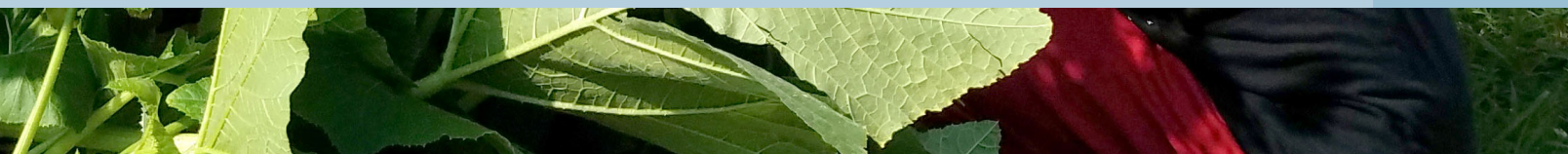




CYFAR ANNUAL REPORT

2017

Promoting the Well-Being of Children, Youth, & Families At-Risk



The Children, Youth, and Families At-Risk (CYFAR) Program is funded by the National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA) to support collaborative programming with the nation's land-grant college and university system. Although only the 1862 and 1890 land-grant colleges and universities are eligible, the institutions within the land-grant system collaborated with some 1994 land-grant colleges. This collaborative programming provided positive outcomes for children, youth, and families placed at risk and served by those institutions. The 2017 CYFAR Annual Report features the highlights of these programmatic activities, outcomes, and impacts.

CYFAR overall is aligned with USDA's Goal 4: facilitate rural prosperity and economic development; the Research, Education, and Economics (REE) Action Plan Goal 4 and 6: nutrition and child obesity and education and science literacy; and, the NIFA Strategic Plan Goal 1: science: catalyze exemplary and relevant research, education, and Extension programs. The alignment is affirmed in evidence-based projects ranging from gardening entrepreneurs to nutrition education to STEM to parent-child reading enhancement, just to name a few.

Since the CYFAR Program's inception, the program has served some 257,000 children and parents in communities that are considered at risk. Furthermore, adult and youth combined have contributed some 645,850 hours at a value of \$15,590,819 (based on 2018 valuation) to those communities. Some 4,050 4-H clubs have been created because of the willing engagement of trained and skilled volunteers and staff.

CYFAR program engagement by the 45 Project Directors, in 43 states and U.S. Territories, includes two to three program sites. Funding also includes the valuable work of the CYFAR Professional Development and Technical Assistance (PDTA) Center of both the University of Minnesota and Pennsylvania State University and the Military PDTA Program operated through Kansas State University.

The CYFAR Evaluation Study (University of Minnesota and Pennsylvania State University) indicates significant differences related to CYFAR participation and is associated with 1) leadership development; 2) nutrition education for high school participants; 3) science education for high school and middle school students; 4) workforce preparation for middle school student participants; 5) technology; and, 6) parenting. The data demonstrates that there is a significant relationship between program quality and positive youth outcomes.

The outcomes revealed in this CYFAR Annual Report indicate the measured impacts on youth, families, and communities placed at risk, from coast to coast in rural and urban communities; in Tribal communities and small towns; and in schools and community buildings/centers through the informal education of the Extension system. Overall, the Report shares the skills developed, knowledge gained, and life trajectories positively impacted by the Extension system marshalling its resources for the good of America's citizens.

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2017 CYFAR Demographics

Each year, the Children, Youth, and Families At-Risk (CYFAR) Program strives to increase our impact on the communities we serve. Without any budgetary increase, we've served more participants and grown our staff and volunteers.



30.85 %

increase in staff/volunteers from last year



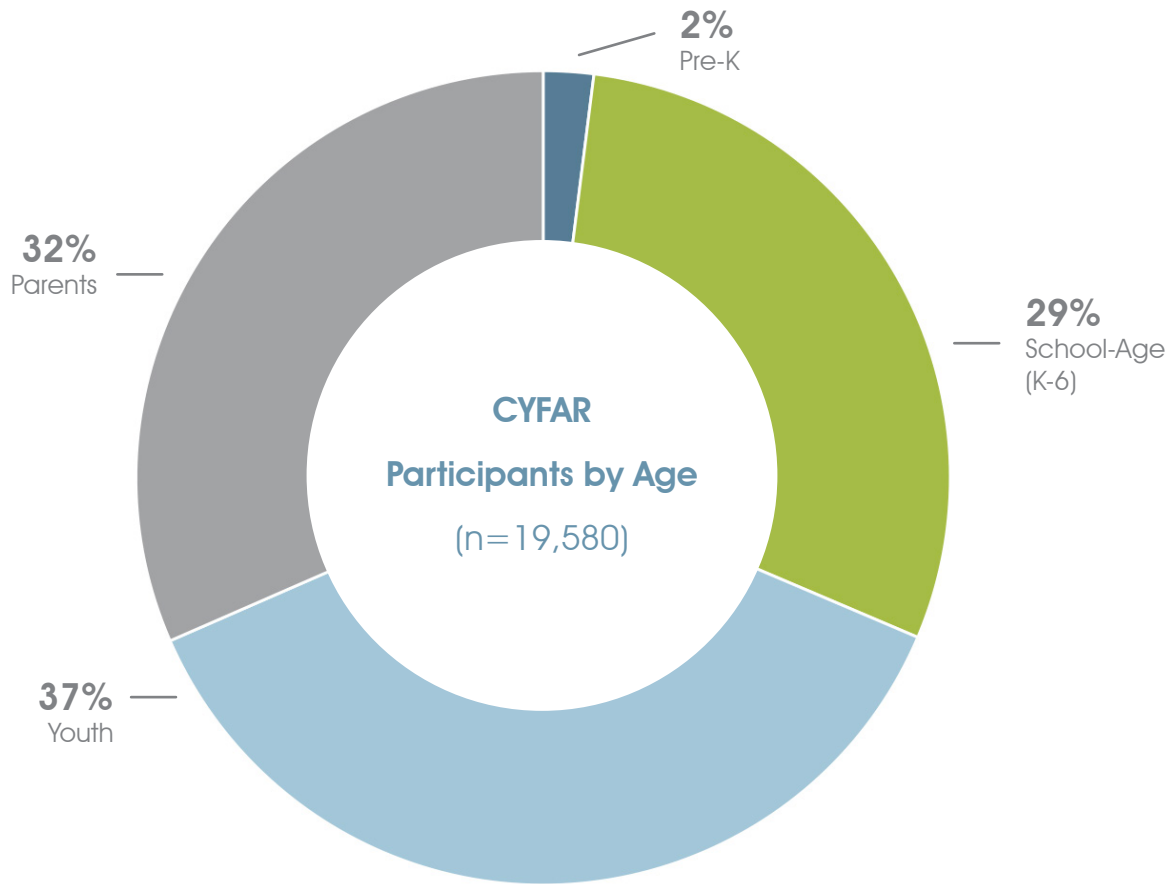
19,580

CYFAR participants served in 2017



10.11 %

growth in participants served since last year

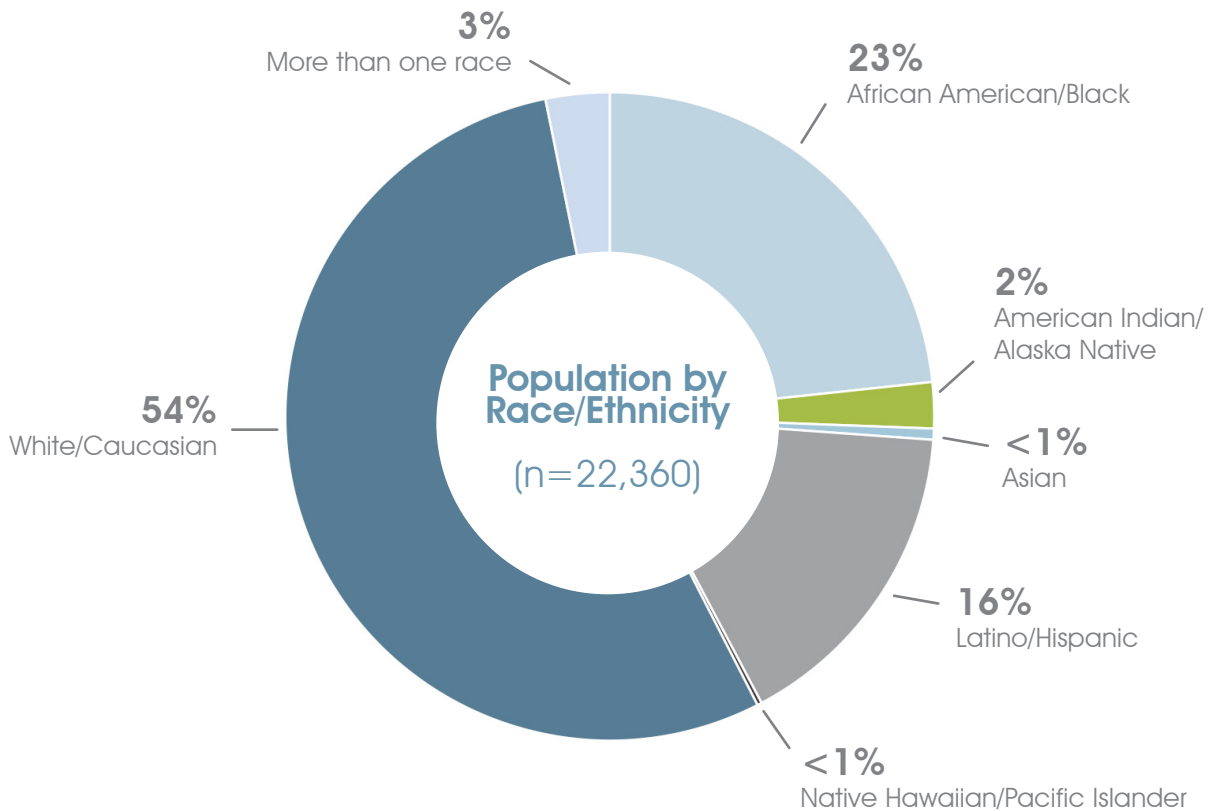
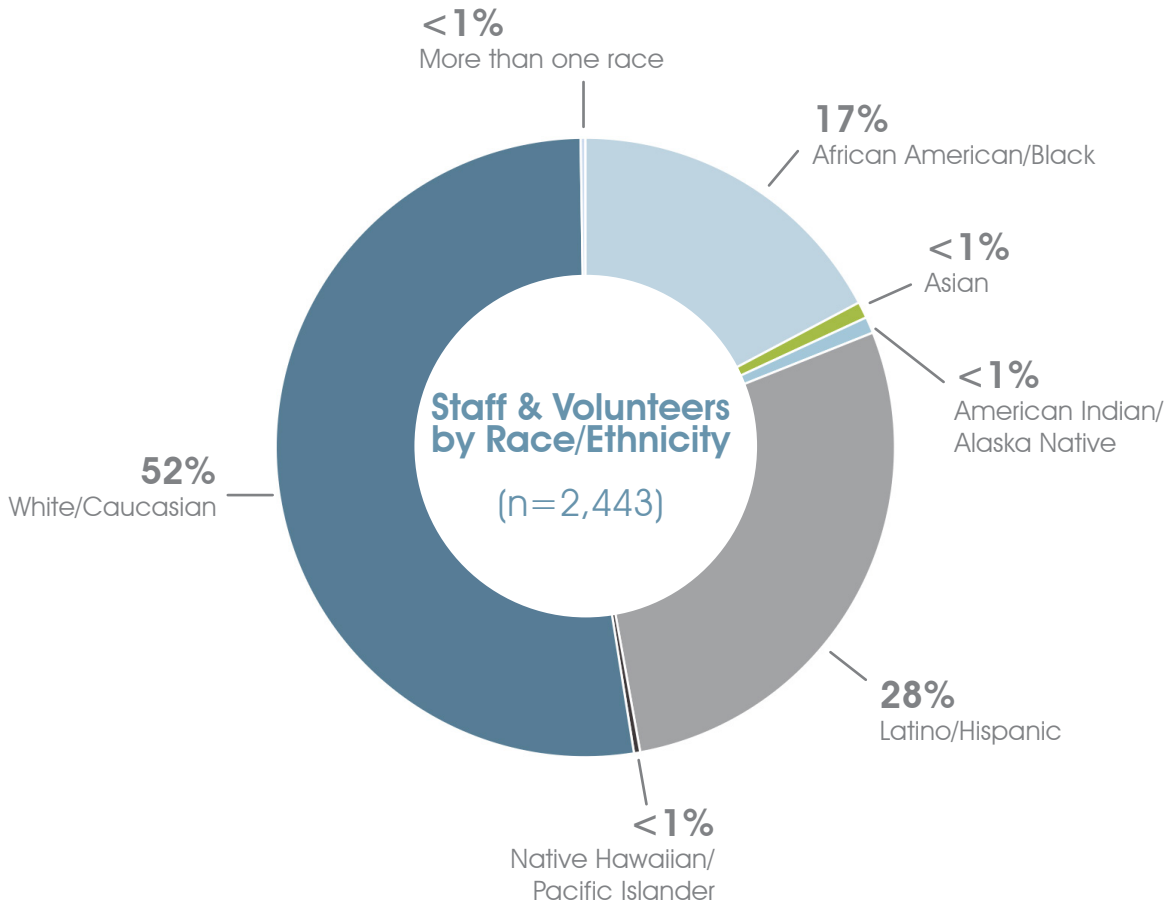


Programs Serving Youth in Poverty

State	University	Project Name	Percentage of Youth Served in Poverty (>50%)
Alabama	Alabama A&M University	Parent and Child Reading Enhancement Program	77%
Alaska	University of Alaska	Fostering Youth Towards a Revolution of Responsibility	100%
Delaware	Delaware State University	Delaware State University Sustainable Community Project	81%
Georgia	University of Georgia	Project GROWL (Growing Real Opportunities in Work and Life)	100%
Indiana	Purdue University	4-H PALS	64%

State	University	Project Name	Percentage of Youth Served in Poverty (>50%)
Iowa	Iowa State University	Juntos: Together for a Better Education and Success for At-Risk Youth in Iowa Communities	75%
Kentucky	University of Kentucky	Youth Engagement and Support (YES)	97%
Kentucky	University of Kentucky	Strong Dads, Resilient Families	66%
Louisiana	Louisiana State University	Healthy YOUTH...Strong Communities	100%
Maine	University of Maine	4-H Community Central	69%
Minnesota	University of Minnesota	Urban 4-H STEM Clubs	92%
Minnesota and Tennessee	University of Minnesota and Tennessee State University	U-Connect	78%
Minnesota	University of Minnesota	Fostering Achievement & Connections to Engage Students (FACES)	86%
Missouri	University of Missouri	4-H Youth Futures	80%
Montana	Montana State University	Linking Youth to Agricultural and Environmental Practices Using STEM	51%
Nebraska	University of Nebraska	WeCook: Fun with Food & Fitness	74%
Nevada	University of Nevada	Heart & Shield: A Program to End Family Violence	60%
New Jersey	State University of New Jersey, Rutgers	Science Pathways	100%
New York	Cornell University	New York 4-H Youth Community Action Network (Youth CAN)	100%
North Carolina and Oklahoma	North Carolina State University and Oklahoma State University	The Juntos Program (NC) and Unidos Se Puede (OK)	93%

State	University	Project Name	Percentage of Youth Served in Poverty (>50%)
North Carolina and South Carolina	North Carolina State University, Clemson University, and North Carolina A&T State University	4-H STEM Education & Science Literacy: Developing the Next Generation of Scientists	69%
Ohio	Ohio State University	Urban G.E.M.S. (Gardening Entrepreneurs Motivating Sustainability)	95%
Ohio and Virginia	Ohio State University and Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University	Food for a Long Life: A Community-Based Intergenerational Project	84%
Oklahoma	Oklahoma State University	iUnidos Se Puede!	88%
Oregon	Oregon State University	4-H Food + Fun Club	76%
Pennsylvania	Pennsylvania State University	PROMoting School-community-university Partnerships to Enhance Resilience	90%
Rhode Island	University of Rhode Island	CELS: Integrating Nutrition Education into Full Service Schools in Providence	91%
South Carolina	Clemson University	Clemson Sustainable Community Project 2013	91%
Texas	Texas A&M University	Urban Community Sustainability	94%
U.S. Virgin Islands	University of the Virgin Islands	Healthy Youth Leading the Way in the Virgin Islands	100%
Vermont	University of Vermont	Helping Vermont Youth PROSPER	56%
West Virginia and Iowa	West Virginia State University and Iowa State University	PROMoting School-community-university Partnerships to Enhance Resilience	66%



2017 CYFAR Budget

The total budget for the CYFAR Program equaled \$8,395,000, representing 44 Sustainable Community Projects (SCP). These SCP represented 84% (\$7,040,000) of the budget; this is inclusive of both new and continued awards. Eligible universities include both 1862 and 1890 Institutions; both type of Land-grant Institutions could subaward to 1994 Institutions. Funds provided support to County 4-H Professionals for military youth programs in all state programs; the amount of funding for Military Programs was \$400,000 or 5% of the budget. The professional development and technical assistance for the CYFAR SCP represented \$613,350 or 7% of the budget dedicated to the Professional Development and Technical Assistance Center. The remaining 4% (\$335,800) was devoted to NIFA overhead.

84%

of the CYFAR budget going directly to SCPs

44

Sustainable Community Projects

\$400,000

dollars in military program funding



**CYFAR IMPACT:
STATE SPOTLIGHT**

Louisiana State University

Following several leadership experiences, youth participants responded to a series of measures about development of leadership skills. All participants (100%) reported that the program had help them learn to determine needs, set goals, use information to solve problems, and solve problems. Program participants also reported improvement in the affective domain with 100% of youth reporting that the program helped them to express feelings, be honest with others, and respect others. The program had a positive impact on the youth leading them to believe that they had acquired essential leadership skills and experienced positive changes at the affective level.

Michigan State University: Building Early Emotional Skills (BEES)

The preliminary results of this period of data collection suggest positive changes. In particular, parents' acceptance and support of their children's negative emotions increased from pre to post assessment. In addition, parents' rejection of children's negative emotions and their unsupportive responses to children's expressions of anger, fear, and sadness decreased from pre to post assessment. Knowledge

of early social-emotional development increased as well. Parenting distress decreased from pre to post assessment. The preliminary data results suggest positive links between BEES and parental functioning, knowledge about early childhood social-emotional development, and the quality of parenting, including emotionally supportive parenting.

University of Kentucky: Youth Engagement and Support (YES)

When homeless youth are given the same opportunities as other youth, 100% are successful at applying chosen life skills, such as acquiring employment and housing, opening a bank account, completing a GED or high school diploma, and more. The most basic needs have to be met first in order for homeless youth to be able to apply life skills. All participants stated they need mentors and elders to help them as they apply life skills.

Iowa State University: Juntos

Analysis of data via paired t-tests related to youth pro-social behavior, empathy, decision-making, and critical thinking suggests that before the youth experienced the intervention, they showed a decrease in attitudes and behaviors associated with these constructs. However, after youth engaged in the intervention, attitudes and behaviors associated with these constructs stopped going in a negative direction and, in contrast, stabilized or moved in a positive direction. Analysis of two waves of parent survey data (e.g., before intervention and 10 months later) did not indicate any change in parent attitudes or behaviors.

After youth started participating in the intervention, they showed greater prevalence of attitudes and behaviors that are theoretically linked to completion of high school and pursuit of post-secondary education. These findings suggest that the program is having a positive effect on youth's attitudes and behaviors that are linked to their future educational attainment.

University of Minnesota: Urban 4-H STEM Clubs

Finding 1. Youth had a tangible plan—a portfolio they could share with their families—for higher education. Finding 2. Youth feel they had experiences in the programs relevant to their future goals and that this helped clarify their pathways (e.g., an aspiring astronomer had the opportunity to visit a planetarium and talk to students studying astronomy in college). Finding 3. Future planning activities made youth feel nervous about college, but more prepared (e.g., “I thought it would be super easy, like just engineering, but it takes really hard work and a lot of years.”). This was not a deterrent, but rather a wake-up call to begin working on their plans. Finding 4. Mentors matter related to future readiness: “Lots of people here [at program] inspire me to finish high school and go on to college.”

While all participants came to the programs with the goal of going to college in the future, they are now more prepared to achieve this goal. Youth recognize that the pathway to college is more difficult than they thought. Youth have created specific action plans, most of which include plans to meet regularly with a close mentor (non-family) to help them understand the steps (and emotions) related to going to college. Findings suggest the Urban 4-H Program fostered preparedness. Higher education was no longer an abstract desire but an achievable goal for which they were prepared.

University of Nebraska:

WeCook: Fun with Food & Fitness

Results revealed youth increased their confidence and had positive attitudes toward food preparation, and youth transferred knowledge from the out-of-school time setting to the home environment. Six findings emerged from the data: 71.4% of families reported youth helped more with food preparation, 78.5% of families reported their youth had a more positive attitude toward food preparation, 57.1% of families reported a desire for increased family meals, 50% of families reported a desire for increased

exercise together, 57.1% of families reported an increase in confidence, and 42.8% of families reported their child was more independent.

WeCook may potentially help address these issues by providing youth the needed skills to help prepare healthy meals at home. However, more research is needed to fully understand how WeCook impacted the home environment.

University of Minnesota and

Tennessee State University: U CONNECT

There was a general trend towards experiencing positive interactions with peers and adults in the program among students who completed both the pre and post surveys. Students who completed the pre and post survey also reported an increase in positive experiences with teachers. 41% - 69% of respondents in the post survey reported that their peers in the program were willing to help each other. 51% - 61% of respondents in the post survey reported that their peers in the program were respectful of one another. 86% - 100% of respondents in the post survey reported that adults were eager to help young people. 67% - 100% of respondents in the post survey reported that school teachers were there for them when they needed them.

An increase in positive experiences with peers and adults in the program contributes to student engagement, increased self-confidence, and understanding that there are resources to help them achieve academic success.

University of Nevada: Heart & Shield: A Program to End Family Violence

Each respondent indicated an increase in knowledge on a majority of questions included in the survey. Responses to the question, "Was there anything that was especially helpful to you? If so, what?" included "Learning to listen and not jumping into solutions," "Find positive alternatives for behavior," "Resources offered and the emotional and developmental effects of family fighting [on children]," and "Seeing other parents struggle and all of us talking about it and supporting each other!". The importance of communication, using good listening skills, and learning how to talk to their children about the previous family fighting were reported by all parents as most beneficial.

University of Rhode Island: Integrating Nutrition Education into Full Service Schools

For the treatment control data of Year 4, ANOVA found a significant ($p < 0.05$) time by group interaction in how many times salty snacks were eaten in the previous day and improved self-efficacy to consume low-fat milk products by the treatment students compared to control students. Paired-t tests (treatment $n = 62$) found a significant ($p < 0.05$) decrease from baseline to post-assessment in how many times a sugar-sweetened beverage was consumed in the previous day, a decrease in how often a salty snack was eaten between meals, and an increase in how many times a fruit was consumed in the previous day in the

treatment group. For the teacher-taught program, paired t-tests found significant improvements in self-efficacy to improve drink consumption (by choosing low fat milk and reducing sweet drinks).

The 13-week in-school nutrition education program is effective in decreasing 3rd grade students' consumption of unhealthy energy-dense snacks and drinks and increasing their intake of fruit. Classroom teachers delivering the program showed increased self-efficacy and promise of behavior change.

University of Ohio: Urban G.E.M.S. (Gardening Entrepreneurs Motivating Sustainability)

Findings (pre-test to post-test) included an 11% increase in the number of youth who eat two or more fruits each day; 51.7% increased fruit consumption; 62% plan to keep eating fruit; 9% increase in the number of youth who eat 3 or more vegetables each day; 51.7% increased vegetables consumption; 55.1% plan to keep eating vegetables; 44.8% improved knowledge of healthy eating; and 51.7% plan to use new cooking skills.

NIFA Strategic Goals

- Goal 1 - Science: Catalyze exemplary and relevant research, education and extension programs.
- Goal 2 - People: Transform NIFA into a model agency with a highly motivated workforce.
- Goal 3 - Process: Institutionalize streamlined, effective technologies, policies, and processes.
- Goal 4 - Communication: Advance America's global preeminence in food and agricultural sciences.

USDA Strategic Goals

1. Ensure USDA programs are delivered efficiently, effectively, and with integrity and a focus on customer service.
2. Maximize the ability of American agricultural producers to prosper by feeding and clothing the world.
3. Promote American agricultural products and exports.
4. Facilitate rural prosperity and economic development.
5. Strengthen the stewardship of private lands through technology and research.
6. Foster productive and sustainable use of our National Forest System Lands.
7. Provide all Americans access to a safe, nutritious and secure food supply.

CYFAR SCP ANNUAL REPORTS

Parent-Child Reading Enhancement Program

Alabama | **Alabama A&M University**

USDA Strategic Goal 1 | CYFAR Common Measure: Parenting

The Parent-Child Reading Enhancement Program (PCREP), based on Bronfenbrenner's systems theory, seeks to help parents more effectively demonstrate and reinforce good reading behaviors in their children. Fifty-six parents in Madison County, Alabama were taught various reading strategies to use in teaching their children how to read or improve their reading skills. The program consisted of 6 weeks of instructions twice a week for 1.5 hours. The classes focused on phonemic awareness, phonics, vocabulary, comprehension, and fluency. While parents were taught by trained educators how to implement research-based strategies for building children's reading skills, their children were simultaneously taught the same skills by service-learning students from the Department of Early Childhood Education at Alabama A&M University. During the last 30 minutes of each class, parents and children again practiced strategies learned that day together. Participants' understanding of how to teach their children to read

along with their ability to assess their children's reading skills and abilities increased significantly after participating in PCREP. Likewise, they felt significantly more knowledgeable about how to use things in a child's environment to teach reading, how to use games to teach reading skills, how to use various activities to teach reading skills, and how to regularly engage their

literacy. The event not only allowed families to have fun together but also allowed children to earn PCREP dollars while they learn, which can be used to buy books and other educational items from the PCREP bookstore.

Sustainability Statement: PCREP will become a statewide program within the Urban Affairs and New

“The tools you taught me [have] benefited him well. He’s in the first grade, and he’s reading fluently with an A in reading. Thanks again!”

children in reading-related activities after participating in PCREP, which also implemented a family event focused on providing quality family time whereby children could engage in educational activities centered on

Nontraditional Program Unit of the Alabama Cooperative Extension System starting in 2019. This means that the program will be implemented in all nine urban centers in the state of Alabama.



Positive Parenting Practices

Mississippi | **Mississippi State University**

USDA Strategic Goal 1 | CYFAR Common Measures: Parenting & Workforce Preparation

Positive Parenting Practices educates pregnant and parenting teen and emerging adults on positive parenting, child development, conflict management, and professional skills. The short-term goals are that after participation in the program teens will report more progressive beliefs in their parenting and child-rearing attitudes and show improved workforce preparation skills. The long-term goal is that the community organizations will develop a social support system for pregnant and parenting teens that is sustained over time. From December 2016 through November 2017, four cohorts completed over 20 hours of face-to-face parenting education in the two counties. Participants engaged in 10 group sessions on the transition to parenthood, communication techniques, co-parenting skills, life skills, managing healthy relationships, and healthy sleeping habits. They also attended individual sessions on subjects matched to individual needs. These parents were connected with resources to aid in parenting. Participants

completed pre- and post-program surveys that measured parenting attitudes. All parenting attitudes improved to some extent, indicating positive changes in progressive beliefs in participants' parenting and child-rearing attitudes.

Sustainability Statement: Professional development has been provided to Steering Committee members in an effort to build their capacity to support pregnant and parenting teens and emerging adults. This capacity building is a way to continue supporting the target population after the grant ends. New partnerships with officials from the Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indians could provide more opportunities for reaching the target population. These officials have begun to seek out Extension educators as experts in parenting education. The project staff is also talking to Extension specialists on how to integrate core elements of this program into ongoing programming delivered by Extension agents.

Fostering Youth Towards A Revolution of Responsibility

Alaska | **University of Alaska**

USDA Strategic Goal 1 | CYFAR Common Measure: Workforce Preparation

Approximately 50% of adolescents nationally (Covenant House) and 40% in Alaska who are aging out of foster care and juvenile justice systems will be homeless within six months because they are unprepared to live independently and have limited education and no social support. Fostering Youth Towards a Revolution of Responsibility's long-term goal is to reduce the homeless rate of teens aging out of state custody through developing skills necessary to enter the workforce. A plan is critical when aging out and living independently because the state of Alaska has one of the harshest climates in the U.S., with winter temperatures dipping to -50° F. Snow remains on the ground for more than half of the year and winter daylight is less than 4 hours. Many deaths have resulted from exposure. The cost of living in Alaska is approximately 40% above the national average and ranks ninth for cost to rent a two-bedroom

apartment. It is imperative that young people are aware of these financial challenges and are prepared to live on their own. The experiences of foster care children, including any abuse and neglect they may have suffered, is important in understanding the on-going social-emotional developmental needs of these children.

Sustainability Statement: The staff at both of the sites are trained in using *One Circle Foundation* curricula. At this site, the staff are growing more confident in implementing the program. This has been a real benefit because the staff know the teens very well, are trusted by them, and bring a good dynamic to the group. Also, when university staff are unable to make the weekly group session because of other university 4-H responsibilities, programming now continues without interruption.



GRANDcares Program

Colorado & Hawaii | **Colorado State University & University of Hawaii at Manoa**

USDA Strategic Goal 1 | CYFAR Common Measures: Leadership Development & Parenting

The GRANDcares project is a systems-based intervention for vulnerable grandparent-headed families. The tripartite intervention is based upon family resilience theory and focuses on strengthening self-care and parenting skills in custodial grandparents, developing communication and leadership skills in grandchildren, and increasing the ability of service providers to meet grandfamilies' needs. GRANDcares's long-term goal is to create an effective, evidence-based intervention to improve quality of life for custodial grandparents and their grandchildren. The GRANDcares intervention will contribute to the parent/family national CYFAR outcome as it will assist grandparents in meeting their grandchildren's physical, social, emotional, and intellectual needs.

Sustainability Statement: During Fall 2017, GRANDcare staff started engaging in conversations with a number of community partners and Extension agents (in Colorado) to discuss if this program might be of interest for regular programming. The staff secured new partners for their Spring 2018 co-facilitator training and hope that these individuals and their sponsoring

agencies will continue the GRANDcares program after the grant ends (July 2020). In the Hawaii sites, GRANDcare staff are engaging in conversations around recruitment with community partners. These approaches, along with sustainability planning among the entire team, will

“I look forward to all these sessions. To me, it’s time for myself. I love all the resources given to me. I share all I have learned at this workshop...I recommend this to all who care for others.” - Adams County Grandparent

hopefully result in continued efforts after the funded project ends. Furthermore, grant leaders have met with multiple researchers and Extension agents outside of Colorado and Hawaii about the possibility of translating this project to other states.

Colorado State University Sustainable Community Project

Colorado | **Colorado State University**

USDA Strategic Goal 1 | CYFAR Common Measure: Leadership Development

The Family Leadership Training Institute (FLTI) of Colorado's model provides civic leadership training to parents, family members, and community leaders. These individuals possess the desire to engage in community action, but they are often impeded by limited skills to make change happen for youth and families. A complementary youth program for youth ages 12-14 years is conducted using the evidence-based *DARE to be You* school curriculum developed by Colorado State University Extension. The youth program employs civic leadership activities paralleling those in the adult program. Adult and youth participants are coached as they develop individual community projects that provide opportunities to apply leadership and civic skills to serve others. Additionally, the model includes the development of a network of local partners through a Civic Design Team to assist in building a support network for newly empowered community leaders. Finally, the model connects program alumni to leadership opportunities. Participants are parents, family members, or adult mentors and their youth partners. The program increases engagement of participants in policy processes, and participants become change agents to improve health and education outcomes for families and youth. In the process, parents and family members demonstrate an understanding of their roles and responsibilities

in the care and education of their youth. Youth show improved skills in relation to school success and engagement in their communities.

Sustainability Statement: Leadership team members have quarterly strategic planning meetings and frequent technical assistance calls to address sustainability and identify funding partners and other strategic program partners. The team utilizes a Technology of Participation strategic plan as a blueprint to guide sustainability planning for the final year of the grant and for long-term capacity building.



“I learned to stand up and speak in an assertive manner. I learned how to be a better listener. I learned how to find my passion and advocate for it.”



4-H Community Central

Maine | **University of Maine**

NIFA Strategic Goal 1 | CYFAR Common Measures: Science & Workforce Preparation

Maine 4-H Community Central is a program offered in Lewiston and Portland, Maine. Partnering with schools, community organizations, and public housing, the program focuses on serving youth where they live, learn, and play. Community Central increases science, engineering, technology, and math skills of young people in grades 3 through 6 through targeted enrichment, program offerings, and family events. Community Central staff members are located at public housing sites and form critical relationships with children, adults, and families. Each community site is tailored to the needs of its residents. In Lewiston, Maine, Community Central partners with McMahan Elementary School to provide school enrichment to all students grades 3 through 6. In addition, after-school enrichment programs are offered at four sites throughout the community. These enrichment programs build upon concepts and ideas taught in the classroom. In Portland, Maine, school

enrichment is focused on math, an area of high need. Community Central staff members conduct additional programming at local study centers throughout the community. In both sites, teens from the community are mentored and trained to deliver high-quality science education to young people in the community. In 2017, 592 students in grades 3 through 6 and 84 teens in grades 9 through 12 were reached. The growth of confidence and transferable skills in these young people has proven to be an unexpected outcome of this project. Teen leaders have provided 838 hours of service in the past year; this time is equivalent to a value of over \$18,000 based on Independent Sector's valuation of volunteer hours (\$21.61 per hour). Quarterly events, such as the UMaine Physics Roadshow, help connect the dots from classroom to after-school to home. Although STEM is the focus, young people see that learning can happen anywhere.

With children, teens, families, and community, the foundation is set to become a lifelong learner.

Sustainability Statement: The sustainability of this project has multiple layers. First, the community capacity of the sites has increased, which allows for the continuation of this project on a smaller scale. Secondly, with the schools, the project has intentionally, over the past 4 years, built the capacity of the classroom teachers to duplicate the lessons and outcomes. This was done by staggering the times of year that 4-H visited their classrooms. With the teens as teachers, the public housing sites have applied for external funds to pay stipends. Maine 4-H has also sought out external funding for additional teen teachers through the National Science Foundation and the Established Program to Stimulate Competitive Research (EPSCoR) project.



4-H Pals

Indiana | **Purdue University**

USDA Strategic Goal 4

CYFAR Common Measure: Physical Activity

The Indiana 4-H PALS Project connects 4-H clubs operating after school during the school year with the Purdue University PALS summer program conducted by the Department of Health and Kinesiology on the Purdue University campus each summer. The 4-H clubs operate at an elementary and intermediate school in the Lafayette School Corporation and are the first after-school 4-H clubs established in Indiana with a specific focus on healthy living activities. Over the past year, both 4-H clubs have focused on age appropriate physical activities while also incorporating key pillars such as responsibility, kindness, fairness, and caring along with learning to prepare healthy snack choices. Community instructors have been engaged to teach the basics of judo and rock-climbing at a local activity center. The older youth also learned how to do arboreal climbing with harnesses and rope work and were able to participate in a weekend caving trip that allowed youth to experience spelunking. Parental response has been very positive as more parents are engaging as volunteers, providing additional hands and assistance when needed. Both clubs also have a focus on encouraging service to their community with youth engaged in brainstorming service projects resulting in the creation of an enhanced "spirit of community" among the club members.

Sustainability Statement: From the initiation of this project the focus has been on sustainability and a strategy to keep the youth engaged in long-term 4-H experiences as they age out of each of these schools. Teachers from each of the schools serve as approved 4-H volunteers in the Indiana 4-H Program. This has afforded increased and ongoing relationships with local Purdue Extension staff and other 4-H volunteers. Parents have also assisted as volunteers with special events and activities, thereby building their individual capacities to serve. The teachers and 4-H volunteers have worked to lift the visibility of the 4-H clubs by assuring the club is involved in every family activity each school offers. They also focus on inviting members of the community to serve as activity facilitators for club meetings, enhancing community engagement opportunities for youth. Purchasing resources that are reusable and will remain with the 4-H club and school after the final year of the award has also been a main focus.



Delaware State University Sustainable Community Project

Delaware | **Delaware State University**

USDA Strategic Goal 4

CYFAR Common Measures: Leadership Development, Nutrition, Parenting, & Physical Activity

The Delaware State University Sustainable Community Project works to provide community members nutritional information, programs, and teachings to enhance and better their lifestyles in regard to proper nutrition, health, physical activity, safe food handling, gardening, and leadership development to create a better overall healthy lifestyle for themselves, their families, and their communities.

Sustainability Statement: Delaware project staff are working with community staff and residents to ensure the gardens will continue and be maintained by volunteers, including master gardeners and outside community members. Project workshops continue by training adult parents and families to help teach other residents what they have learned.





Juntos: Together for a Better Education and Success for At-Risk Youth in Iowa Communities

Iowa | Iowa State University

USDA Strategic Goal 1 | CYFAR Common Measure: Workforce Preparation

The Juntos: Together for a Better Education program model is being implemented to increase high school graduation and college application rates among Latino youth who are at risk for not completing high school in Des Moines and Muscatine, Iowa. Juntos was implemented through

the family workshop series (6 lessons), success coaching (a form of one-on-one and group academic mentoring), 4-H clubs (local and state activities), family nights, and multiday college experiences. The success coaches and strong local partnerships with school staff and county

Extension councils were key to the planning and implementation of all aspects of Juntos. One site created a parent advisory group, Padres Juntos, to cultivate parent leadership in planning and implementing family nights. Eighty-nine (89) parents and one hundred four (104) youth actively participated in various elements of the overall project.

“As Hispanics, for us this is something new for our children to go to college. It excites us to see what they are going to achieve. Because they [society] say that since we have not done it, they are not going to be able to achieve it. When we are in a program like Juntos, we see that it is possible.” - Parent in Juntos

Sustainability Statement: The County Extension Councils’ support of financial and human resources and school support and access to infrastructure are in place to sustain Juntos. Staff and volunteer leadership is in place to continue the family workshop series, 4-H club, and other youth focused activities.

U-Connect Kentucky

Kentucky | **Kentucky State University**

USDA Strategic Goal 4

CYFAR Common Measures: Leadership Development, Nutrition, Science, Technology, & Workforce Preparation

Kentucky State University, University of Minnesota, and Tennessee State University developed a multistate grant called U-Connect to address educational disparities for at-risk youth. Programming included *Check & Connect* curriculum, STEM, and parent engagement. Kentucky State University's Cooperative Extension Program implemented the Check & Connect model at three community sites: Imani After School program, Community Inspired Solutions (CIS) in Fayette County, Kentucky, and the Promising Youth Center for Excellence in Franklin County, Kentucky. A total of 54 youth were successfully engaged in programmatic efforts. Youth engaged in educational activities that promoted improvement in academics, behavior, school attendance, and healthy lifestyles. Examples included science, math, technology, goal setting, time management, health and wellness, service learning, reading, career counseling, self-esteem, nutrition, conflict resolution, decision-making, gardening, leadership, and life skills. At the beginning and end of each academic year, youth completed a survey to allow program staff to better understand their needs and experiences with U-Connect. Youth reported an increase in their desire to continue their education beyond high school. Youth also reported high levels of family support that encouraged academic success. The program is relevant and important for the sustainability of the Commonwealth of Kentucky as it affords experiential and learning opportunities that promote educational attainment, academic success, and life skills for improved quality of life.

“My daughter has learned study skills that are important for excelling in school and beyond.” - Parent

Sustainability Statement: Kentucky State University's 4-H program will be working with sites beyond the five years of funding to develop 4-H clubs and/or programs that meet the unique needs of the population the project serves. The 4-H program will continue working with the sites on various activities. A formal meeting will be held by mid spring semester to solidify a sustainability plan in writing. It should be noted that the CIS site functions with the assistance of volunteers. They have a strong volunteer program, so the focus this semester is on providing some resources to strengthen this volunteer program.





Health YOUTH . . . Strong Communities

Louisiana | **Louisiana State University**

USDA Strategic Goal 4 | CYFAR Common Measure: Workforce Preparation

Healthy YOUTH...Strong Communities targets school-age youth who reside in low-income neighborhoods, face the risk of childhood obesity, and are challenged by limited access to nutritious food. The program model uses a variety of delivery modes to teach youth the skills necessary for positive attitudes, engagement, and behaviors related to healthy life choices and community involvement. Weekly educational programs were held for elementary audiences focusing on gardening, nutrition, and leadership development. Community events were held at the Shreveport Public Assembly and Recreation (SPAR) Community Centers for recruitment and to showcase projects participants had been involved in. Collaborators participated by offering services such as health screenings and health education. Teens are involved in financial literacy, robotics, and science-based programming, which incorporates a garden to provide additional hands-on opportunities. The *Living Your Financial Experience (LYFE)* curriculum was taught to 89 teens. The series of lessons taught youth about potential careers that would match their personality types, how to read a paycheck and what taxes and deductions are taken out each pay period, writing goals, insurance, and bank services. A leadership summit was conducted for 22 teens. The summit provided the youth an opportunity to develop leadership skills including goal setting, communication, and adult-youth partnerships. Students took part in hands-on activities as well as trips to area colleges and businesses to learn about potential careers. A health curriculum was taught to middle school students. Technology is being incorporated into the classroom through the use of robotics. Students are learning how to code through the use of a

spherical robot (spheros). Results from surveys indicated the garden program provided a way to significantly increase youth's knowledge of handwashing procedures. Given the potential for food contamination from garden soil and other hazards, this is critical knowledge for youth to avoid foodborne illnesses.

Sustainability Statement: Professional development opportunities are being provided to school faculty and community volunteers to develop their leadership skills and knowledge base. Two Green Oaks school teachers and administrators attended the National Differentiated Instruction Conference to learn new techniques and programming for use throughout the school year, and one faculty member attended a national 3-D printer workshop to learn how to effectively engage students in using a 3-D printer. These opportunities provide a knowledge base for staff to implement the programs throughout the school year. The program continues to create a strong base of volunteers at the SPAR Community Centers by educating them about the goals and expectations of the program. Staff, volunteers, and collaborators participate in professional development to build the connection and capacity of the team. In February 2017, three team members participated in a "Designathon" that resulted in a concept map for healthy communities. Meetings are held with site managers bi-weekly to ensure their understanding of program plans and to encourage them to engage more youth and community members in the program.

Strong Dads, Resilient Families

Kentucky | **University of Kentucky**

USDA Strategic Goal 1 | CYFAR Common Measure: Parenting

Strong Dads, Resilient Families provides educational programs for fathers and father figures ages 18 years and older in Todd (western) and Wolfe (eastern) counties in Kentucky. The primary goal of the project is to strengthen the parenting skills of the father figures as a means to promote family resiliency. Short-term objectives include the following: an understanding of basic child development among fathers and father figures, an increase in parenting skills among participants, an increase in community collaborations and partnerships on issues and programs pertaining to fatherhood, and opportunities for fathers and father figures to engage in program planning and evaluation processes. Long-term objectives include the following: an increase in the application of effective parenting skills, improvement in the involvement of positive father and father figures in the lives of children, and an increase in male involvement within Extension programs and the community.

Throughout implementation of this CYFAR grant, the staff have learned that there is a real challenge to reach fathers. Program staff initially sent surveys home with school-age children to see what kinds of program activities fathers in these communities would like to do with their children. Most of those surveys came back completed by someone other than the target respondents (i.e., the fathers). Then, efforts were directed to open houses, farm gatherings, back-to-school events, and more. The fathers often tried to hand off the “paperwork” to the mothers accompanying them. Wolfe County then began offering a prize drawing (prizes not paid for by grant) for fathers

who completed surveys themselves. This was the successful ingredient for collecting surveys directly from fathers and father figures.

Todd County High School principal to develop plans for continuing the CYFAR programming developed at the school. The programming started



Sustainability Statement: Partnering coalitions and organizations receive updates, resources, and information to help them understand the fathering initiative to learn how to reach out to fathers in various target audiences in order to engage them in volunteer work and organization work. As this grant has moved into the fifth year of funding, these organizations have learned how to better utilize their own programming to reach out to a more diverse population of fathers and father figures. The Todd County coordinator is housed in the Todd County Middle School. The schools have developed a strong relationship with the CYFAR coordinator and lean on this individual and resources through the grant as a way to connect students and their fathers. Meetings were held between the 4-H agent and the

through the Todd County Detention Center using *24/7 Dad* has built a very positive image for the CYFAR program, and the Detention Center is finalizing plans for sustaining this program. The local jail is working with the Todd County CYFAR grant to find an avenue for sustaining the Incarcerated Fathers program though their budget appropriations, but this hasn't been finalized yet. Wolfe County hired the CYFAR coordinator into another position at the Wolfe County Extension Office where she will be able to continue some of the fatherhood programming she began through the CYFAR grant. The 4-H agent and community partners will continue the preschool program, court-ordered program, and other programs and events developed through the grant.

Youth Engagement and Support (YES)

Kentucky | University of Kentucky

USDA Strategic Goal 1

CYFAR Common Measure: Leadership Development

The purpose of this grant is to provide life skills programs for homeless and unstably housed youth in Jefferson County, Kentucky. The primary goal is for target youth to increase the number of critical life skills they possess to become more self-sufficient. Primary program content includes life skills development, particularly in communication and conflict resolution, decision-making and goal setting, stress and anger management, self-responsibility and boundaries, teamwork, personal safety, healthy lifestyles, and workforce preparation. The target audience is homeless and unstably housed youth (ages 12-22 years) participating in the Jefferson County YMCA Safe Place Services Shelter House or Matt Kubancik Youth Development Center. Short-term objectives include increasing youth awareness and understanding of critical life skills, aspirations to become self-sufficient, and community awareness about homeless youth. Long-term objectives include increasing youth application of critical life skills, youth showing evidence of self-sufficiency, and an increased number of community collaborations working with target youth. Data will be collected using a multimethod approach. The program model is the YMCA Safe Place Services (SPS) Program Model. This model employs a multidisciplinary positive youth development approach that views youth in the context of family and community and conducts evidence-based programming based on the needs of participating youth. The primary curriculum to be used in each community site is *"Tackling the Tough Skills,"* supplemented by *"Skills to Pay the Bills."*

Sustainability Statement: Partnering coalitions and entities have been trained to understand the Youth Engagement and Support initiative in an effort to better reach out to homeless and unstably housed youth in their communities. The site coordinator is now a YMCA employee, made possible by subcontracts with YMCA Safe Place that were approved and implemented during the reporting year. This move has assisted in integrating the CYFAR life skills programs into basic program structure at the YMCA. When the grant ends, the YMCA plans to sustain programming in collaboration with Jefferson County Extension through combined efforts and through community buy-in and support as a result of successes of the program. A key collaborator for sustainability is the Louisville Metro Council. The council is being informed about the program and the impacts being made throughout the community. The goal through these updates is to build relationships with Metro Government and the Mayor's office to move toward a budget increase that might help support the YMCA personnel after funding ends.



Project GROWL

(Growing Real Opportunities for Work & Life in Agriculture)

Georgia | **University of Georgia**

USDA Strategic Goal 1

CYFAR Common Measures: Workforce Preparation & Leadership Development

This year the programming was separated into three grade levels: seventh, eighth, and ninth. There were two groups per grade level. The seventh and eighth grade groups met after school in their own schools and the ninth grade group met together twice a month at a set location outside of their schools. The seventh grade participants focused on goal setting, team building, and public speaking. The eighth grade participants focused on basic agricultural education through gardening while incorporating the goal setting, team building, and public speaking they learned in the previous year. The ninth grade participants focused on environmental sciences and community service projects. Programming was taught through worksheets, experiential learning, field trips, and farm visits.

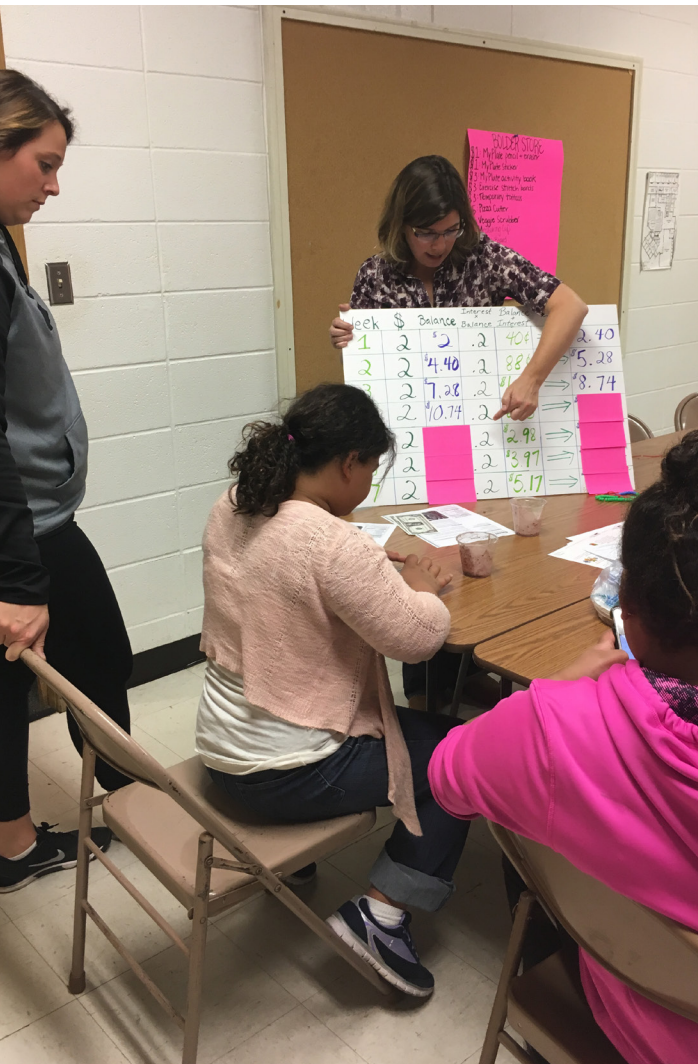


Sustainability Statement: Community partners, volunteers, and master gardeners play a vital role in sustainability for Project GROWL. Every three months, community partners meet with the Program Coordinator to discuss the current standings of the program, potential events, and the next steps needed to reach sustainability. Volunteers work directly and indirectly with the program to address needs that arise. They have also taken over responsibilities that are minor but important to making Project GROWL effective, like making copies, setting up meeting rooms, and collecting supplies. Master gardeners work directly with the youth by teaching about the garden and incorporating skills that the youth can use outside of Project GROWL. They also work indirectly by tending to the garden during the week and on weekends when the GROWLers are not present.

Fostering Achievement & Connection to Engage Students (FACES)

Minnesota | University of Minnesota

USDA Strategic Goal 4 | CYFAR Common Measures: Nutrition & Physical Activity



This project focuses on improving student academic achievement through financial and nutritional health programming. The long-term objective of the University of Minnesota and Fond du Lac Tribal and Community College (FDLTCC) joint Sustainable Communities Project is to reduce the education and employment disparity for minority youth in underserved communities in Minnesota. To achieve that objective, the FACES program is designed to provide opportunities for youth to develop the strategies and skills needed to balance personal, family, and cultural values and live a fulfilling life. The second year of the project began with a review of the after-school programming activities. Based on input from staff and students, materials were revised to create a 12-lesson toolkit of financial lessons. In addition, nutrition and financial events were combined to help students better understand the connections between their financial and eating choices.

At the Bolder Options - Rochester, Minnesota site, the combined financial and nutritional activities make for highly interactive sessions. In addition to the cooking lessons—and eating the results—mentors and youth receive a monthly newsletter so they can stay connected between events. The Bolder Options - Minneapolis, Minnesota site continues to flourish by hosting events like family cooking nights with mentors, mentees, volunteers, and family members in attendance. With CYFAR's resources, each attendee took home a book of the recipes used that night. FDLTCC sites, Ojibwe and Carlton Middle School provided opportunities for youth to engage in learning that incorporated their Native American culture. The youth learned about the nutritional differences between cane sugar and traditional maple sugar. During the spring, when the sap of the maple trees was ready to be tapped, the youth participated in the Sugar Bush events, which gave a deeper meaning and context for the youth.

Sustainability Statement: Now that Year 2 is complete, each site has been working with their Extension educators to document and create lesson plans and activities that anyone can teach in the future. These have been dubbed Take-and-Teach lessons. A series of 12 financial lessons called *MakeSense* was created and rolled out at professional development training in October 2017. This partnership between the University of Minnesota, Extension, and youth-serving community programs provides a success story that can serve as a strong foundation for securing future funding and engaging community partners. Sustainability planning has started due to the credit of the CYFAR coach. Discussion and documentation of sustainability plans take place during monthly meetings.

Urban 4-H Stem Clubs

Minnesota | **University of Minnesota**

NIFA Strategic Goal 1 | CYFAR Common Measures: Science & Workforce Preparation

Urban 4-H STEM Clubs are designed to ignite youth interest in learning about science, technology, engineering, and mathematics. The clubs are designed for middle school-aged youth living in the Minneapolis and St. Paul area who experience educational barriers. Each club meets for at least 26 two-hour sessions during the academic year. The clubs are facilitated by two adults who work in partnership with youth participants and their families. In the clubs, youth develop inquiry skills through an engineering-oriented curriculum. Along with the STEM content, youth also engage in a sequence of activities that equip them with the mindset and personal leadership skills needed to pursue higher education and careers. In addition to this core programming, participants have the opportunity to deepen their STEM learning during the summer through a 4-day residential campus experience at the University of Minnesota Twin Cities campus where they learn about student life, explore academic interests, identify steps toward college readiness, and meet faculty and students in STEM fields. Throughout the entire program, youth develop a portfolio that captures their growth over time and present it at public showcase events.

Sustainability Statement: The program is sustained through organizational partnerships with Ka Joog and Minneapolis Community Education including partnership agreements with both sites. Adult volunteers play important roles in supporting their children's participation. The project also includes an effective staff that is able to mentor youth and serve as role models, which adds to the program's sustainability. The campus

immersion component of the model is strengthened by campus partnerships with Aerospace Engineering, the Department of Chemistry Center for Sustainable Polymers, and other University of Minnesota departments. In terms of funding, a \$50,000 state grant was secured from the Somali Youth Development Fund to support staff sustainability with the Ka Joog sites. Funding also included a \$10,000 grant from the Minneapolis Foundation 612 Grant to support campus immersion and field trips and an additional \$3,200 from donors who support the program. Ka Joog secured \$500,000 through the Department of Homeland Security to advance youth employment. That project will be leveraged with this CYFAR project to support adolescents in their career development. Minneapolis Community Education may be an employment site for the youth. Lastly, the CYFAR team has been working with other staff members in the University of Minnesota Extension Urban Youth Development Office to replicate this program model in other sites. The response has been positive and the programs are growing. Through this effort, \$3,722 was secured from the Minnesota 4-H Foundation to support the replication of the campus immersion model in other parts of the state. There are two scaled down campus immersion programs

scheduled for 2018: one is in White Earth in partnership with the University of Minnesota Duluth, and another is in Rochester in partnership with the University of Minnesota Rochester. Lastly, by spring of 2017, only one Ka Joog site depended on a paid, part-time staff to lead the youth programs. Ka Joog has been able to fold the responsibilities of leading the club into their staffs' job descriptions.



Building Early Emotional Skills (BEES)

Michigan | **Michigan State University**

NIFA Strategic Goal 1 | CYFAR Common Measure: Parenting

The BEES program is designed to provide parent education to parents of children ages 0-3 years through traditional face-to-face group classes and online classes. Participants learn key parenting skills and early childhood development information while finding friendships and growing critical community supports designed to encourage discussion of real-life situations. The BEES team held 13 team meetings to revise the curriculum, create a facilitator's guide, and draft an early childhood provider version. The original curriculum videos were evaluated and reformatted. The final eight videos were created as supplemental information for parents. Data were collected from 100 parents, with eight enrolled in the face-to-face format and 92 enrolled in the online format. Evaluations show positive changes in parents' emotion coaching beliefs and positive, supportive responses to children's expressions of anger, fear, and sadness. Participation in BEES classes also showed a decrease in parents' rejection of children's negative emotions. By

showing these increases and decreases, parents are able to increase their emotionally supportive parenting towards their children's emotions.

Sustainability Statement: Building the classes into the program offerings of Michigan State University Extension will ensure that classes continue beyond the grant funding period. The online class will continue to serve statewide residents and be available at their convenience on a rolling registration basis. For the face-to-face classes, different options of offering workshops are being explored in a condensed format as well as partnering with organizations to offer scholarships to attend the program free of charge to participants. The child and family development team is discussing options to keep the classes free of charge by supporting parenting education classes through fee-for-service programs in other areas and continuing parenting education classes as part of core programming.

Stepping into STEM

Nevada | **University of Nevada**

NIFA Strategic Goal 1 | CYFAR Common Measure: Parenting

Stepping into STEM is designed to increase young Latino children's interest, knowledge, and engagement in STEM activities and to encourage and teach Spanish-speaking parents to be positive forces for their children's early STEM learning as they enter and progress through school. The project targets Latino families with preschoolers and early elementary-aged children and emphasizes foundational math, science, engineering, and technology skills. The project focuses on two targeted communities, Reno and Las Vegas, defined as "zip-code neighborhoods" that contain several high-risk elementary schools. Target families already or soon will have children attending these schools. Primary collaborators include Clark and Washoe County School Districts and Clark and Washoe County Library Systems.

Sustainability Statement: Implementation is to begin Spring 2018. Several measures will be taken to ensure sustainability. Collaborations with a multitude of educational and social agencies are already in place: Washoe (Reno) and Clark (Las Vegas) County School Districts, Washoe and Clark County Library Districts, Head Start, United Way, 21st Century Schools, Public Television, and Nevada State Department of Education. The nature of these collaborations speaks to the program's potential for sustainability and expansion. Families will be encouraged to become active with existing 4-H programs and activities. A train-the-trainer approach focusing on pertinent community professionals will be undertaken to build the capacity of other community agencies and professionals to continue and expand the program beyond the five-year grant. An estimated 20 community professionals will be trained over the five-year period to enhance program ownership and sustainability. Special care will be taken to communicate with and train Extension staff in other county offices for possible adoption of the project. Additional funding will be sought, and the program has successfully worked with local school districts to obtain funding for Family Storyteller, Striving Readers, and after-school programs.

Michigan SCP - Flint

Michigan | Michigan State University

USDA Strategic Goal 1

CYFAR Common Measure: Parenting

This project targets parents of children ages 2 to 8 years in Flint, Michigan, who were exposed to high lead levels due to the Flint water crisis. Utilizing parenting education and supports for young children, the project hopes to bring together parents, community members, educational districts, the medical community, and organizations that promote early childhood development to enhance family dynamics. Staff will conduct focus groups during Year 1 to identify needs, strengths, and areas for growth to inform the specific direction of educational interventions and methods. The focus will be on increasing parents' ability to respond to their child's emotions appropriately, parental knowledge of child development and parenting, positive interactions between parents and children, and perception of informal support. The team met with local community partners to determine needs based on programs that were already being offered to avoid duplication. Classes will not start until the next reporting period, but three focus groups were held with 21 parents to help determine program priorities, desires, and needs of parents in the community. Parents expressed a desire to learn more about the impacts of lead on child development and what they can do to mitigate those impacts, how to support their children in learning to control their behavior and emotions, how to better understand and support their children's brain development, and how to support their children's relationships with others.

Sustainability Statement: Building into the existing infrastructure of Michigan State University Extension at the state and county levels will ensure that early childhood education will continue to be offered after specific funding has ended.



WeCook: Fun with Food and Fitness

Nebraska | **University of Nebraska**

USDA Strategic Goal 4 | CYFAR Common Measures: Nutrition, Parenting, & Physical Activity

WeCook: Fun with Food & Fitness (WeCook) was developed to address critical health disparities among Nebraska youth through hands-on, research-based, out-of-school time programming. Programming began at two Title I schools in Lincoln, Nebraska, and has since expanded to five Title I schools. Research shows youth from at-risk backgrounds are more likely to have poor health habits and face challenges comprehending written materials. These trends illustrate a need for educational programs that teach hands-on nutrition, physical activity, and food preparation in efforts to improve the overall health of the nation's youth. WeCook is a 12-week program that addresses the rise in childhood obesity prevalence, especially focusing on the disparities between at-risk youth and those who are not considered at risk. Programming aims to improve nutrition knowledge, physical activity levels, and food preparation skills among at-risk youth. Participants consist of fourth and fifth graders and their families from Title I schools across the Lincoln Public Schools district. Twice a week, youth participate in 60-minute sessions over the 12-week period. Once per month, families take part in family meal nights where they are able to enjoy a meal prepared by the youth and are provided educational handouts. Programming focuses on teaching hands-on food preparation skills, nutrition knowledge, and engagement in fun physical activities.



Sustainability Statement: A comprehensive curriculum covering all 24 contact hours of the WeCook program is in the final stages of development. Publication of this curriculum will allow for greater statewide, and potentially nationwide, replicability beyond the five years of CYFAR funding at two sites. The costs to implement this program are relatively low. Recipes use lower cost ingredients, and the equipment needed for programming is used multiple times and is inexpensive to purchase. Volunteers or interns can be used to provide instruction, which also keeps programming costs to a minimum. Continued development of community partnerships addressing youth health issues is important to program sustainability.

“The WeCook program has really helped my son enjoy being in the kitchen and wanting to learn more about eating, not only healthy, but learning how to cook.” - Parent



U-Connect

Minnesota & Tennessee | **University of Minnesota & Tennessee State University**

USDA Strategic Goal 4 | CYFAR Common Measure: Nutrition

Four program sites in Minnesota and Tennessee are implementing U-Connect. The U-Connect project targets middle school-aged youth (10-14 years old) in rural and urban communities in Minnesota and Tennessee. U-Connect is a comprehensive program based on the *Check & Connect* framework developed at the University of Minnesota's Institute on Community Integration, with program enhancements from nutrition education, STEM education, and parent engagement. *Check & Connect* is an evidence-based student engagement intervention that promotes young people's self-regulation, intrinsic motivation, and persistence. This intervention supports positive youth development by promoting relationships with caring adults and peers, skill-building within a safe environment, and cognitive engagement with school and learning.

Sustainability Statement: Hobgood Elementary School, Tennessee, and Croft Design Center Middle Prep School, Tennessee, will engage in building relationships with local,

state, and national community funding organizations; research grant funding via websites for funding sources such as Anne E. Casey Foundation, Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, J.W. Kellogg Foundation, and local foundations; and develop applications for Wal-Mart, Target, and local funding entities such as hospital foundations, banks, and community organizations. Keystone/West 7th Community Center, Saint Paul, Minnesota, will reapply for 21st Century Community Learning Center funds in 2019 to continue STEM and nutrition programs in an attempt to raise enough funds to maintain the Community Kids program and apply for another award of an AmeriCorps Promise Fellow through the Minnesota Alliance with Youth in order to provide similar service hours and keep up with rigorous data collection. The staff at Kwanzaa/21st Century Academy, Minneapolis, Minnesota, has developed partnerships with other religious communities in the Twin Cities to continue the *Check & Connect* mentoring model as a tool through which the program will engage youth and their families.



4-H

Youth Futures

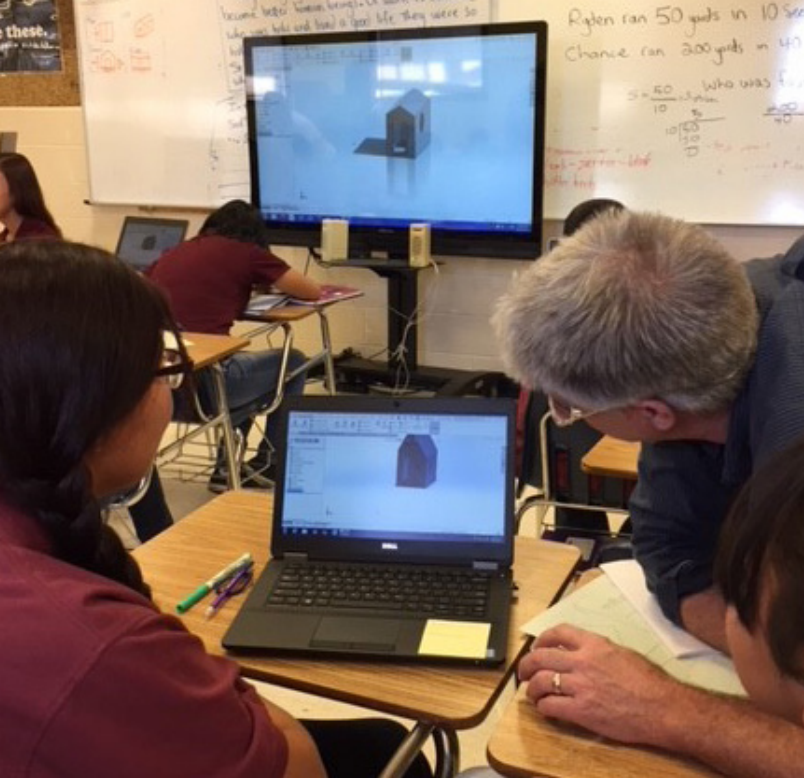
Missouri | **University of Missouri**

USDA Strategic Goal 1

CYFAR Common Measures: Leadership Development, Technology, & Workforce Preparation

The 4-H Youth Futures program is an extensive college readiness program for underrepresented and vulnerable youth. This program encourages and provides the knowledge, skills, and tools for youth to prepare, enroll in, and graduate from college. The participants in this program are those who may have never considered going to college as an option. They are often first generation college students and may be homeless, have incarcerated parents, or have no support from their families. Mentoring is an important feature of the program. Mentors provide youth with guidance and encouragement and they help youth navigate their high school careers, the pathway to college, and work with them on developing life skills and the soft skills employers seek. Collaborating with other organizations helps to provide youth with more options for success. While participating in the 4-H Youth Futures program, youth learn how to write personal statements, hone interviewing skills, complete college applications, search for scholarships, apply for FAFSA, and prepare for the ACT. They also learn and practice professional behavioral skills, public speaking, and the importance of giving back to the community through required service activities. In addition to mentoring youth, the program educates parents on the importance of college and the pathway to get there. Parents are included in educational opportunities so they will know how to support their child.

Sustainability Statement: All partners understand that they are expected to help sustain the program once the grant ends. The program is fortunate to have partners that appreciate the program and wish to see its continued growth. One of the mentors is also a school staff member who has gained the support of the administration and other school personnel. These connections have allowed the program to grow by connecting with other school representatives. Another partner sustains the program by providing programming space, volunteers, and financial support. It is expected that partners will continue to work with the program once the 5-year grant cycle nears its end in order to help sustain the program. This was part of the initial conversation when the partnerships began. Program impact will encourage these to continue and will benefit all involved.



Linking Youth to Agricultural and Environmental Practices Using STEM

Montana | **Montana State University**

NIFA Strategic Goal 1 | CYFAR Common Measures: Science, Technology, & Workforce Preparation

Poverty, due to lack of jobs and resources, continues to be a problem in Indian country. This project has used STEM as a framework to train Native American students so they can acquire skills that will be useful to them as they seek future employment. To accomplish this, Montana State University CYFAR project staff partnered with schools on two Indian Reservations and consulted with community leaders to implement programming during school science classes; approximately 60 students and four teachers were trained.

Sustainability Statement: Community capacity will increase due to a youth population that is better prepared for further employment on and off the reservation; sustainable, well-developed science and after-school programs that

focus on agriculture and engage youth with community partners will continue beyond the initial 5-year grant. Teachers are committed to developing activities that integrate STEM in their academic schedules and are committed to working with the CYFAR staff on continuing this program with their students.

“I can’t wait until Dr. Gregg comes again.”

- Pretty Eagle Academy Youth

Heart & Shield: A Program to End Family Violence

Nevada | **University of Nevada**

USDA Strategic Goal 1 | CYFAR Common Measure: Parenting



Heart & Shield (H&S) creates an environment for child and adult survivors of intimate partner violence (IPV) to obtain skills and resources necessary to break the cycle of IPV. Participants attend a 9-week session and monthly Family Night Out activities. Each meeting includes a healthy meal, nutrition tips, family violence prevention education for each age group, and a family activity that reinforces skills taught. Participants are divided into age groups: parents, children ages birth to 8 years, youth 9 to 13 years, and teens 14 to 18 years. Educational topics for parents focus on communication, emotion identification and regulation, problem solving, typical child development and development affected by family violence, parenting styles, guidance and discipline, healthy relationships, and strengthening families. Children,

youth, and teen topics teach communication, emotion identification and regulation, problem solving, friendship skills, healthy relationships, social/emotional skills, and strengthening families. In 2017, 39 adults and 72 youth participated in the program. Faculty and staff delivered presentations to statewide and national stakeholders for sustainability. More than 40 local presentations were given to community partners to increase awareness of IPV and its effects on children and adults, increasing program referrals and ways to partner to sustain the program.

Sustainability Statement: A third tribal community has requested that the H&S curriculum be delivered to their location. The principal investigator (PI) has applied for community grants to sustain the program beyond CYFAR

funding. Coalitions addressing child abuse and H&S staff are working together to develop a comprehensive program to serve families affected by child abuse and IPV. The PI has served as a resource for agency personnel as they apply for additional funds to expand local services. A statewide domestic violence organization has requested that they receive training to implement H&S curriculum with their clientele once it has been evaluated and revised. The Nevada Attorney General's Office has been working with the Co-PI to establish the H&S Law Enforcement training as a statewide professional development for officers. Local churches and organizations have provided holiday baskets and gifts for H&S families.



Science Pathways

New Jersey | Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey

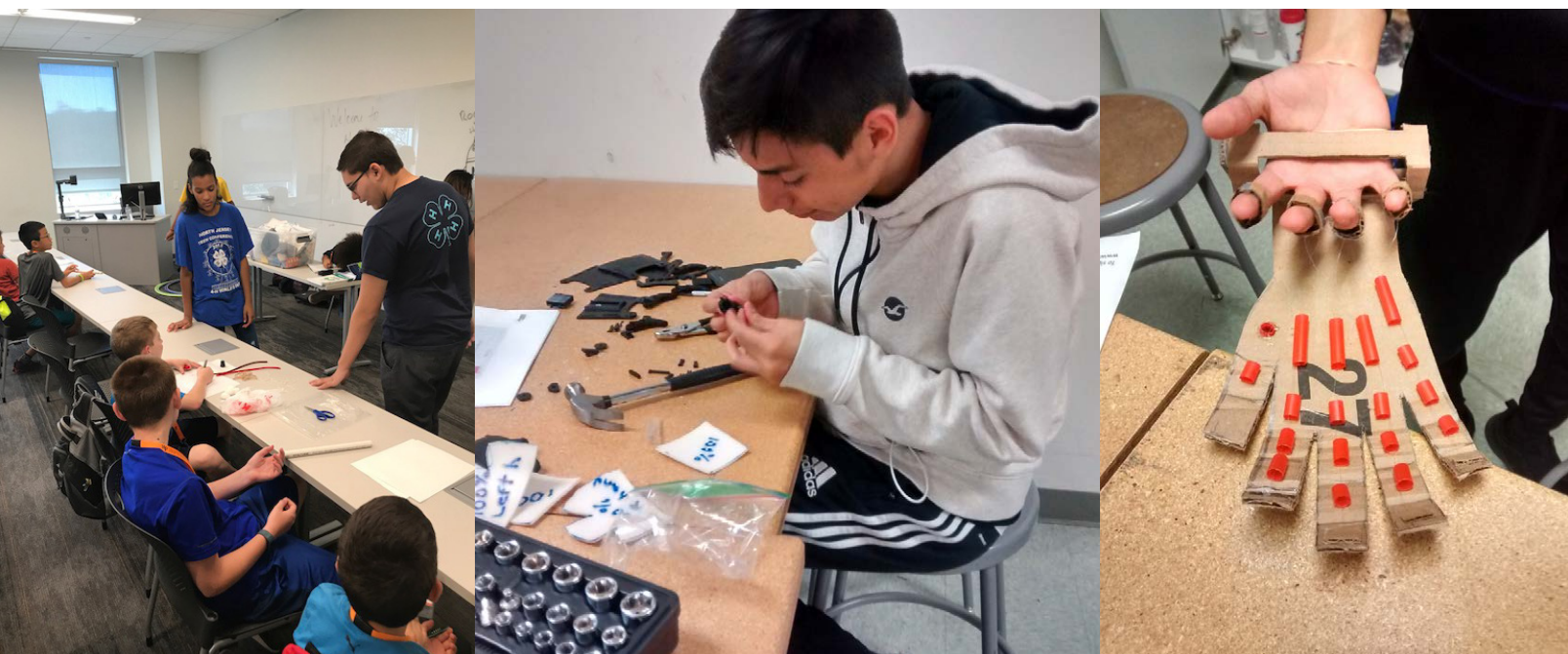
NIFA Strategic Goal 1

CYFAR Common Measures: Leadership Development, Science, Technology, & Workforce Preparation

The Science Pathways program is a high-context leadership program geared toward students in high school. The guiding principal of this program is as follows: if teens are given the opportunity to learn skills that prepare them for leadership in a digital future, expose them to the opportunities and resources in their community, and give them the support they need to plan for success, they will be more able to transition from high school to a successful future. Under this understanding, the goal of the Science Pathways program is to develop leadership, service, and life skills in urban teens while exposing them to the various science, engineering, and technology fields that exist. This is accomplished through the use of fun, hands-on science activities in a Makerspace setting within their communities. Each year, at-risk teens from the urban areas of Paterson and Trenton, New Jersey, are recruited to the Science Pathways program prior to their freshman year of high school. All teens are traditionally underrepresented minorities in the fields of science, technology, engineering,

and mathematics. The program changes focus each year. Year 1 is all about learning science skills and tools. Year 2 is focused on self-exploration, personal skill assessment, and giving back to others through teach-backs. During the third year of participation, teens focus on career exploration. During their fourth (last) year of participation, teens will focus on goal setting and attainment as they prepare for a successful transition out of high school.

Sustainability Statement: Program sites have been established with collaborators in the community that will sustain the program after funding ceases. East Side High School in Paterson will house the Paterson program and the Boys and Girls Club of Trenton will house the Trenton program. Now working within those partnerships, the program is seeking grants and other local funding opportunities to afford the consumable supplies and continued training for the educators.





4-H STEM Education & Science Literacy: Developing the Next Generation of Scientists

North Carolina & South Carolina

North Carolina State University, Clemson University, & North Carolina A&T State University

NIFA Strategic Goal 1 | CYFAR Common Measure: Science

The 4-H STEM Education & Science Literacy: Developing the Next Generation of Scientists program leverages resources and personnel at three land-grant universities to serve school-age youth, teachers, non-formal educators, and their families using education programs, outreach, 4-H, and other youth development programs that focus on STEM education. In 2017, the program provided STEM-based Science Nights at three elementary schools in Anson County in North Carolina and in Marlboro and Dillon Counties in South Carolina. Over 125 youth attended the Science Night at Ansonville Elementary School in Anson County, North Carolina; 540 youth attended the Science Night at Latta Elementary School in Dillon County, South Carolina; and over 65 youth attended the Science Night at Wallace Elementary in Marlboro County, South Carolina. During these events, youth participated in science-based activities that included investigating pathogen transmission using forensic technician tools, studying forces and motion using magnets to identify physical properties that contribute to push and pull, discovering the power of electricity using a simple flashlight design project to create open and closed circuits, and putting their hands in fake blood to understand the critical role of the different components of blood. After Dinner Science Kits were created and sent home with youth and their families who attended the Science Nights at each school. Training for second- and third-grade teachers is planned for Spring 2018 to begin delivering STEM-based content in classrooms at each of the four elementary school sites.

Sustainability Statement: To build a systems change model, the project will focus on the best practices in program sustainability including building community support, cultivating stewardship and key program champions, hiring and training exceptional staff and volunteers, maximizing and generating funding streams (local dollars, private industry, in-kind gifts, etc.), and communicating program results. State and community site leaders are committed to this project and to guiding its development. Today, hundreds of families across the four program sites know about the CYFAR program and are excited about the STEM programs and the opportunities they afford youth. This creates a robust and open pipeline for STEM beginning at the elementary level. Providing professional development opportunities for partnering with future and current elementary teachers is a crucial part of widening this pipeline. Informal STEM programs like the North and South Carolina 4-H STEM CYFAR program are structured yet flexible and provide an environment where youth can become engaged in and inspired about STEM fields and topics without fear of academic failure. Simultaneously, youth can be encouraged to appreciate the relevance of STEM topics and fields to their daily lives through hands-on, learner-driven projects. The North and South Carolina 4-H STEM CYFAR team continuously works on program sustainability and keeps sustainability at the forefront of all programmatic decisions.

New York 4-H Community Action Network (Youth CAN)

New York | **Cornell University**

USDA Strategic Goal 1

CYFAR Common Measures: Leadership Development & Workforce Preparation

New York 4-H Youth Community Action Network (Youth CAN) uses Cornell Cooperative Extension's (CCE) 4-H Signature Program, *Youth Community Action (YCA)*, to promote civic engagement and workforce development among high-need teens in Albany and Buffalo, New York. By creating youth-led networks of community organizations, Youth CAN Teen Leaders, 14-18 year-old youth, become community change agents and conduct projects addressing critical NIFA/USDA Research, Education, and Economics (REE) goals. In doing so, Teen Leaders gain the skills needed to graduate successfully from high school prepared for college, careers, and citizenship.

Sustainability Statement: Intentional efforts to sustain Youth CAN continue to be integral to all program efforts. Planning for sustainability is a topic at every Youth CAN team meeting. In addition, meetings with community partners are held regularly for the specific purpose of discussing strategies for the continuation of the program after the end of Year 5. In fact, substantial progress in assuring sustainability has already been made. In Albany County, the Boys & Girls Club of Albany has committed to continuing Youth CAN and has already begun programming independent of support from the CCE Albany Youth CAN Community Project Coordinator. Similarly, in Erie County, Global Concepts Charter High School (community partner in Years 1 through 3) has adopted the Youth Community Action Youth CAN model and have sustained the program.



“The Youth CAN Teen Leaders were so impressive—practicing what they preach! It was excellent in every way. It was clear that all of their projects go to the heart of what real community change looks like.”

- Community Member



Urban G.E.M.S. (Gardening Entrepreneurs Motivating Sustainability)

Ohio | **Ohio State University**

USDA Strategic Goal 4

CYFAR Common Measures: Leadership Development, Nutrition, Physical Activity, Science, Technology, & Workforce Preparation

The Urban GEMS (Gardening Entrepreneurs Motivating Sustainability) program is a multifaceted youth development initiative that strives to enrich the educational, personal, and career development of young people in high-risk communities; improve health related knowledge, attitudes, and behaviors among young people; and improve leadership skills, grit, and workforce readiness while gaining business acumen through connecting with adults in local food production. Youth participants benefit from the expertise of university faculty, Extension educators, community school professionals, volunteers, and business sector partners. The Urban GEMS program currently operates in various locations on the south side of Columbus, Ohio, selected for high rates of poverty, food insecurity, unemployment, crime, and failing public schools. The primary Urban GEMS implementation sites include a school and a non-profit, youth-serving organization. The students have connected with professionals through participation in the Urban GEMS advisory board, led team meetings, interacted with adult advisers and volunteers, and gained invaluable experience in public speaking. The project has also led to productive interactions with the community as a whole. Ultimately, participants learn important life lessons about self-empowerment and becoming a person who gives back to the community.

The program utilizes aeroponic food production as a vehicle to enrich the lives and learning of the young people in the program through project-based learning

around scientific discovery, math lessons, historical analysis, nutritional principles, consumer science education, and the creative and language arts. Individual and team-based learning integrates literacy, numeracy, teamwork, and portfolio production in a culturally relevant, positive, and empowering learning environment. The GEMS program model is based on the identified needs of the community and the strengths of assembled partners. By creating partnerships with schools, businesses, and communities, the project can help to institutionalize change and create new opportunities within a sustainable project.

Sustainability Statement: Urban GEMS serves youth and families to promote access to healthy fresh food, improve nutritional knowledge and habits, employ chronically unemployed or underemployed 10- to 22-year-olds in the urban core, and inspire hope through gardening and positive youth development. As Urban GEMS demonstrates positive outcomes, ideally potential donors or business partners who would be willing to invest in building or renting a secure greenhouse-like facility with food production capacity will express increased interest. Establishing an Urban GEMS farm in close proximity to the early innovators engaged on the Southside of Columbus, Ohio, will have benefits for the ongoing sustainability of Urban GEMS Youth Work. The public health aspects of putting young people in positions of power through direct involvement in solving community food security problems is part of the goal of what the Urban GEMS brand will mean to people.

4-H Grilling and Beyond: Cultivating Healthy Fathers, Kids, and Communities

Ohio | **Ohio State University**

USDA Strategic Goal 4

CYFAR Common Measures: Leadership Development, Nutrition, Parenting, & Workforce Preparation

The 4-H Grilling & Beyond project brings together fatherhood education, nutrition education, and youth development education into a single family life education program delivered to fathers and their adolescent youth in the context of food grilling. Grilling food is an activity enjoyed by many men and is growing in popularity among 4-H youth. Grilling can also be a family activity that involves conversation, learning, teaching, and healthy eating. In collaboration with county Extension offices and local community partners, this project helps fathers increase their parenting abilities and motivations so they can more effectively provide guidance to their children. The project increases participants' knowledge of nutritional health and introduces youth to 4-H programming that provides opportunities for them to develop life and workforce preparation skills. The project's goals are to enhance father-adolescent relationships, to increase healthy eating episodes and decrease unhealthy eating episodes, and to increase community involvement in changing patterns of food consumption. To accomplish these goals, the project incorporates innovative technology, a sustainability plan, and a multilevel approach to community involvement. By bringing together fatherhood, nutrition, and youth development into a program with father-friendly activities, the project addresses society's need for stronger families, healthier communities, and youth prepared for the future.

Sustainability Statement: Viewed broadly, sustainability refers to the continuation of the program once the project funds are not available. During the reporting period, three new county Extension offices joined the expansion of 4-H Grilling and Beyond. Extension staff in each office are preparing to implement the *weGrill* program during the next reporting period. They have been trained in *weGrill* implementation, have the curricular materials and supplies to continue with the project, and have been successful in making connections with local community organizations for continued success. These aspects of sustainability (training, curriculum, and connections) make it much more likely that the program will be offered in these locations in the future. What's more, the expansion of the project in 2018 into eight new locations in three site areas promises additional success and continuation of the *weGrill* impact into the future.



The Juntos Program (NC) and Unidos Se Puede (OK)

North Carolina & Oklahoma

North Carolina State University & Oklahoma State University

USDA Strategic Goal 1 | CYFAR Common Measures: Parenting, Technology, & Workforce Preparation

The mission of the Juntos program is to help Latino students achieve high school graduation and attend higher education. This is done through four components: Family Engagement, One-on-One Success Coaching, After-School 4-H Clubs, and Summer Academy. The program goals are to increase family engagement that leads to students' educational success, increase the sense of belonging among Latino students and their families in their schools and communities, increase Latino student success by improving student attendance and grades and achieving high school graduation, and increase the percent of Latino students attending higher education. In the 2016-17 school year, approximately 600 Latino students participated in Juntos in North Carolina (NC) across nine counties. Two of these counties were funded by the CYFAR grant, which served 160 youth and their families. The program made significant impacts in NC: 68% of students reported Juntos helped them to improve their grades, 70% improved their school attendance, 85% reported Juntos helped motivate them to graduate high school, and 86% reported Juntos helped motivate them to go to college. In addition, 71% reported that Juntos helped them to feel like they belonged in school, and 85%

participated in community service. Also, 419 hours were dedicated to one-on-one success coaching with youth. Lastly, 100% of high school seniors who participated in Juntos in NC graduated from high school, and 52% of them are attending a higher education institution.

Sustainability Statement: The goal is to sustain the Juntos program and continue to serve current students through the four components. This will be made possible with new grant funds, matching funds from community partners, and commitment from the school system, cooperative extension, and other partners. The program received additional grants from the American Honda Foundation and the Spencer Foundation to continue programming and is receiving in-kind support from major partners (e.g., the local schools system and county government). Partners are continuing to seek other funds to sustain the Juntos 4-H Clubs and Family Engagement components at both sites with the support of the schools and local extension office. The Juntos program will depend on the support from local 4-H and the school system to train volunteers who can lead 4-H clubs and/or Family Nights. Successful partners meetings have been held with district superintendents, school principals, county Extension leaders, and other stakeholders to discuss the continuation and sustainability of the Juntos Program in each county. Investigation is being done on expanding the program's funding streams and getting more corporate funding and donations.



Food for a Long Life: A Community-Based Intergenerational Project

Ohio & Virginia

Ohio State University & Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University

USDA Strategic Goal 1 | CYFAR Common Measure: Nutrition

Food for a Long Life (FFLL) uses a community-based participatory action research (CBPAR) approach to improve knowledge about, access to, and consumption of healthy food in families with young children living in the Near East Side of Columbus, Ohio, and Lynchburg, Virginia. Two childcare centers in each state and partners supporting elder well-being and healthy food access initiatives joined with FFLL staff to identify community needs and resources related to healthy food. The group used this information to identify three programming priorities to implement in Year 2 as well as ways to measure programming success and challenges. Programming priorities were customized to reflect the unique qualities of each community. To support the sustainability of FFLL programming, partnerships that connect existing organizations addressing families and healthy food access in these communities were created. To illustrate progress toward FFLL goals and sustainability, a partnership was established between a Head Start site in Virginia and SNAP-Ed to obtain curricular materials used in

nutrition lessons with the children and their intergenerational partners. The CBPAR approach fosters improved access to and knowledge and consumption of healthy food while promoting program sustainability.

Sustainability Statement: Efforts related to sustainability during the Year 1 planning period and first quarter of Year 2 centered on building partnerships with existing community organizations that currently deliver services to members of the FFLL intended audience and/or supporting healthy food access initiatives within these communities. These connections included SNAP-Ed staff in Virginia and Ohio and Extension agents specializing in nutrition, food safety, and child and family development. Related to the intergenerational component of FFLL, partnerships with community programs serving older adults assisted intergenerational program planning to support FFLL objectives; these intergenerational activities launched in Virginia and in Ohio during the 2017-2018 reporting period.



4-H Food + Fun Club

Oregon | **Oregon State University**

USDA Strategic Goal 4 | CYFAR Common Measures: Nutrition & Physical Activity

As part of the Oregon 4-H Latino Outreach Program, the 4-H Food + Fun Club focuses on the bilingual and bicultural development, delivery, and evaluation of after-school and summer programs targeting at-risk, low-income, and Latino youth in grades 6-8 in Benton and Linn Counties in Oregon. The core healthy living curriculum emphasizes experiential learning in food, nutrition, and physical activity utilizing technology. Teamwork is emphasized as a learning strategy. Program implementation includes an average of 36 sessions of the program 4-H Food + Fun delivered at each location of the Sustainable Community Program. The project implementation faculty created a nine-lesson curriculum plan to deliver a core healthy living curriculum each term. That curriculum focuses on food, nutrition, and physical activity with teamwork as a learning strategy.

Oregon State University's student involvement was incorporated in the learning strategy as well. Community integration has been focused on developing and maintaining relationships with organizations that serve the Latino communities in Benton County. Linus Pauling Middle School in Corvallis is a key community partnership that serves a large number of Latino youth in the target age group. Access to the target population and their families is made possible through partnering with this site. The Linus Pauling Middle School is also a location where the Juntos program for middle school has been implemented. Finally, technology integration includes the Instagram account for 4-H Food, where youth were encouraged to post their healthy meals. Youth had access to the Instagram account through their cellphones, school iPads, or school computers. In

addition to this, videos were watched from the curriculum where youth had the opportunity to observe the health behaviors of other youth and then reflect on their decisions. Internet browsers have been used to inquire about the nutrition information of recipe ingredients.

Sustainability Statement: For financial sustainability, the project staff has been developing a relationship with Oregon State University's students and professors to implement the FIESTAS (Families Involved in Education Sociocultural Teaching and STEM) model in this program after the grant expires. The FIESTAS model provides a framework that generates a five-year grant and will be used in this project to enable sustainability.

Urban Community Sustainability

Texas | **Texas A&M University**

USDA Strategic Goal 4 | CYFAR Common Measure: Nutrition

The goal of this five-year effort is to improve the health of at-risk teens and their families in two low-income, inner-city communities while providing experiences related to Extension careers. This goal will be accomplished through a tailored, culturally and linguistically relevant 4-H program with extensive family involvement. Staff, faculty, and students from community-based organizations, two county Extension programs, and three four-year university volunteers from two supporting organizations will partner to mentor, recruit, and enroll 210 students in college studies. Teens will acquire sound dietary habits by learning while teaching others; apply science, math, and reading skills through planning, caring for, and harvesting demon-

stration home gardens; become college-ready through mentorship from college students; and learn about the array of Extension careers through job shadowing and internships. Five non-traditional and innovative aspects distinguish this effort: tailoring to real-world lifestyles and challenges of low-income populations; a hands-on, experiential Extension service-learning approach; the strong near-peer mentoring component; strong mentoring and funding by Extension; and many opportunities to network with university faculty and students from three important disciplines.

Sustainability Statement: As the project evolves, collaborative efforts with all stakeholders and partners will

continue to support this effort. Because of low programming cost, a substantial portion of requested funds are to support community-level activities, which includes transportation. These successful activities have positively impacted participants. Our Lady of the Lake University (OLLU) and University of Texas at San Antonio (UTSA) dietetic intern students support programming. Collaborative efforts with Texas A&M University (TAMU) San Antonio for future 4-H programming will solidify the bonds of the TAMU system as it supports the presence of 4-H on their campuses to serve minority youth and prepare them for college.

¡Unidos Se Puede!

Oklahoma | **Oklahoma State University**

USDA Strategic Goal 1 | CYFAR Common Measures: Parenting, Technology, & Workforce Preparation

In the 2016-17 school year, approximately 240 youth actively participated in the Unidos Se Puede program, of which 120 were supported by CYFAR funds and 120 were supported by a grant from the National Institutes of Health. Longitudinal evaluations from the Unidos Se Puede program show significant changes over time in several important domains. Ninety-eight percent report being very satisfied with the program. In addition, youth reported statistically significant increases in how much education their parents expected them to accomplish; their parents' involvement in their education; their own expectations of educational achievement, self-efficacy, attitudes toward school, grades, and prosocial behaviors; and significant decreases in drug use and behavior citations in school (i.e., detentions, suspension).

Latino immigrant middle schoolers and their families participate in three components that make up the Unidos Se Puede program: 1) parental involvement in child's schooling is enhanced through five weekly workshops followed by seven monthly family fun nights; 2) youth gain critical thinking, problem solving, and goal setting skills through working with a near-peer, ethnically matched success coach; and 3) youth increase entrepreneurship related skills through regular club meetings and advance their sense of future possible selves through attendance to an overnight trip to a major land-grant university where they are exposed to STEM related fields, faculty, and Latino college students. The program has experienced great success. Parental and youth program acceptance is evidenced by excellent recruitment and retention rates. Focus groups and debriefing sessions have revealed high rates of parental and youth satisfaction with the program. Quantitative assessments are currently ongoing.

Sustainability Statement: Working with the community advisory board, Unidos program staff has developed a six-part sustainability plan. The plan emphasizes community participation and ownership and minimizes dependence on

continued financial awards. In short, the program (1) converted the Unidos Se Puede program into a 501(c)3 organization with a board of directors; (2) contracts with Tulsa Public Schools for services rendered, due to the data showing that Unidos Se Puede provides a cost benefit to the school district; (3) developing two large annual fundraising activities; (4) working with community partners to sponsor different activities (e.g., this year the Tulsa County Sheriff's department, Blue Cross Blue Shield, and AAON Inc. all sponsored activities that exposed youth to professions in different segments of society, and the Tulsa Hispanic Chamber of Commerce sponsored an entrepreneurship workshop and provided Unidos with office space); (5) applying to the United Way to become a funded organization; and (6) continuing to apply for grants to further develop and refine the program. This year the Anne and Henry Zarrow Foundation awarded Unidos a \$10,000 grant.





PROmoting School-community-university Partnerships to Enhance Resilience

Pennsylvania | **Pennsylvania State University**

USDA Strategic Goal 1 | CYFAR Common Measure: Parenting

PROmoting School-community-university Partnerships to Enhance Resilience (PROSPER) is a proven system for the delivery of high-quality, evidence-based prevention programs. PROSPER has been successfully implemented by Extension educators across Pennsylvania. Over 15 years of rigorous research indicates that PROSPER significantly delays and prevents substance use initiation for a myriad of substances, including marijuana, alcohol, tobacco, and prescription opioids. These results are evident throughout adolescence and sustained into young adulthood. The current challenge for PROSPER is to scale it up to a level that realizes its public health potential. This CYFAR-funded project implemented PROSPER in two school districts in Fayette County, Pennsylvania. PROSPER school-based programs are currently implemented with sixth and seventh graders in the Laurel Highlands School District and with fifth and sixth graders in both districts through the Fayette County YMCA. The Extension 4-H educator in Fayette

County provides leadership for this initiative and also sits on the Fayette County Communities that Care (CTC) board.

Sustainability Statement: The Fayette PROSPER team has discussed sustainability for several months. One school district is using the school-based program and has agreed to continue to implement it as part of their usual curriculum. Both districts have discussed using Title I funding to support the Strengthening Families for Parents and Youth Ages 10-14 program; however, no funds have yet been earmarked for this purpose. The largest sustainability challenge remains the Extension team leader position and the prevention coordinator position. However, within Pennsylvania there is a plan for the Dean of the College of Agriculture to approach the state legislature with a proposal for permanent, large-scale funding for PROSPER across the commonwealth.

CELS: Integrating Nutrition Education Into Full Service Schools in Providence, RI

Rhode Island | University of Rhode Island

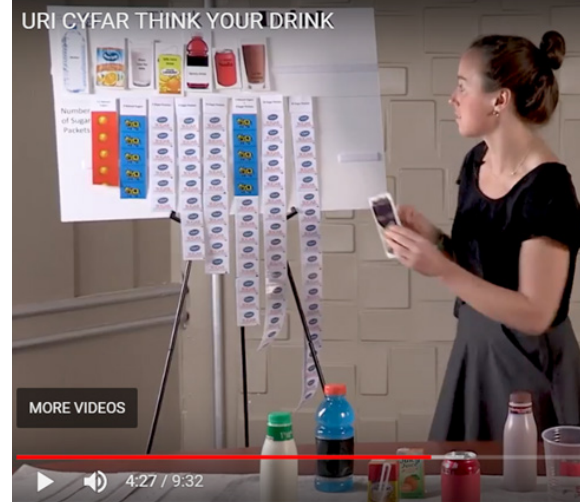
USDA Strategic Goal 4

CYFAR Common Measures: Nutrition & Technology

Integrating Nutrition Education into Full-Service Schools in Providence, Rhode Island, encourages low-income third-grade children and their parents or caregivers to adopt healthy eating behaviors. Each year, a treatment and control school are involved with in-school, after-school, and parent engagement. A modified 13-week version of *Body Quest: Food of the Warrior* is used for the in-school program and focuses on increasing fruit and vegetable consumption and decreasing sugar-sweetened beverage (SSB) and energy-dense snack consumption using seven iPad applications and interactive activities. The six-week after-school program adapted from *Cooking with Kids* teaches cooking and healthy eating and uses iPads to reinforce nutrition topics. Caregivers of third graders are offered a six-week program, *Healthy Children, Healthy Families: Parents Making a Difference!*, that focuses on parental feeding practices. The after-school student and caregiver programs are held at the same time during a six-week Family Night series.

In-school data were collected at baseline, post-assessment, and 27 weeks to assess maintenance. After-school students and parents completed surveys at Week 1 and 6. A control group for each arm completed surveys at comparable time points. Analysis of variance (ANOVA) and paired t-tests detected between and within group changes with a significance set at $p < 0.05$. A total of 259 students and parents participated in Year 4. For the in-school program, there was a significant decrease in the treatment group's ($n=62$) frequency of salty snacks consumed in the previous day compared to the control group ($n=79$). Paired t-tests found significant positive behavior changes in the treatment group's consumption of sugar-sweetened beverages, salty snacks, and fruit. Students who received the after-school program ($n=22$) significantly decreased their SSB intake from Week 1 to Week 6. There were no significant changes in the parent program ($n=9$), possibly due to small numbers of participants.

Sustainability Statement: To sustain the in-school program beyond one year, participating third-grade teachers attend the 13-week program and are provided a curriculum binder to follow along as needed. Materials needed for the classroom teachers to deliver the in-school program to subsequent third graders are recreated and provided. This includes interactive, hands-on activities and learning tools. Based on teacher feedback, the program has continued to make implementation easier for the classroom teachers. Thus, this year, five videos were created. These videos replace a portion of the curriculum to alleviate teacher burden and to assure content consistency and accuracy. However, the curriculum content still includes hands-on, interactive activities for the students.



Clemson Sustainable Community Project 2013

South Carolina | **Clemson University**

USDA Strategic Goal 4 | CYFAR Common Measures: Nutrition & Physical Activity

The Clemson Sustainable Community Project was implemented successfully at two sites again in Year 5: The Ridge-land Boys & Girls Club (Jasper County) and the Renewed Faith Learning Center (Allendale County) in South Carolina. The program has been consistently delivered at both sites in an after-school setting designed to provide a health and wellness curriculum and youth development activities that offer youth in grades K-8 the chance to live healthier, more active lives. Students were engaged in active learning as they assisted in food preparation, in activities that promoted healthy lifestyles and physical movement, and in the elements of starting and maintaining a school garden. Parents were involved at various levels: nutritional information sent home, parent nights, and community health fairs. Community connections involved local mentors and professionals visiting the after-school sites and introducing students to health professions and other career possibilities. Students had opportunities for summer camp experiences, a photo-voice project, technology proficiency, student leadership conferences, and Physical Fitness Day activities. Site staff received ongoing training in youth development principles, grant writing, and strengths-based workshops. Community support builds each year, and sustainability is growing stronger.

Sustainability Statement: Site coordinators are making contacts with community leaders and local services and have created a plan for building partnerships with local communities for sustainability. Each site has developed 15 community partners to address the development of a sustainable model. Site staff attended a grant writing workshop and learned the process of proposal writing and searching for sustainability grants.



“My child is constantly sharing nutritional information with the family every day. We actually set aside a few minutes every day before dinner for him to share what he has learned. He is persistent.” – Parent

Growing U

Texas | Texas A&M University & Prairie View A&M University

USDA Strategic Goal 4 | CYFAR Common Measures: Nutrition & Physical Activity

The Growing U project targets the CYFAR goals of reducing childhood obesity and helping low-income, school-age youth fulfill contributing lives by increasing their skills in nutrition, gardening, and physical fitness and increasing the number of low-income youth in 4-H clubs. Youth will learn from the evidence-based *Learn, Grow, Eat, & Go! (LGEG)*, *Junior Master Gardener (JMG)*, and *Walk Across Texas (WAT)* curricula. Each year, a cohort of 210 children (35 at each of the six sites) will participate in a 4-H club with volunteers and staff to support them. Parent volunteers will assume the club leader responsibilities and transition each cohort to a community club supported by the 4-H agent. This will result in 1,050 youth receiving a long-term 4-H experience. Youth will then have the opportunity to return to the program the following school year to be trained as youth leaders to help younger participants through the program. Families will learn gardening and nutrition skills with their youth through the parent component of the *LGEG* curriculum. This creates a community-level factor that will help youth with their long-term health decisions. The *LGEG* program has scientific journal articles to show its validity in reducing obesity and increasing youth knowledge, vegetable preferences, vegetable consumption, and healthy food availability at home. There are over 14 years of documented success on *WAT* regarding improving wellness and physical activity among adults and kids statewide. Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service will partner with Prairie View A&M Cooperative Extension to serve more youth and combine expertise in serving at-risk youth.

Sustainability Statement: Sustainability will be achieved by educating parents, creating community clubs at each site allowing utilization of the grow boxes beyond the grant, and bringing youth back after they have completed the program to be youth leaders. To create sustainability and a long-term 4-H

experience, parents will become club leaders. Leaders and community members will be trained by the county agents to prepare to be community club leaders. These volunteers will also have the opportunity to be paired with an experienced club leader who will serve as a mentor in the first couple of years of the new club operating. Youth who complete the Growing U program will be encouraged to come back to the program and can be trained as youth leaders. The schools and community center will allow clubs to use the temporary grow boxes in the summer as they work to create their own by next fall. After the grant ends, schools can turn the materials used to build the grow boxes into school gardens or community gardens. This will allow youth to continue their learning and the community to continue to be involved in the health and wellness of their children.





Healthy Youth Leading the Way in the Virgin Islands

U.S. Virgin Islands | **University of the Virgin Islands**

USDA Strategic Goal 4

CYFAR Common Measure: Nutrition & Physical Activity



The Healthy Youth Leading the Way in the Virgin Islands (VI) program is a project focused on preventing childhood obesity. This after-school program provided targeted educational sessions on nutrition, physical activity, and gardening, which occurred during a five day per week session coupled with 4-H programming, computer technology, homework assistance, and tutoring. On St. Thomas, at the Estate Tutu Apartments, a low-income housing community, 29 youth between the ages of 5 and 14 years were enrolled. Most youth were elementary school age. All of the youth were Black and 31% were Hispanic. None of the parents were involved in the military. The total number of sessions provided was 111 with an average daily attendance of 17 youth. On St. Croix, at the New Testament Church of God, 18 low-income youth between the ages of 5 and 13 years were enrolled—all in elementary school. All youth were Black and 17% were Hispanic. None of the parents were involved in the military. The program provided 25 sessions with an average daily attendance of 11 youth.



Sustainability Statement: On St. Croix, the potential for sustainability has tremendously increased in that the program has been moved to a long-established place of worship. Before forming the partnership, the church expressed an interest in having the program and invested resources in setting up a location on their grounds, which now includes a computer center. The pastor serves on the Advisory Council and participates regularly in the Advisory Council meetings. On St. Thomas, the site is a local low-income housing development, and it has potential for continuation in that in recent years the Housing Authority has supported the kind of after-school programming conducted by CYFAR in some of their facilities.

4-H Science After-school

Utah | **Utah State University**

NIFA Strategic Goal 1 | CYFAR Common Measure: Science

The Utah State University Sustainable Community Project provides 4-H after-school programming, with an emphasis on STEM, at three elementary school sites. The three community sites are Aspen, Larsen, and East Meadows Elementary schools. Each of these sites offers a healthy snack, homework time, and at least two 4-H clubs each day. There is at least one STEM club offered each day of the week. Clubs meet weekly for a 5- to 10-week period, with at least 32 weeks of programming occurring during the school year. In addition to these daily activities, the site also provides two service project opportunities and two parent showcases at least twice a year. 4-H Science after-school participants are given opportunities and encouraged to participate in additional 4-H contests, camps, and retreats. The county 4-H program offers a variety of camps and retreats, including STEM camps and retreats that enhance what youth are learning in their after-school programs.

Sustainability Statement: The sustainability of 4-H programs will be moved over to the schools and the school districts at the end of the five years. The schools and school districts are being prepared with all the tools necessary to be successful. There is an opportunity that Utah Department of Workforce Services funding will become available soon, and guidance will be provided to the specific districts as they apply for these grants. The schools are also pooling resources in order to sustain the programming into the future.

“I love that my child has been exposed to so many things that he hasn’t seen before.

The 3-D printing club has opened up his mind to a whole new world of things that I didn’t even know existed. He is so excited to learn new things in your program.” - Parent



Helping Vermont Youth PROSPER

Vermont | **University of Vermont**

USDA Strategic Goal 1 | CYFAR Common Measure: Workforce Preparation

PROSPER (PROmoting School-university-community Partnerships that Enhance Resilience) is an evidence-based delivery system meant to support strong youth and families through the delivery of both a family and youth program that builds life skills and reinforces healthy behaviors. Offered in two communities through the CYFAR SCP grant, community teams are leading the effort, raising awareness for the programs offered and their impact, and building the foundation for sustainability. Through delivery of both the *Botvin's Lifeskills* curriculum and *Strengthening Families for Parents and Youth Ages 10-14*, youth are gaining problem-solving and decision-making skills. Both parents and youth are improving their communication with one another, which builds better family functioning. The fidelity of both the programs offered is high, which assures that the right gains toward a reduction in risky behaviors are being made through this effort.

Sustainability Statement: Sustainability of Helping Vermont Youth PROSPER is dependent upon the relationship with the

school. From the onset, school principals brought in their teachers and staff to be on the community team and take part in the shared leadership. This allowed for creative and efficient collaboration. One community team took the approach to bring the model into the school as part of an existing system. The school's Step UP nights, nights when incoming middle schoolers moved up to the top floor of the school, evolved to become what is now known as "Step UP and PROSPER." The school principal has been a champion by promoting it on the school website, having it as part of the agenda when updating the school board and supervisory office, and regularly highlighting it on the local radio station. Promoting it as one of the school's programs has aided in additional local support. Yearly the principal has applied for a grant from the local hospital to help provide support for family meals and childcare for the family program. There are now over 60 families that have graduated from the family program. That is over 60 graduated youth and 85 parents and care providers.



Sustainable Community Revitalization Through Children's Hands (SCRATCH)

West Virginia | **West Virginia State University**

NIFA Strategic Goal 1

CYFAR Common Measures: Leadership Development, Nutrition, Science, & Technology

The Sustainable Community Revitalization Through Children's Hands (SCRATCH) McDowell Program is designed to mitigate the negative impacts of poverty, limited access to markets, and unemployment through an interactive intervention program involving youth participants (grades K-8). This program delivers life skills that foster food independence and diet choice to improve the overall quality of life for families in economically depressed areas. The SCRATCH McDowell program will move the fundamental principles of mentoring, training, and agricultural production applied successfully in an urban community in Huntington, West Virginia, into a rural setting. One season of training and interaction was completed at Southside Elementary in War, West Virginia. The program was adapted into an existing after-school program and delivered by school educators with training and support from West Virginia State University Extension agents serving as program coordinators. The following components were delivered to 25 youth participants: food product cultivation, preparation, and marketing. These skills were delivered through the *Junior Master Gardener* curriculum developed by Texas A&M University and *Literature in the Garden*, a module that promotes literacy while delivering conservation and growing methods in agriculture. Students acquired knowledge in plant growth and development as well as an understanding of soils and water systems. Of the 25 youth participants, 19 achieved certification in Chapter 2: Soils and Water. In addition to youth training, the program is youth centered by design. The program provides a platform for input and choice for developing and growing foods that are relevant to their needs and what needs they perceive exist in their communities. Concepts and ideas for entrepreneurial efforts come from the youth participants and are then guided to fruition by the adult facilitators.

“Young gardeners raise big results.”
- Anonymous

Sustainability Statement: SCRATCH will transition out of the West Virginia State University Extension Service (WVSUES) Agriculture and Natural Resources (ANR) division and into 4-H and Youth Development and/or Center for the Advancement of Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (CASTEM) as it has greater affinity with those domains than the adult education mission of ANR. It will be incorporated into WVSUES programming and delivered as a tool kit for educators to implement independently with support and guidance from WVSUES.

PROMoting School-community-university Partnerships to Enhance Resilience

West Virginia & Iowa | **West Virginia University & Iowa State University**

USDA Strategic Goal 1 | CYFAR Common Measure: Workforce Preparation



West Virginia University Extension Service applied for CYFAR Sustainable Communities Project funding in 2014 and invited Iowa State University to partner on the project as a subawardee. Iowa State was selected to be a partner because of their history of successful implementation of PROSPER, an evidenced-based intervention model that has been proven effective in achieving positive youth development outcomes through maximizing community and school partnerships through the leadership of Extension professionals and the

PROSPER national network. The PROSPER Model is based on empirical studies focused on the needs of youth and families, and rigorous evaluation has proven its effectiveness. The PROSPER model family programming is provided free to all sixth-grade families. Participation barriers (e.g., childcare and accessibility) are addressed by community teams who also incentivize participation through community donations. PROSPER family programs emphasize parental support,

encouragement of children's capacities and strength, and communication that values youth. In-school PROSPER model programs are delivered to all seventh graders as part of the general school curriculum. Through the school program, youth are encouraged to build strength and character, and to be contributing members of their families, schools, and communities, thus positively influencing their peer networks. The in-school programming emphasizes peer support, positive adult-adolescent relationships, and interpersonal skills that

support positive, healthy relationships and youth development.

Sustainability Statement: Currently, work is being done to expand the PROSPER model to additional West Virginia counties with great need. The community collaborations are key to success beyond the grant.



Nicianak 4-Health

Wisconsin | University of Wisconsin

USDA Strategic Goal 1

CYFAR Common Measure: None

Nicianak 4-Health utilizes a positive youth development model including 4-H clubs to improve the health and well-being of elementary school children living on the Menominee Indian Reservation. Programs provide Native American youth and families the opportunity to create and share nutritious meals, build family relationships, and increase opportunities for safe recreation and physical activity. Activities target knowledge, attitudes, and habits related to making healthy choices in a culturally affirming setting. Programs also focus on building caregiver and community supports to sustain programs so that youth in both communities have access to high-quality program environments. In 2014, the team hosted focus groups to engage Menominee parents and caregivers of youth in grades K-2 and incorporated their input into program design, such as purposefully including cultural history and arts into program offerings and modification of the original target audience to include the whole family in events (youth, parents, siblings, and extended families). In 2017, 4-H Clubs for families of young children, one in Keshena and one in Neopit, met every other week to learn and play together. Another 4-H club, Menominee Immersion, was developed for high school students to promote language learning and leadership development. Participation in the educational programs included 144 youth and 67 caregivers in 2017. Initial results of the program have demonstrated increased knowledge and application of cultural practice, nutrition, and physical activity requirements for elementary school-aged youth and leadership development and increased social support for both high school youth and caregivers.

Sustainability Statement: The 4-H clubs have been established and are growing parent leadership for many of the program components. Programs are supported by Menominee County Extension staff members who will remain in the community after grant end. Youth and families are growing their engagement with Extension programming outside of the community. The high school program has secured a small grant to expand programming, and the staff is exploring further funding options with community partners.



Partnering for School Success (PSS)

Minnesota | **University of Minnesota**

USDA Strategic Goal 1 | CYFAR Common Measure: None

The Partnering for School Success (PSS) program model is based on an ecological systems framework that recognizes that student success in school is influenced by multiple factors in the family and community. This project focuses on two major factors: the family environment and the school environment and the adults who can change these environments to improve student success. The program has three interrelated components: 1) The Family School Partnership (FSP) aims to improve the relationships between parents and school staff. 2) Family Strengthening Education (FSE) is intended to increase both parent and youth capacity to achieve positive educational outcomes for their families. This includes the curriculum *Educación: Nuestra Mejor Herencia* (Education: Our Best Legacy), *Open Doors with Higher Education*, and other supplemental educational experiences including field trips to local universities and colleges, technology booster sessions, and collaboration with 4-H. 3) School navigators are Latino community members hired by a school or community organization to act as liaisons between parents and the school. School navigators help parents work with the school system and build positive connections between the two. School navigators facilitate the FSP, co-teach the FSE curricula, and serve as the people parents go to with questions. PSS is an effective model for schools and communities to implement to address systemic and ecological barriers to academic success for Latino youth. Through FSE, school staff and families create several opportunities to engage with each other, applying their knowledge and skills to increase their collaborative efforts for student school success. Latino school navigators act as key support and serve as connectors (both culturally and linguistically) in the relationship between families and school staff. They ensure that both parties feel understood and that their voices are heard while simultaneously encouraging youth educational success. School staff and teachers gain knowledge and learn skills aimed at improving their relationships with Latino parents and students. Latino parents and youth gain knowledge and learn skills aimed at improving their relationships with school staff and teachers.

Over the five years of the program, participating schools changed their approach to working with Latino parents. The change involved greater acknowledgement of the skills and values that parents bring to the educational success of their children. Parents, school staff, and school navigators' participation in leadership training increased the program's sustainability because they wanted to and were able to continue the work moving forward. Training school navigators to deliver the educational curricula allowed them to remain within the school system to train future cohorts of parents, leading to further sustainability and institutionalization of the changes created by the program. In one location, a Latino parent group, *Latinos en Acción*, has formed, and this group has organized to be an advocate for Latino youth and their parents to both the school and broader community. A Latino 4-H Club has formed and continues as a result of this CYFAR grant. The Pumas 4-H Club has been highlighted as a model first-generation 4-H club, providing long-term leadership opportunities for both Latino youth and parents. One family participated with a middle school child but also had an older child who was in high school. The family used the information they learned in the program to support their older child to attend a 2-year community college program and then transition into a 4-year university. Their older child then came back to support the program by working with middle school youth during the summer and speaking about the experience of attending college.

Sustainability Statement: A 2-year internal initiative grant was awarded for follow-up with families on leadership and working on the school-family partnership component. Work will continue with The University of Minnesota Community Vitality Center to strengthen families' capacity to advocate for themselves and their children at school and organize into a parent group based on initial goals for the FSP component of the project. The Puma 4-H club will continue at Triton under leadership of Extension. *Our Best Legacy* curriculum will be culturally adapted and translated for use with the Hmong community. Larger grants are being sought to bring additional components of the CYFAR grant to the Hmong community. The PSS program from this CYFAR grant has grown beyond the two CYFAR sites. The State of Minnesota Department of Education hosted and co-facilitated PSS training for other school districts in Minnesota. *Our Best Legacy* curriculum training was offered twice this past year with 50 participants attending the English session and seven attending the Spanish session.



LESSONS LEARNED:
WHAT CYFAR TAUGHT US THIS YEAR

Alabama - Parent-Child Reading Enhancement Program

Although many Hispanic parents recognize the importance and the need for the program, it has been very difficult to get them to commit to coming. Even though more Hispanic parents were recruited this year than last year, the program still needs to do a better job at recruiting them. In addition, even though a software program used for assessing each child at the beginning and at the end of the program, many parents did not submit their children's assessments because the assessment was voluntary.

Alaska - Fostering Youth Towards a Revolution of Responsibility

Working with teens in state custody means being flexible. Staff must be ready to change programming with little notice due to a facility lockdown, runaway teen, teen attending a court hearing, or teen being released from state custody.

Colorado - Colorado State University Sustainable Community Project

In order to address the complex developmental issues communities face, FLTI at Colorado State University Extension and partners believe that a more civically engaged public will lead to better health, education, social, and economic outcomes for communities. FLTI's two-generation CYFAR project continues to gain visibility and stature as an authentic family engagement and community leadership program with positive and significant results and evaluation outcomes. The number of new communities and organizations interested in the two-generation project continues to grow. This growth potential is a notable success and a testament to the curriculum and the project's intentional planning, coordination, and implementation. Participants demonstrate an understanding of their role and responsibility in the care and education of their youth. Youth demonstrate civic duty, civic efficacy, neighborhood social connection, and civic participation. Youth outcomes are improved both in terms of individual competencies and educational outcomes in middle school. Community is strengthened through the civic engagement of parents of diverse backgrounds. Participants also continue to report positive outcomes related to the health of their families. Evaluation data also continue to demonstrate that FLTI is successful in recruiting participants across race, culture, income, education, gender, marital status, employment status, etc.

Colorado and Hawaii - GRANDcares Program

In the past few years, staff have learned that the recruitment of grandparent participation in the GRANDcares program is easier in counties where more grandparents are primary caregivers to their grandchildren. Furthermore, staff learned that many grandparents work. Therefore, they have experimented with the times of day they offer the program. It was also important to secure childcare for evening classes as a way for grandparents who work full time to attend the program.

Delaware - Delaware State University Sustainable Community Project

Youth and adults have learned the importance of community gardening that allows them to save money, eat healthier, and provide nutritious meals for their families. In addition, physical activity can be fun for all members of the family and help to fight obesity issues that plague low-income communities. Most are learning that cooking at home can be done economically and in a short amount of time.

Georgia - Project GROWL (Growing Real Opportunities for Work & Life in Agriculture)

This is the third year that programming for personal and professional development has been implemented through goal setting and public speaking. With each new cohort, the concepts have stayed the same, but the implementation has been different to reflect the different levels of understanding in the youth. Curriculum was at first developed to be a standard tool that could be used again by individuals new to the program. No two groups of students are alike, so while the idea of goal setting is important, how it is implemented changes. Youth are responding better to hands-on, experiential learning than in-classroom experiences, so more trips and community events were incorporated.

Indiana - 4-H PALS

While schools are often willing partners for new programming opportunities, they can also sometimes present challenges that are difficult to overcome. The 4-H PALS project's initial project design was altered as a result of lack of support from a school principal. In the long run, it allowed project staff to redirect their efforts to third- and fourth-grade students, which has resulted in an incredible response from families seeking opportunities for youth in after-school hours. While the schools in the project are well equipped with technology, the firewalls present ongoing concerns attempting to utilize technology tools in the building. These lessons have necessitated an incredible amount of creativity. Despite the school's internal purchasing processes, project staff believe they have finally found a way to allow the teachers and 4-H volunteers to make purchases without utilizing personal credit cards and lengthy reimbursement processes.

Iowa - Juntos: Together for a Better Education and Success for At-Risk Youth in Iowa Communities

To reduce transportation barriers, the school district provided vans for staff to transport youth from two middle schools to the high school for 4-H after-school programming. Project personnel and volunteers helped to lessen fear, sadness, confusion, uncertainty, and created a sense of safety related to potential immigration concerns among families enrolled in the project by providing information, access to community resources, and responsive, relevant programming. Success coaching occurred with younger youth (eighth and ninth grades) and with older youth (tenth and eleventh grades) to provide continual support with academics, college preparation, scholarship application assistance, and creating resumes. Families have shared multiple benefits from participating in Juntos. Project staff have recognized that creative thinking and additional resources are needed to maintain meaningful ongoing programming and support with youth and their families over time to reach long-term outcomes.

Kentucky - U-Connect: Kentucky

Impacts of programs are long-lasting. A big challenge has been maintaining cohorts of youth.

Kentucky - Strong Dads, Resilient Families

The implementation of this program has shown program staff and partners that fathers are interested in self-improvement. Fathers are often the forgotten parent or the “bad” parent. Project staff have learned that most fathers are eager to be involved and want to be a part of their children’s lives. However, most are unsure of how to do that or if they are doing it correctly. This program has helped create more confident fathers within the grant site communities.

Kentucky - Youth Engagement and Support (YES)

The most important part of working with homeless youth is building relationships. Youth do not care what you know or what you have to say until they know you care. In addition, until a youth’s basic needs are met, it is difficult for them to focus on anything else. Life skills are best taught in real time, meaning what is relevant to the youth at that moment. Skills taught through relationships, natural interactions, and consistency tend to stick better with youth. Thus, adults must be knowledgeable about life skills and flexible in the ways they teach those concepts and skills.

Louisiana - Healthy YOUTH...Strong Communities

The collaborative effort with Green Oaks High School has been beneficial in providing an audience at the teen level. Programming has been incorporated during class time to enhance school instructional efforts and to provide programming in areas that were not being addressed within regular classroom instructional time. A program focusing on financial management, goal setting, and careers was a welcome addition to the school’s middle school curriculum.

Maine - 4-H Community Central

The most important lesson learned is how important being connected to the community is for a program to be successful. Having the ability to base programs on the needs of the individuals that it serves has benefited the programs. Program staff also learned that the content is not the most important component of the project; it is the relationships within the program that meet the needs of youth and families.

Michigan - Building Early Emotional Skills (BEES)

Participant feedback has been used to continually modify lessons and language in both formats of the class. It has been helpful to understand some of the troubleshooting that needs to take place with participants that are new to technology and utilizing the online classes. This information will be helpful in developing support documents for moving towards sustainability especially when instructors may not be available to assist with registration. Work is being done to shorten the evaluation as the program moves toward sustainability based on feedback stating that it is too long.

Michigan - Michigan Sustainable Community Project - Flint

Due to the mistrust in the Flint community, it will be important to continually check in with participants and partners to ensure that the project continues to meet their needs and is responsive to new needs as the water crisis continues to unfold and parents find out more information related to their children and lead exposure.

Minnesota - Fostering Achievement & Connections to Engage Students (FACES)

Overall, youth in the program reported high levels of program quality. Data show that supportive relationships rank the highest among program quality measures. This is a testament to the staff, volunteers, and stakeholders. Data about core competencies show that the youth who attend these programs have strong personal characteristics such as social conscience and personal values. An area for improvement could be the core competencies of decision-making and critical thinking. Financial behaviors were practiced more frequently by youth reporting at posttest than by youth reporting at pretest. In addition, youth at posttest reported more positive attitudes about money at posttest than youth at pretest. This suggests that financial activities are working. Based on evaluations, the majority of the youth do not talk with their parents about money. This creates a great opportunity for sites to dive deeper into the area of financial education and decision-making in Year 3.

Minnesota - Urban 4-H STEM Clubs

The principal investigator (PI) worked with the CYFAR team to update and improve the evaluation plan. Program staff updated instruments, improved data collection strategies, and improved communication among all team members. In turn, the quality of data improved significantly along with team member accountability and communication. Additionally, resources were maximized and are on track to determine the evidence base of the program model.

Minnesota and Tennessee - U-Connect

1) The more support the participants have with homework, daily check-ins, and school visits, the more successful in terms of grades and behavioral change they will be (21st Century Academy, Minneapolis, MN). 2) Summer campus visits and programming allow the program to reach greater numbers of youth (Keystone/West 7th Community Center, Saint Paul, MN). 3) Having youth participate in community service can be very impactful in students' lives. Youth volunteered during the summer to distribute food and sell concessions at Family Movie Nights, increasing community awareness and learning responsibility and early job skills (Keystone/West 7th Community Center, Saint Paul, MN). 4) Youth received a grant to help homeless teens in the community by purchasing backpacks and filling them with hygiene supplies, hats, and mittens. They gained grant writing and interviewing skills, learned about homelessness, and developed empathy for people in crisis (Keystone/West 7th Community Center, Saint Paul, MN). 5) Working with school administration is an integral part of the mentoring process and its success (Hobgood Elementary School, TN). 6) The relationships between mentors, teachers, administrators, and parents must be established during the school year for all engaged to feel like they are truly a part of the process (Croft Design Center Middle Prep School, TN).

Mississippi - Positive Parenting Practices

Three key lessons were learned in 2017. First, program participants have expressed an interest in more content related to healthy relationships. In response to this request, the project staff was trained in the *Relationship Smarts 3.0* curriculum and have identified ways to include portions of this curriculum in the program. Second, program content related to workforce preparation has been substantially reduced. Additionally, new partnerships have been formed with officials from the Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indians. Through these partnerships, the program is being implemented at two sites on the reservation (high school and justice center). Third, Steering Committee members can benefit more from professional development than from maintaining the original Steering Committee function. Therefore, content experts from Mississippi State University Extension provided education to members at meetings this year. This focus on professional development will carry forward.

Missouri - 4-H Youth Futures

When collaborating with other organizations, be sure they understand and acknowledge the purpose of your program and that the goals of the collaboration are shared. Program staff learned this when one of the partnering organizations had a change in leadership. The new leader had a different understanding of the purpose and expectations of the program and wanted to do things differently. A decision was made to discontinue the collaboration in order to meet programming needs. This was done with mutual understanding but it was a difficult decision because it was a valuable partnership, one with services that benefited the youth. With the intention of building the community, the program has been careful moving forward, making sure all partners understand the program's purpose and agree to work together on achieving success.

Montana - Linking Youth to Agricultural and Environmental Practices Using STEM

The plan of work for the Pretty Eagle Academy will have minor adjustments. The students are learning to fly a drone that was purchased for the school as part of the CYFAR grant rather than building their own. Building their own drones was an excellent engineering exercise, but the drones were difficult to fly, and gathering footage that could be used to generate readable maps was not working as well. Students will continue to learn engineering skills, however, as they learn CAD and 3-D to print their designs. The project at Two Eagle River School is not sustainable as the school personnel are not committed and student attendance is very low. The Polson Middle School will take over the program for Year 4, starting September 2017.

Nebraska - WeCook: Fun with Food & Fitness

Expanding the program in its entirety poses quality assurance challenges. With the two original sites being coordinated through the university, WeCook is afforded resources other community partners are not. For example, supplies for the two original sites are organized and stored in a centralized location where team members are able to collaborate in person on an almost daily basis. Both Lincoln Parks & Recreation and Partnership for a Healthy Lincoln require a decentralization of resources, making quality control a challenge. In addition to this, recruiting staff and volunteers for the additional sites while maintaining a low youth:adult ratio for each cohort requires a great deal of work and creativity—all of which is made easier by conducting the program in a city such as Lincoln, Nebraska, where University students are looking for community experiences. With all of the challenges, however, the WeCook team continues to grow the program and improve its quality simultaneously.

Nevada - Heart & Shield: A Program to End Family Violence

Parents felt this program helped facilitate their reconnection with their community. Isolation, whether at the hands of an abuser or self-imposed due to the feelings of shame inherent as a result of domestic violence, is a strong deterrent to victims associating with family and friends. This isolation tendency inhibits a victim's ability to receive needed counseling, guidance, and resources. Strong community connections help facilitate protective environments, one of the six critical strategies to building victim capacity during recovery identified by the Centers for Disease Control in 2017. Faculty and staff find that families have unaddressed needs such as mental health counseling, housing, adequate food, and children's academic and social challenges. It is critical for program staff to provide resource referral information and assist families in connecting to local agencies.

New Jersey - Science Pathways

As a pilot program, there have been struggles over the last two years to identify the technical resources needed to accomplish highly technical areas of the laser cutting and 3-D printing programs. While the equipment and its use are heavily touted, there is often a dearth of accompanying directions or curriculum. Even when available, these areas have carried a steep learning curve for implementation staff. To this end, those services have been contracted through other resources more familiar with troubleshooting these pieces of equipment. Also, there have been difficulties in matching activities to teen skills that have led to changes in the curriculum over the last two years. Additionally, like many similar programs, there have been struggles with transportation for teens to and from the program site. The staff has yet to fully resolve this issue; however, transportation options for participants that allow parents to choose from more options have been identified.

New York - New York 4-H Youth Community Action Network (Youth CAN)

The workforce skills learned by the Youth CAN Teen Leaders through their job shadowing, internships, and summer employment have enhanced both the youth participants' education and career aspirations while complimenting the project's overall sustainability objectives. Project staff fully anticipate that Youth CAN's focus on developing tomorrow's leaders will translate into connectedness with and investment in the communities in which they work. One hundred percent of the Youth CAN Teen Leaders who completed their two years in the program and graduated from high school have gone on to college with full or partial scholarships. Almost all of these young people are the first in their families to attend college—an outcome that speaks well to ending the cycle of generational poverty.

North Carolina and Oklahoma - The Juntos Program (NC) and Unidos Se Puede (OK)

One lesson learned during the five years of program implementation was that there is a need to develop and implement a capacity-building and sustainability plan during the initial planning and implementation stages of the grant cycle. In 2017 efforts were made to develop a sustainability plan, with support from the CYFAR coach, which has been actively implemented. In addition, the staff has learned that strong communication with partners and stakeholders is key to successful program implementation and essential in maintaining program fidelity. It has become evident that each cohort builds a strong connection with each other, which leads to youth and parents being invested in the youth's academic success. Lastly, working with feeder schools can increase youth retention in the program. Unfortunately, the program lost some students from middle school to high school due to them being assigned to different schools in the community.

North Carolina and South Carolina - 4-H STEM Education & Science Literacy: Developing the Next Generation of Scientists

The North and South Carolina 4-H STEM CYFAR program encountered a few obstacles during the 2017 program year. The program required a change in the school site at the request of the superintendent because the original school site was taken over by the state. The program coordinator hired in early 2017 did not fit the program, and it was necessary to rehire for the position. Integrating technology has required more time and navigation through local policies and procedures than originally anticipated. Technology components of the program require careful consideration of each site's unique issues and constraints, including a school that is anticipating a move in the next year and a school that has limited connectivity. These challenges brought the North and South Carolina 4-H CYFAR team closer and required out-of-the-box teamwork and strategizing to keep the program moving. Today, the program is moving ahead, and the staff couldn't be more excited for what 2018 will bring.

Ohio - 4-H Grilling and Beyond: Cultivating Healthy Fathers, Kids, and Communities

The key lesson learned is the power and effectiveness of local community connections, and when those do not exist, implementing a program is very difficult. This is most necessary when recruiting families to participate in an educational program. Staff also learned that it is best to involve local people and allow them to drive the marketing, recruitment, and outreach effort.

Ohio - Urban G.E.M.S. (Gardening Entrepreneurs Motivating Sustainability)

The early results from the first cohort of participants showed a steady increase in the number of youth consuming increased amounts of fruits and vegetables, an increase in those who plan to keep eating fruits and vegetables, and an overall improved knowledge of healthy eating. These results have been useful in refining the curriculum and strengthening commitment to sustainable change. A second cohort is currently engaged in program implementation, and school and community support has been outstanding in establishing a new program and is showing promise.

Ohio - Food for a Long Life: A Community-Based Intergenerational Project

The site staff is a secondary audience that may be experiencing food insecurity themselves. Therefore, as nutrition education is delivered to preschool students, the program also strives to help teachers understand how healthy meals and snacks can be affordable and tasty. Collaboration with community partners to determine the most effective modes of contacting parents and collecting data has been useful in identifying strategies for recruiting parents and children as well as gathering baseline data reflective of site culture. In addition, because intergenerational activities pose logistical challenges and may limit the benefits of shared nutrition programming, smaller group intergenerational programming should be supported. Finally, continued communication with sites regarding their technology needs will ensure deadlines for purchasing needed items are met.

Oklahoma - ¡Unidos Se Puede!

Much has been learned about engaging the community in the work of the program. This year, 34 distinct community partners contributed in one way or another to the success of Unidos. Key to success has been participation in projects or activities that serve the mission of the community partners in one way or another. The initial enrollment rate using a list of eligible families provided by the public school system is approximately 65%. Families who did not accept the invitation to participate in the Unidos Se Puede program identified being overly tired due to demanding work schedules, poor availability of childcare, fear of traveling (which was associated with increased risk of being apprehended by police), and finances (cost associated with events and activities such as having to dine out on evenings when activities were scheduled) as barriers to participation. Training for success coaches, both initial and ongoing, is crucial for overall program success. Coaches need to be trained in areas such as active listening, problem solving and goal setting, emotion regulation, motivational interviewing, and adolescent development and family theory. A more intense training program has better prepared coaches for work with students and their families. Successful recruitment requires providing food and childcare for parents coming from work, aligning program goals with the values and goals of the target population, and that programs partner with a trusted community partner until able to generate a reputation in the community.

Oregon State - 4-H Food + Fun Club

Through the implementation of the Oregon Sustainable Community Project, the staff learned about the importance of having behavioral management assistance provided through the community sites. When present, this additional staff helped to facilitate more beneficial learning environments.

Pennsylvania - PROMoting School-community-university Partnerships to Enhance Resilience

PROSPER can be readily and successfully adopted in new communities. Extension educators, with their extensive knowledge of the communities they serve, can provide critical expertise around prevention science, assuring the use of evidence-based practices and high-quality implementation. Sustaining funding for the Extension educator's position and for the technical assistance provider after grant funding is the largest challenge.

Rhode Island - CELS: Integrating Nutrition Education Into Full Service Schools in Providence, RI

Parent engagement has continued to be a focus of improvement. Caregivers can be difficult to recruit and sustain for programs, but continued efforts to make the six-week Family Night program appealing to families has been met with success. Efforts include providing relevant nutrition education and reinforcements and generating enthusiasm for the Family Night program by demonstrating sneak-peeks of program content. In Year 4, a record high of 16 parent caregivers were involved in the Family Night program, with nine completing the series; this was an increase from six participants in the previous year (with four completing the series).

South Carolina - Clemson Sustainable Community Project 2013

Several lessons have been learned through the implementation of the project. The most essential lesson is in regard to delivering the curriculum in an after-school setting. After a day of school, students respond best to creative, hands-on activities that engage them in the subject matter. Instructional staff have been diligent in designing each afternoon's activities with this goal in mind. Another lesson is the ongoing need for the program staff to be ambassadors for the program in the community to increase student participation and increase community involvement with the program.

Texas - Urban Community Sustainability

Due to administrative changes, 4-H Chartered Club enrollment was reduced significantly, but those enrolled attended most, if not all, 4-H activities, events, and field trips with increased parent participation and volunteerism. The Giving Garden is popular and the Master Gardener is not always available, so parents have risen to the occasion to help maintain the garden as students are eager to participate. In addition, there is difficulty in receiving required paperwork from students and parents. In the future, hosting more events to showcase project visibility will help parents observe the benefits and encourage participation. Scheduling field trips with one school personnel can create problems. In the future, at least two school personnel will be included in planning field trips. Educational trips will be conducted according to the availability of teachers and students.

Texas - Growing U

The lesson learned during this reporting period was the importance of establishing relationships with stakeholders prior to fund distribution. With the established relationships with community partners, the planning year will be utilized to create clear expectations, investigate potential hurdles with six different sites, and create an effective evaluation tool.

U.S. Virgin Islands - Healthy Youth Leading the Way in the VI

One of the lessons learned involved the education level of staff for the site positions. Early in the process, paraprofessionals were preferred. However, with an increased emphasis on evaluation and established curricula, individuals with a college degree are more appropriate. This, of course, means more salary for staff. Otherwise, it is difficult to find appropriate staff for the positions. Another lesson involves minimizing a change in cohorts over the five-year period. By the time the program gets organized and running smoothly, a large portion of the time has transpired. In ending the project, program delivery time is lost due to close out. These are two issues for consideration.

Utah - 4-H Science Afterschool

The STEM coordinator has had tremendous success reaching out to STEM companies within the county to partner with in offering additional program support and collaboration. Each site partners with the university and local companies to assist in site programming. The biggest partnership is with Brigham Young University doing underwater robotics. Utah County 4-H has incorporated technology into the Elementary Afterschool Programs on three fronts. The first is by increasing the amount of computer training that after-school site coordinators receive from the technology specialist. The second is by incorporating more technology into clubs on site. Finally, and most importantly, the focus has been on working to give youth opportunities to learn how to master technology in a supportive environment. Whether it is a club that gets kids involved in the first steps of coding or one that allows them to design their own robots, CYFAR after-school programs are encouraging youth to become technologically fluent. The technology specialist works closely on all of these fronts providing training, support, and resources.

Vermont - Helping Vermont Youth PROSPER

It is important to look for ways to integrate the program into existing systems, looking ahead towards sustainability. Trying to create something from scratch, without looking for overlap, does not work. It is important for all participants, including staff that might be peripherally related, to fully understand the program purpose and how it fits into the school and community's larger goals.

West Virginia - Sustainable Community Revitalization Through Children's Hands (SCRATCH)

Implementation of the SCRATCH McDowell program was challenged by the natural and social environment of McDowell County. A resident agent could not be located to implement the program. While the content and activities were well received at Southside Elementary, remote implementation by West Virginia State University Extension Service (WVSUES) agents was not sustainable. In order to move forward with program efforts, a request to CYFAR to move the programming to Raleigh County, an area of similar rugged topography and economic challenges but with the advantage of proximity to a larger metropolitan area (Beckley, West Virginia), was submitted. The request was granted, and both an agent and a participating school have been selected. Markets did not exist in McDowell County and completion of the entrepreneurial experiences were not possible. These markets and economic opportunities already exist in Raleigh County. To summarize the year's objectives, McDowell County received the benefits of the short-term results (i.e., mastery of curriculum), but Raleigh County will benefit from the long-term exposure to the project and will be the catalyst for those changes in behavior that lead to better food choice, greater self-esteem, improved literacy and math skills, and improved community service/development.

West Virginia and Iowa - PROMoting School-community-university Partnerships to Enhance Resilience

One lesson that was learned is to have multiple back-up trainers prepared to step in as needed. For example, one of the lead trainers who was very active and popular with the staff and families had an emergency medical situation, taking the trainer out of volunteering for the family program. This ultimately led to the realization of the need to train a cadre of volunteers above the number in the original plan.

Wisconsin - Nicianak 4-Health

The principles learned from this project were identified in a national webinar. First to promote indigenous education sovereignty and self-determination by strengthening local knowledge and institutions. Second to utilize a generational and intergenerational approach, building on the assets of elders and youth. Third to reclaim what has been disrupted by colonization, including language. Fourth to promote cultural sustainability and revitalization. Finally, to ground work in community-based accountability by practicing respect, reciprocity, and caring relationships.

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READ ALL ABOUT US

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