



HEALTH EQUITY AND WELL-BEING

The Cooperative Extension System (Extension) and its partners are working together to foster healthy people, livable communities, and a strong nation. Extension's approach to improving the health of the nation can save as much as \$1 billion each year in health care costs. The U.S. spends 17% of its GDP on health care, twice the global average. A significant portion of the poor health in the U.S. is preventable—nearly half of the health burden in the U.S. is attributed to behavioral and contextual risk factors that increase the prevalence of disease. Among those experiencing the greatest number of obstacles to achieving optimal health are people of color and those living in the most urban and the most rural areas of the country.

The challenge of keeping people healthy has become even more difficult recently due to the increased prevalence of toxic stress and mental health disorders. Extension is helping address these issues by providing connective services to youth, seniors, and underserved populations that allow them to get the assistance they need. These examples illustrate the power of Extension health programs in partnering for positive change:



Fostering Healthy Food Choices: In California, Extension program participants increased fresh fruit and vegetable purchases among participants by 171% since completing the [CalFresh Program](#). In Ohio, 58% of survey participants in a program offered by Extension reported cooking at home more frequently and managing food resources more effectively.



Changing Lifestyles for Long-term Health: Walking has a positive effect on health and weight. Adult participants in an Indiana-based Extension walking program increased their physical activity. At baseline, participants reported walking an average of 146.2 minutes per week, and this increased to 310.3 minutes after the program. At baseline, 28% met national physical activity guidelines and this increased to 92% after the walking program.



Building Healthy Minds: [Mindful Mechanics](#) is an Extension program that teaches youth to check in with their body, manage their thoughts and emotions, focus on the present moment, find reasons to be grateful, use positive self-talk, and visualize joy. Teens who learn these skills report being able to better manage their own mental health and are more prepared to help others.



Improving Health Equity: Alabama A&M University, a historically black institution, created the [Alabama Health Rocks!](#) Extension 4-H program designed to empower young people with the tools to reduce or eliminate tobacco, alcohol, and drug use. After 10 hours of training, 76% of youths felt confident enough to say “no” to vaping and drug use, and 84% understood the dangers of vaping.

INVESTING IN THE FUTURE

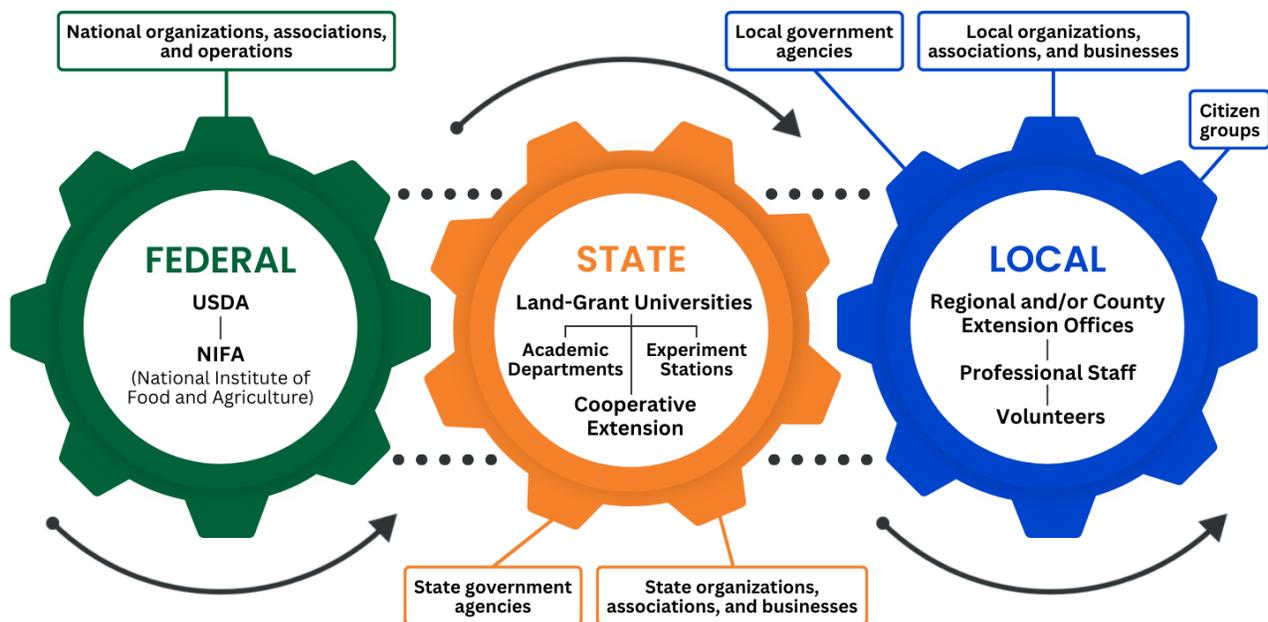
Investing in the Cooperative Extension System through Smith-Lever, 1890s Extension, 1994 Extension, and new partnership funding will allow the System to build out the educational resources that address human and community issues around health equity and well-being. This investment will prioritize prevention education in a common-sense approach to reducing health care costs for people, communities, and the nation.

COOPERATIVE EXTENSION

AN UNPRECEDENTED REACH

The [Cooperative Extension System](#), in partnership with [USDA's National Institute of Food and Agriculture \(NIFA\)](#), [National 4-H Council](#), and [Extension Foundation](#), is translating research into action for agriculture, health, natural resources, and human sciences to rapidly get practical tools and knowledge into the hands of people and communities who need them.

With over 32,000 state and local professionals and 1M+ volunteers, Extension is a nationwide, educational network that empowers farmers, ranchers, families, and communities to meet the challenges they face. With its wide reach — an office in or near most of the nation's approximately 3,000 counties — Extension professionals help people to adapt to changing agricultural practices and technology; improve nutrition, health, and food safety; prepare for and respond to emergencies; protect our environment; and prepare the nation's youth with essential skills to become tomorrow's leaders.



TRANSLATING RESEARCH INTO ACTION

[Land-Grant University](#) faculty members translate science-based research results into practical educational resources appropriate for targeted audiences.

County-based educators work at the local level to identify issues, provide outreach education, evaluate the effectiveness of learning tools, and collect grassroots input to prioritize future research needs.

By living and working in communities, county Extension educators leverage relationships to respond to local needs, build trust, and engage effectively with their communities. [Find Extension in every state and territory using this interactive map.](#)