



Extension

UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN-MADISON
ASHLAND COUNTY





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Extension

UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN-MADISON
ASHLAND COUNTY

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Extension

UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN-MADISON
ASHLAND COUNTY

January 1, 2022 - December 31, 2023

Dear Ashland County Board of Supervisors, Community Partners & Interested Readers,

In this 2023 annual report you'll find that at the UW-Madison Division of Extension Ashland County, our resourceful and resilient educators and staff are focused on helping the community members of Ashland County to meet community challenges, strengthen families and individuals, protect natural resources and support young people. We had another year of great Extension programming in Ashland County and all of Wisconsin! We worked to continue connecting local people with the knowledge and research of the University of Wisconsin. We utilized our local, regional and statewide networks to support communities in responding to emerging issues and we brought new ideas and great resources to Ashland County.

Extension services are a result of a contracted partnership between the county and the state. As a department of Ashland County, we use county resources efficiently and responsibly. As you can see on the budget page of this report, our local work is financed not only by Ashland County, but also by the UW system (using state and federal resources).

We developed this report with data and stories from 2023. We highlight positive outcomes from all of our major educational programs. Our staff works to address high priority local needs through our educational programming and our collaborations with community groups, volunteers and program partners. We could not be effective in our work without the valuable contributions of our various partners. Strong partnerships are at the heart of our programs -- we can achieve more together!

THANK YOU to the Ashland County Board of Supervisors, the County Administrator, and the Agriculture & Extension Education Committee for your continued support of Extension Ashland County during 2023. We appreciate the opportunity to serve Ashland County residents and local efforts to strengthen our people, our communities, and our economy.

On behalf of the Extension Ashland County staff,

Mary Pardee
Area Extension Director
Area 1 (Ashland, Bayfield, Iron & Douglas
Counties)

2023 Ashland County Agriculture & Extension Education Committee

George Bussey

Pat Kinney

George Mika

Kathy L. Schutte

Matt Mackenzie

Brett Martinsen

2023 Extension Staff

Lissa Radke, Community
Development Educator

Heidi Ungrodt, Families
& Finance Educator

Joy Schelble, FRTEP
Educator

Stephanie Bakker,
FoodWise Coordinator

Marisa Perlberg,
FoodWise Educator

Kate Wallner, 4-H Youth
Development Educator

Blake Frost, Office
Manager

Mary Pardee, Area
Extension Director



Community Development

Lissa Radke, Community Development Educator



Lissa's work with UW Madison Extension focuses on building relationships between individuals, organizations, and University resources to further the goals of the Ashland County Community. Her programming reaches across Ashland County and some participants include: local farmers, business owners, government employees, outdoor professionals, and passionate community members with big ideas. Lissa loves her Extension job! "It's satisfying to work with diverse groups, local governments, and the broader community to find practical solutions to local challenges, and to bring positive change at the grassroots level. It's also exciting to connect the UW's scientists, researchers, and faculty to local people and groups to help Ashland County address our real-world issues. Every day is different and brings new ideas and solutions!"

Ashland County Charges Ahead: Electric Vehicle Work Group

Ashland County Extension initiated a county-wide work group called Ashland County Charges Ahead in partnership with Cheq Bay Renewables to accomplish four goals that advanced a clean energy economy including electric vehicle infrastructure and solar installations. About 35 diverse stakeholders from around the county developed a map of existing and proposed EV charging stations for the county, as well as a 2024 outreach campaign with a calendar of monthly activities to enhance understandings of these new vehicles entering our county.



Extension celebrated the opening of the City of Ashland's first public EV charging station in downtown Ashland in May 2023.

Activity Highlights



Extension and members of the local chapter of the League of Women Voters thanked local clerks for organizing and conducting safe and fair elections in 2023, including by honoring City of Ashland Election Clerk Sarah Szymaniak in City Hall.

Ashland County Votes! Report Cards Highlighting Voter Turnouts and County Elections

We produced four editions of a new "voting report card" that highlighted information about our local elections in the County.

Each post-election edition contained turnout rates in each of the 16 municipalities in the county, feature stories about local clerks and poll workers, data from the Wisconsin Elections Commission, fun and historical facts about elections, and how to vote in the state. The report cards were shared publicly and with all clerks and local elected officials in the county.



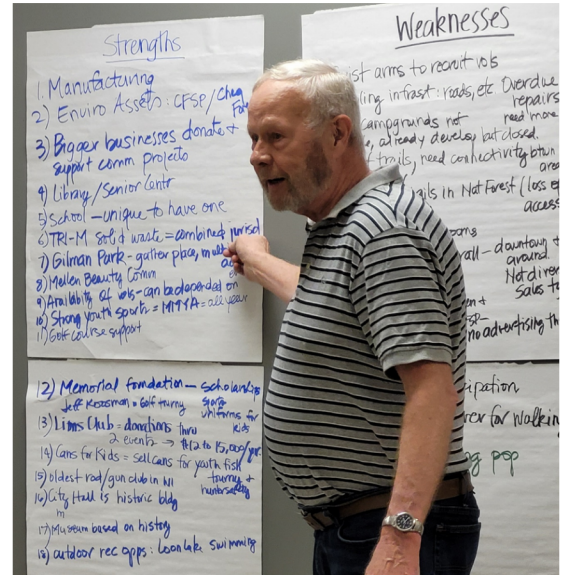
Community Development

Lissa Radke, Community Development Educator

Morse and Mellen Engaged in a Community Economic Analysis Program

Ashland County Extension worked with community leaders and residents in the Town of Morse and City of Mellen to develop a new vision and goals for their community and economic development strategic plans.

Town of Morse Chairman Jeff Ehrhardt summarized feedback at a community conversation to develop action steps to accomplish four new goals. About three dozen people participated in the year-long engagement process including local elected officials, residents, business owners, young people and seniors, and regional and state specialists.



Town of Morse community conversation.

Preparing for Extreme Weather and Natural Disasters

Ashland County Extension partnered with the National Park Service to lead community conversations about how to take actions that will prevent damages and impacts during extreme weather storms and disasters. Participants in Morse and Mellen area, the four townships of Glidden, and Butternut mapped where they experienced the worst flooding impacts in the past in order to plan prevention actions for the future.



Weather readiness community meeting.

28th Annual Cleansweeps

Hazardous Materials Collection Event

Technicians from Veolia Environmental Services helped over 125 participants in the 2023 28th Annual Cleansweeps Hazardous Materials Collection event in Ashland safely recycle and manage their unwanted toxic products. Extension hosted a webinar about how to identify and prepare materials for Cleansweeps, and recruited 12 community volunteers to help at the event.



The Veolia team handling hazardous waste





Human Development & Relationships

Heidi Ungrodt, Families and Finance Educator, 50%



Heidi Ungrodt is a Human Development and Relationships Educator in Ashland County. Her work focuses on building individual and family wellbeing through programs that strengthen social emotional skills and healthy family relationships. Her outreach and programs reach families in times of stress and transition, and participants include co-parents, grandparents raising grandchildren, and justice-involved individuals and their families. Heidi is dedicated to the Wisconsin Idea and Extension's mission of promoting lifelong learning through relevant, engaging and innovative programming.

Activity Highlights



Parents Forever is offered on an ongoing basis in Ashland County for separating or divorcing parents. This evidence-based program helps co-parents learn skills to improve communication and problem solving, support children emotionally and keep kids out of the middle of conflict. In 2023, we returned to in-person offerings, while continuing to reach most families virtually.

We also expanded co-parenting education to include "booster sessions". The **Resilient Co-Parenting** virtual series highlights a different co-parenting topic each month. 2023 sessions included: *Successful Step-Families*, *Families Fighting Fair*, *Relationship Readiness & Forgiveness for Moving Forward*.

The **The Whole Brain Child** class series was developed in Ashland & Bayfield Counties in 2023 for local parents. Based on The Whole Brain Child book and workbook, this virtual series included 5 sessions for parents to learn the science behind their child's developing mind and share ways to survive the everyday struggles that accompany each stage of growth.



Aging Mastery Program

National Council on Aging

The **Aging Mastery Program** is a 10-session series for seniors to develop sustainable behaviors across many dimensions that have been shown to lead to improved health, stronger economic security, enhanced well-being, and increased societal participation. In 2023, through a partnership with Includa Managed Care, we piloted a blended program, hosting an in-person group at the Northern Great Lakes Visitor Center with virtual instruction from professionals from all across the state, reaching 11 in-person participants.



The **Literacy Link** works with local partners to foster positive, literacy focused interactions between children and their justice-involved parent. In 2023 in Ashland County, parents participated in a workshop on the importance of reading aloud to children. Following the workshop, parents had the opportunity to create video recordings reading storybooks, which are then shared with their children at home.

Triple P is an evidence-based parenting program that gives parents simple and practical strategies to help build healthy relationships, confidently manage children's behavior and prevent problems from developing. In 2023, statewide collaboration expanded local access to over 50 sessions of Triple P, reaching 142 different participants. Bayfield County residents attended a combined total of 28 sessions.



Trauma-Informed Caregiving is a research-based program that brings together birth parents, foster parents, kinship providers and family-serving professionals. In 8 weekly sessions, participants learn about the effects of trauma on the developing brains and bodies of children and explore ways to promote support and healing. In 2023, we offered this program virtually to local and statewide participants.



Positive Youth Development

Kate Wallner, 4-H Youth Development Educator



The end of 2023 marked Kate Wallner's first full year as the 4-H Youth Development Educator in Ashland County. During that time, a key focus was to get the annual events cycle as streamlined as possible and find ways of adapting ongoing activities to make them more accessible to the local 4-H community. Other themes of the last year included connecting with project partners near and far, updating communications to fit the current day, and most importantly getting to know the Leaders, families, and youth participants that make 4-H a space of growth and belonging in the Northwoods.

Activity Highlights

Winter The heavy snow in the 2023 winter season kept Nordic skiers busy, including CANSKI members! The Middle and High School CANSKI participants began at the end of 2022, and the Elementary learners started in early January until gear check-in in March. Thanks to a team of Coaches and Volunteers, over fifty youth from Ashland County enjoyed safe and assisted cross country ski practice and the winter wonderland!

Relatedly, the annual Ashwabay Summit Race for skiers of all ages included our 4-H skiers in early February. All the awards for third, second, and first prize winners featured baked goods from community members supporting our efforts, so a huge thank you to those who made pies, cookies, and other treats to share!

In addition to outdoor fun, the new year featured reuniting the Ashland County Teen Court for further training and case preparation to serve as agents of restorative justice for county peers and their families. Whenever the weather got in the way, Teen Court still held meetings over Zoom to make sure work could move forward.



2023 Ashwabay Summit Race!



Volunteers supplied tasty skiing awards!

Spring The annual Art Contest has become a sure sign of spring in 4-H, and the theme of 2023 was decoupage! This medium allowed for uniquely artistic creations! Young artists between the ages of 5 and 19 could enter original artwork and be monetarily rewarded based on their ranking between the seven different age categories. There were twenty entries in total, with each artist receiving a certificate if not also receiving up to fifteen dollars in cash.



Local artists recognized for their talents!

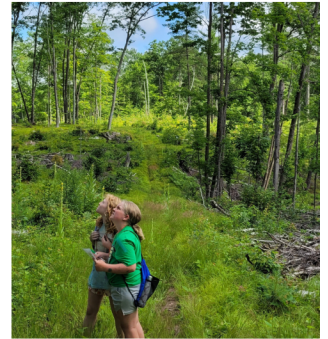
Other highlights of the season include one of our 4-H members joining Wisconsin 4-Hers at Space Camp in Alabama in mid-April! Their trip was funded in part by the Leaders Association during the Member Evaluation process, where youth apply to show their investment in 4-H and continuous learning in and outside of the classroom. The season also saw the beginning of the Ashland County Sewing Club, and since its debut the club has been thriving under its wonderful leadership and partnership with area organizations! They have been busy learning how to sew pillowcases, hats, clothes, and even quilts!



Positive Youth Development

Kate Wallner, 4-H Youth Development Educator

Summer As June began, 4-H Ashland County held a combined Achievement & Art Celebration to honor the entries for the Art Contest and recognize the great accomplishments of 4-Hers from the previous 4-H year. Among the honorees were 6 Member Evaluation awardees, 5 senior graduates, 4 Senior Scholarships from the Ashland County Leaders Association, and even more special awards for various projects. Later in summer, four of our youth excellently represented Ashland County and Bad River as delegates in the Wisconsin Youth Conference of Summer Academy. Held in Madison, Wisconsin, the conference brought young leaders together from around the state to explore career paths and network with future employers. Back up north, collaborations with neighboring counties included Cloverbud Day Camp at Northern Great Lakes Visitor Center, and Summer Camp at Crosswoods near Delta. Then the biggest event of the season is always the County Fair in mid-August! Youth showcased projects in the 4-H Junior Fair Exhibition Hall and 4-H clubs raised money in the delicious Dairy Bar.



*Summer
Camp
scavenger
hunt!*

A huge shout out to the 4-H community members who volunteered their time at the Fair, and a huge thank you to the wider community for supporting youth efforts through buying ice cream or bidding on pies!



Special 4-H Awards at the Fair!



*The
Market
Sale Club
busy at
the Fair!*

Fall As the academic year begins, Fall welcomes a wonderful opportunity for youth to reflect and prepare for opportunities ahead. This coincides with the transition of the 4-H year in October, when Clubs renew their charters, youth members and families renew their enrollment via 4-H Online, and members take stock of all they have accomplished since the Fall before. In Fall, 4-Hers harvest the benefits of their achievements by completing record books that track their activities and applying to awards for funding special programs. Their work receives recognition at the annual Achievement Celebration held in November. In 2023 the event was hosted at the Sigurd Olson Environmental Institute (SOEI) on the Northland College campus. Since the event brings the whole 4-H community together, outdoor and indoor activities were prepared for members to enjoy before the presentation of awards, which included 3 Senior Scholarships, 1 Member Evaluation, and more! The season also offers opportunities to reconnect with collaborators, reach out to potential partners, and recruit more Youth, Leaders, and Volunteers to build our 4-H family. Though it is a busy season as the holidays near, it is wonderful to know the 4-H community makes time to gather and honor one another, too!



Sharing 4-H resources to potential members!



Celebrating 4-H Youth and their accomplishments!



Joy has served the Bad River Band of Lake Superior Ojibwe for the past 9 years as the FRTEP Educator. The Bad River FRTEP project continues to strengthen the health and resiliency of over 300 youth and their family members through linked educational programs that engage people in producing and consuming seasonal foods, restoring knowledge of traditional foodways, and strengthening use and understanding of language and culture. The FRTEP/Extension approach to improving Bad River youths' relationships to food and health includes all the components of growing, harvesting, cooking, and preserving food. There are demonstrations and collaborations around traditional foodways, and meaningful youth involvement in community wide culture camps and harvest events.

Activity Highlights

Natural resources education treaty rights, and connection to place and culture are important in the Bad River community. FRTEP provides youth opportunities to build foundations of knowledge, skills, experience, and confidence through programs that connect them to place and culture. The goals and objectives of the FRTEP program also align with the UW-Native Nations identified priorities of the 12 Native Nations of Wisconsin.

Mentoring Joy and FRTEP provide guidance and resources for young leaders who are improving community health, including the screening of applicants and a recommendation for hire of the new Food Sovereignty Coordinator. FRTEP then helped to train and support the new leader as well as provided needed resources to further food production and distribution across the community, including the construction of raised bed gardens at the home of 12 families in Bad River in 2023 with many more planned for 2024.



In addition, Joy is on the advisory board to manage the Local Food Purchase Assistance Program which started in spring of 2023 with the award of a large USDA grant to create new economic opportunities for tribal hunters, harvesters, and growers and to distribute fresh local food to tribal members. Food was distributed all harvest season of 2023 with complementary educational supports. It was a delicious and nutritious year of education!

Partners

Joy partnered with the Ojibwe Language and Culture program at the Ashland School District to provide education about traditional plant foods and medicines and worked to provide resources to continue this education.

FRTEP facilitated on-site programming for youth with weekly lessons on nutrition, Ojibwe traditional foodways, and food preparation and preservation in partnership with the newly restructured Bad River Food Sovereignty Program, the re-opened Boys and Girls Club, Extension Foodwise Ashland County, and the Ashland County SPARK after school and summer programs.

FRTEP partnered with several tribal programs to serve youth and their families with education and provide resources to further traditional food knowledge and explore career pathways including: AODA services, the new Mashkiiziibii Youth Services, Healing Circle, Youth Diversion, Social Services Family Foundations, and other organizations such as the Savannah Institute, UW-Madison's Nelson Institute, and the Indigenous Food Lab.



BAAGA'ADOWEWIN A celebrated highlight is the continued support of the restoration of the healing game of baaga'adowewin. Joy plays an integral role in the resurgence of the traditional Ojibwe lacrosse game for Bad River youth. Thomas Howes, Ojibwe lacrosse leader in for the Fond Du Lac Band of Ojibwe said, "This is the first generation of Ojibwe youth growing up with a lacrosse stick in their hand since the 1800s."

Players who were interviewed said the game had made them more physically active and confident in participating in other physical activities and focus more on academics at school. An after school program staff person reported,

"I see the kids at school, and I see them at the SPARK after school program, and they are just low, but on days that they play lacrosse they are bright and energized, and when I see them in the game, they are so full of light. It is so awesome to see them do this Ojibwe game."

Bad River Social Services and AODA staff recognize baaga'adowewin as a somatic therapy in supporting native youth who are at higher risk of mental health issues, drug and alcohol related problems, and higher rates of suicide than white youth.



FRTEP has been facilitating community and school-based games since 2018.

172 youth and adults participated in the 2023 season.

170 hours of game time over the 2023 season.



Healthy Choices Healthy Lives

FoodWise is federally funded by the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program-Education (SNAP-Ed) and the Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program (EFNEP). With local strengths, we support healthy eating habits, active lifestyles, and healthy community environments for Wisconsin residents experiencing limited incomes through nutrition education at the individual, community, and systems levels.



Ashland County Landscape

Whether people are healthy or not is affected by systems, policies, and environmental factors.

11%

of county residents experience limited income and low access to a grocery store.[^]



17%

of county residents use SNAP benefits to purchase food for themselves and their families.*



[^]County Health Rankings

* WI Dept of Administration and WI Dept of Health Services

Achieving More Together

UW-Madison Division of Extension works alongside the people of Wisconsin throughout urban and rural communities to deliver practical educational programs where people live and work. In Ashland County, FoodWise partners with schools, after-school programs, Head Start programs, senior meal programs, and food pantries to help make the healthy choice the easy choice in our communities.

Community

Impacts in 2023

Collaborated with two other FoodWise teams to provide three virtual StrongBodies strength training series over Zoom.

Our team continues to create a monthly newsletter and distribute to partners with information on food security resources, Harvest of the Month content, recipes, and more!



Congratulations to Marisa for receiving the 2023 FoodWise Community Engagement Golden Award!

Inspiring Collaborations



Garden Club and **Chef's In Training** are two collaborative efforts that we supported in 2023. The programs helped youth learn more about preparing healthy recipes, maintaining food safety, and growing produce gardens. This collaborative effort was between Bad River Boys and Girls Club and their youth, Bad River Food Sovereignty, Bad River FRTEP, and FoodWise.

Garden Club took place during the summer at Bad River Food Sovereignty. Youth learned about different cultural garden practices. Afterwards, they prepared and sampled a healthy snack.

In the Fall, **Chef's in Training** started. This was a weekly program where youth from the Boys and Girls Club prepared a healthy recipe while learning cooking skills and food safety along the way. Produce from Bad River Food Sovereignty was incorporated whenever possible. We are excited to continue to support the growth of these programs in 2024!



Connect With Us

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Stephanie Bakker
Nutrition Coordinator



Marisa Perlberg
Nutrition Educator



Deb Leonard
Nutrition Educator

Multi-level Program Efforts

Extension is thrilled to receive a 5-year CDC High Obesity Program (HOP) grant award for activities focused in Ashland and Menominee Counties!

Grant strategies focus on food and nutrition security through food service and nutrition guidelines. Plus, fruit and vegetable vouchers, produce prescriptions, safe and accessible physical activities, and early care and education (ECE) settings.

The grant started in September 2023 and throughout the first year, we focused on assessment to guide planning for future years. Other efforts include gathering existing community and state assessments to inform programming. We look forward to keeping the community posted on progress made in 2024.



2023 Budget

In 2023, the work of the Ashland County Extension office was completed by 6 educators and 1 full-time office manager. Our staffing can change over the course of the year - needs change with the time of year, funding availability, vacancies, and special opportunities. Over the course of a year, Extension touches a lot of community needs!

The success of Ashland County Extension programming relies on four aspects:

- **County funding**
- **Donations, Grants & Fees**
- **State funding**
- **Volunteers**

Local educators are part of a statewide network that supplies programming support, topic expertise, professional development and funding. Ashland County benefits from the expertise of statewide Extension specialists on topics such as economic development, agriculture, and climate change.

In Extension, local educators are co-funded by the county and state. County funds help to outfit Extension with office supplies, technology, and program and travel costs. Providing valuable support to our programming efforts is our Office Manager, an Extension staff member fully funded by the county.

FoodWise, our nutrition education program, is paid for by federal SNAP-Ed (Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program Education) funds that come through UW-Madison Division of Extension. Ashland County FoodWise is part of a three-county project which also includes Bayfield and Iron Counties. Ashland County and the Bad River Band of Lake Superior Chippewa host our FRTEP Educator, which is a federal grant. County funds are not involved in the salaries of the FoodWise Coordinator, FoodWise Educator, FRTEP Educator or Area Extension Director.

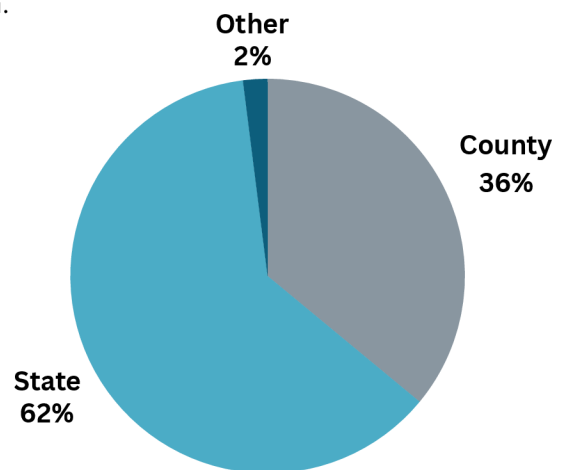
The charts show the basics of where our funding comes from.

County:	Co-Funded Staff Fee	\$102,250
	Support Staff	\$53,961
	Office & Technology	\$4,573
	Educational Program Support	\$5,601
		\$166,385

State:	Co-Funded Staff Salary/Fringe	\$92,566
	FoodWise Staff & Program	\$63,178
	FRTEP Staff & Program	\$84,000
	Program Support	\$1,200
	Professional Development	\$9,023
	Director Salary/Fringe	\$36,933
		\$286,900

Other:	Donations, Grants, Fees	\$8,000
		\$8,000

TOTAL EXTENSION BUDGET= \$461,285



Extension Trained Volunteers contributed another **\$61,056** in value that is not included on this chart.
(Using the 2023 standard "Independent Sector" rate of \$31.80.)

