the lives of others. Here is an example of a **#BecauseofUWEX** story from Winnebago County:

The Oshkosh Area Community Pantry (OACP) celebrated its fifth anniversary in May of 2014. In naming the Pantry in 2009, it was consciously decided to keep the word “food” out of the title. Supporting that goal, UW-Extension has been partnering with OACP since 2009 through:

- Food, nutrition, money management and housing classes
- Providing produce from

- the community garden
 - 4-H members preparing birthday kits
 - Staff serving on the pantry board/committees
 - Leading planning and evaluation processes
- 2014 was a “pivotal” year in moving beyond providing food for over 2,000 households each month, to addressing the greater needs and goals of the pantry. Under the leadership of Terri Green, OACP Pantry Director, with UW-Extension assistance (**#BecauseofUWEX**) the pantry has begun tackling the goals of “identifying and evaluating our customers’ broader needs and provid-

ing access to other community resources that foster independence”.

This past year a needs assessment administered at a mobile food pantry at UW-Oshkosh found that individuals living around the campus had food access issues. This area is recognized as a “food desert” and is populated not only by students, but also by individuals who have difficulty securing affordable housing.

A grant was secured by the Helen Bader Foundation to meet the food needs of the elderly through home delivery and portable shopping carts to assist elderly guests who walk or ride the bus to the pantry.



Building Capacity

Through various outlets, UW-Extension creates thriving youth, families, and communities by building the capacity of volunteers, leaders, professionals, and organizations in Winnebago County.

Volunteers and Leaders

Leadership and citizenship skills are essential for youth and adults alike. Volunteers bring many skills and expertise to UW-Extension programming where they are able to build confidence and create lasting relationships. Through UW-Extension programming:

- 162 youth serve as club officers, camp counselors and project advisors.
- 214 adults support clubs and subject matter.
- Volunteers help share industry information through Tractor Safety, Breakfast on the Farm, Dairy Quiz Bowl, Meat Animal Quality Assurance, and Dairy Judging.
- 19 new Winnebago County UW-Extension Master Gardeners Volunteers (WCMGV) were trained in 2014. They received 24 hours of classroom training along with 12+ hours of online lectures in foundational horticulture topics. There are 96 certified WCMGV's providing horticulture education and support throughout the county.
- 26 Home and Community Education (HCE) volunteers work to improve child literacy skills through the Wisconsin Bookworms™ program. 135 Headstart children received sets of books.
- Over 30 HCE volunteers also produced 2,217 pieces of headgear to support cancer patients with the Stitches of Love project.

Organizations

Throughout 2014 UW-Extension educators provided organizational development support through teaching, coaching and facilitating strategic planning and decision making processes for 11 local non-profit organizations and collaborations, including: Sustainable Fox Valley, Oshkosh Area Community Pantry, Oshkosh Zoo, Oshkosh Symphony, Fond du Lac Festivals, Fox Valley Time Exchange, Oshkosh Service League, Winnebago Housing Coalition, Wisconsin Federation of Museums, Day by Day Warming Shelter, and the Oshkosh Seniors Center.

Professionals

Appointed governmental officials, including local Plan Commissioners, often need educational support in order to perform the duties of their office and serve their residents. Through the Winnebago County Plan Commissioner Network, 80 plan commissioners met in 2014 for training and networking.

Professionals in government agencies, commercial businesses, Master Gardener organizations, and utility companies also benefitted from UW-Extension's educational programming. In 2014, 57 people representing 15 government entities participated in 4 chainsaw safety workshops. In addition, 121 people received training in tree identification and selection. These workshops contributed to building the capacity of these professionals to better serve their communities in the area of horticulture and environmental services.

Through the Collaboration Workgroup, agency staff have a monthly opportunity to meet, identify, and address local issues and form partnerships to support individuals and families.

In 2014 UW-Extension mobilized 795 volunteers, who donated 38,245 hours of their time to project leadership and community service, valued at \$846,744.00





Resilient & Productive Environments

Natural resources are integral to the communities of Winnebago County. Addressing their ecological health is complex, with many potential paths leading to a sustainable environment.

Water quality of the Lake Winnebago System is impacted by land use, weather patterns, and human activity. UW-Extension provided education to 10 producers on nutrient management planning to assist farmers in keeping nutrients on the land and out of our waterways. Pesticide applicator training was provided to 29 people.

Forestry in the county contributes over \$4 billion to the local economy, and about 96% of the forested land is owned by individuals and families. To support this industry, a Winter Woodland Owner Conference is hosted annually in Oshkosh. In 2014, 110 attendees from Winnebago and surrounding counties attended to learn

about forest management techniques and other related topics.

To help slow the spread and combat the economic and environmental impact of Emerald Ash Borer (EAB) on the county's forest resource, UW-Extension is playing a role in multiple efforts. UW-Extension developed a networking group that local municipalities can turn to for guidance and advice. Programming for residents and local municipalities has also been conducted.

As a way for communities to learn new approaches and revitalize their sustainability activities, UW-Extension lead the effort of bringing Torbjorn Lahti, Swedish sustainability expert, to local municipalities for a variety of educational workshops. The effort reached approximately 175 participants across sectors building capacity and social capital.



Health, Food Safety & Security

Part of transforming a community is helping citizens make healthy, informed choices in their life and making sure that everyone has access to safe, nutritious, and affordable food.

Through our Wisconsin Nutrition Education Program Services (WNEP), our educators work with limited-income families and individuals on how to choose and prepare healthy, safe, and affordable food for their families. In addition, they teach meal planning and budgeting, safe food storage, and ways to increase physical activity based on Dietary Guidelines for Americans and MyPlate. In 2014, educators started a program transition from teaching learn-while-you-wait to multi-session programs. This

has led to greater impact and more active involvement. Participants are increasing their knowledge of nutrition, leading to better choices and healthy changes in their lives.

For over 40 years, UW-Extension has supported a community garden where approximately 90 families grow their own produce. In addition, Master Gardener volunteers contribute to afterschool programs by educating underserved youth about growing their own food, connect seniors and the disabled to healthy food through therapeutic gardening, and demonstrate gardening techniques to the general public through presentations and displays.





Stronger Economies

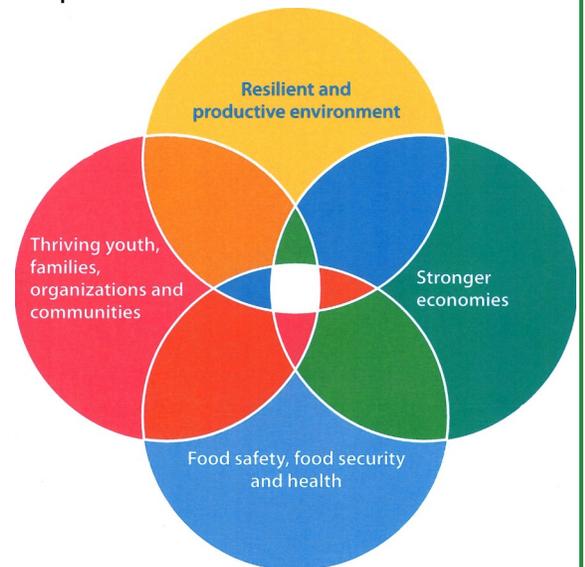
Building stronger economies means supporting business development, creating systems that support business, and teaching families how to stretch their budgets.

UW-Extension worked with representatives from the Housing Coalition, City of Oshkosh, and Winnebago Apartment Association to create and host a workshop series for landlords that focused on teaching Landlords the rights, responsibilities, and strategies of how to be a more effective and cost-efficient landlord. Landlords also increased their knowledge of City of Oshkosh Housing Codes and the resources available to support them as landlords and business owners. Over 100 Oshkosh landlords received the training to help improve their business and relationship with their renters.

The 'Hub' is a new concept in the Oshkosh area aimed at helping individuals and families with emergency financial needs. UW-Extension served on the Steering Committee for the creation of the Hub, which works to break down the barriers to families getting the help they need. Rather

than having multiple organizations to contact, lack of coordinated services, and dealing with ongoing emergencies, the Hub strives to create a system that helps sustain families following an emergency.

UW-Extension also plays a strong role in Winnebago County teaching youth Science, Technology, Engineering & Math (STEM) skills that will prepare them for all aspects of future leadership, including skill development in both hard sciences and interpersonal abilities.



In 2014 we hosted 693 meetings, at the JP Coughlin Center, with over 13,015 people in attendance.



Winnebago County Faculty, Staff and Committee

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Sarah Thompson, 4H Youth and Science Educator

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