



**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, 2015

UW-Extension (UWEX) supports, empowers, and engages the citizens of Winnebago County through education, unbiased research, and local partnerships. UWEX programming transforms lives, organizations, and communities by meeting needs, tackling tough issues, and growing 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, UWEX 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.



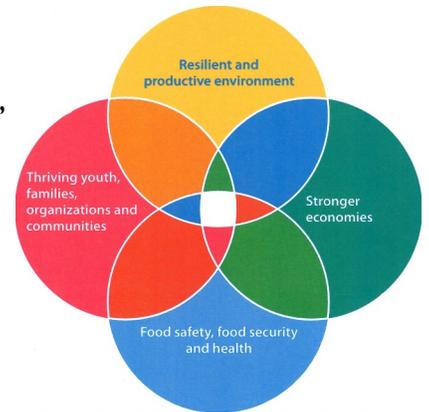
Thriving Youth, Families, Organizations and Communities

UWEX creates thriving youth, families, and communities by building the capacity of volunteers, leaders, professionals, and organizations in Winnebago County.

New in 2015...

Making the Ride Happen (MRH), a mobility management program of Lutheran Social Services, partnered with East Central Regional Planning Commission and UWEX in Winnebago and Outagamie Counties to help them. MRH had a strategic direction to expand their program to serve more elderly and veterans. Doing so would require expansion of volunteer services and mobility management functions.

The team learned they needed to better understand the characteristics of the potential demand of future users. UWEX created a survey to understand people's transportation behaviors. The survey project was piloted in the rural town of Winneconne and with the Winnebago County Veterans Service Office to gather input from rural residents and veterans alike. Responses from the pilot survey indicated that roughly 50% of respondents would seek transportation assistance should they develop a medical condition. Additionally, 40% of respondents were not aware at all of transportation programs such as Making the Ride Happen.





Thriving Youth, Families, Organizations and Communities



“Block parties reminded me to get on my hands and knees to play with my child.” - parent attendee

In 2015 UW-Extension mobilized 484 volunteers, who donated 33,237 hours of their time to project leadership and community service, valued at \$745,173.

Winnebago County became the first pilot of an on-line parent conversation group “Parentheticals.” The Facebook conversation and a bi-weekly newsletter targets parents and those who live and work with children ages 10-16.

Block Parties were also introduced to the county. These parent-child events educate parents on the importance of devoted play time with their children. Three events reached more than 75 families in our first effort.

Ongoing programs...

Volunteers and Leaders

Volunteers bring many skills and expertise to UW-Extension (UWEX) programming where they are able to build confidence and create lasting relationships. Through UWEX programming:

- 526 4-H members volunteer in their community clubs. Additionally, 4-H members may serve as club officers, ambassadors and camp counselors.
- 216 adults support 4-H clubs and subject matter.
- 104 Winnebago County Master Gardeners Volunteers provided nearly 7,700 hours of horticulture education and support throughout the county.
- 148 Head Start children participated in the Wisconsin Bookworms™ program sponsored by the Home and Community Education organization.
- 38 Stiches of Love volunteers produced 2,955 pieces of headgear to support cancer patients.

Organizations

UWEX educators provided organizational development support through teaching, coaching and facilitating strategic planning and decision making processes for local non-profit organizations, collaborations, and governmental units including: Oshkosh Zoological Society, Neenah Menasha Fire and Rescue, Making the Ride Happen, ReThink, THRIVE Fox Valley, City of Neenah BID, Hunger Task Force, Winnebago County Community Gardens, Butte des Morts Historical Society, Menasha Jefferson Neighborhood, Winnebago County Historical Society, IGNITE, Neenah Menasha YMCA, hub, Women in Poverty Initiative Senior Health Promotion, Oshkosh 4 Education, Aging and Disability Resource Staff and Wicked Problems workgroup.

Professionals

- Through the Winnebago County Plan Commissioner Network, plan commissioners from 14 Towns, Villages and Cities met in 2015 for training and networking.
- 30 professionals participated in an invasive species identification and management workshop. 123 professionals received training in proper tree pruning.
- Monthly, 30-50 agency representatives attend The Oshkosh Collaboration Workgroup, co-lead by the Oshkosh Area United Way and UWEX.



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.

New in 2015...

To help protect the aesthetic, economical, and environmental benefits of the County's urban forest, UW-Extension (UWEX) is playing a role in multiple efforts. UWEX helped facilitate a tree inventory and tracking system, prepared the "Winnebago County Urban Forestry & Emerald Ash Borer (EAB) Management Plan", and assisted in developing a management program that includes treatment of ash trees from EAB, removal of risk trees, and planting of new trees. Efforts will lead to efficiencies in maintenance activities and budgets, along with safer public spaces.

Ongoing programs...

The annual Winter Woodland Owner Conference was attended by 65 attendees from Winnebago and surrounding counties. Participants learned the latest forest management techniques.

UWEX, Natural Resources Conservation Service, and Land and Water Conservation Department partnered to hold a Soil Health Field Day. Over 100 agency staff, farmers, and students learned the importance of organic matter and cover crops as it relates to water infiltration, soil erosion, and runoff.

Twelve producers received assistance with developing nutrient management plans. Pesticide applicator training was provided to 30 people.

In 2015 UW-Extension leveraged \$132,296 in grants and \$613,449 in state specialist value to support programming in Winnebago County.



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.

New in 2015...

For over 40 years, UWEX has supported a community garden. Grant funds were used in 2015 to hire an outreach coordinator to work with Hmong Gardeners to learn more about their techniques and to bridge relationships between gardeners.

Ongoing programs...

Through our Wisconsin Nutrition Education Program, our educators

reached nearly 5,000 people in schools and community sites. The program helps limited-income families and individuals learn meal planning, and safe food preparation/storage leading to better choices and healthy changes in their lives.

Research based home food preservation information is shared via community presentations, publications and one-on-one instructions.

Master Gardener volunteers responded to gardening questions from 315 residents, conducted community projects and connected seniors and the disabled to healthy food through therapeutic gardening.





Stronger Economies

“I appreciate all the work you do for the Towns... keeping us on top of things so we can present a professional front to the public.”

—Town Clerk

In 2015 we hosted 550 meetings, at the JP Coughlin Center, with over 11,773 people in attendance.



Growing stronger economies means supporting business development and growth, creating cross-sector support for businesses, and teaching families how to stretch their budgets.

New in 2015...

Conversations with Economic development professionals in the Fox Valley and Oshkosh area indicate that a significant barrier to workforce development is exposing youth to actual businesses and connecting young people’s experiences with job skills. In response, UW-Extension (UWEX) developed a workforce skills survey for 4-H youth and adults in the county. The purpose of the survey is to understand the desires of youth and parents with respect to workforce skills development and how it relates to skills employers seek.

Statistics show that 70% of family business owners plan to retire in 10 years. Without proper business succession planning a loss of even a few businesses in areas like the City of Omro

could have negative economic impacts. UWEX worked with representatives from UW-Oshkosh Small Business Development Center and the Wisconsin Family Business Forum to address this need by sponsoring a business succession planning presentation in Omro. Fifteen people representing six different communities attended.

Ongoing programs...

Teaching youth Science, Technology, Engineering & Math (STEM) skills continues through monthly LEGO® Club meetings and events like National Youth Science Day.

Fifteen youth completed a six week tractor and farm safety course. Course participants earn certification allowing them to work on a farm, adding manpower to the farm labor force.

Winnebago County Faculty, Staff and Committee in 2015

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Sarah Thompson, 4-H Youth and Science Educator

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Winnebago County UWEX 2015 Annual Report –February 2016

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