



2022 ANNUAL REPORT

CYFAR

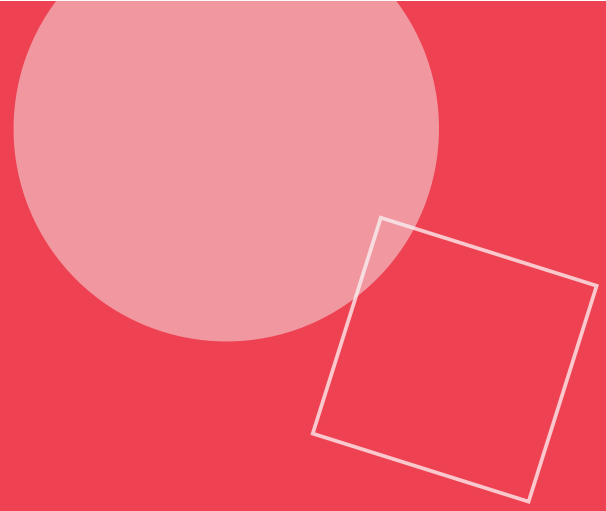
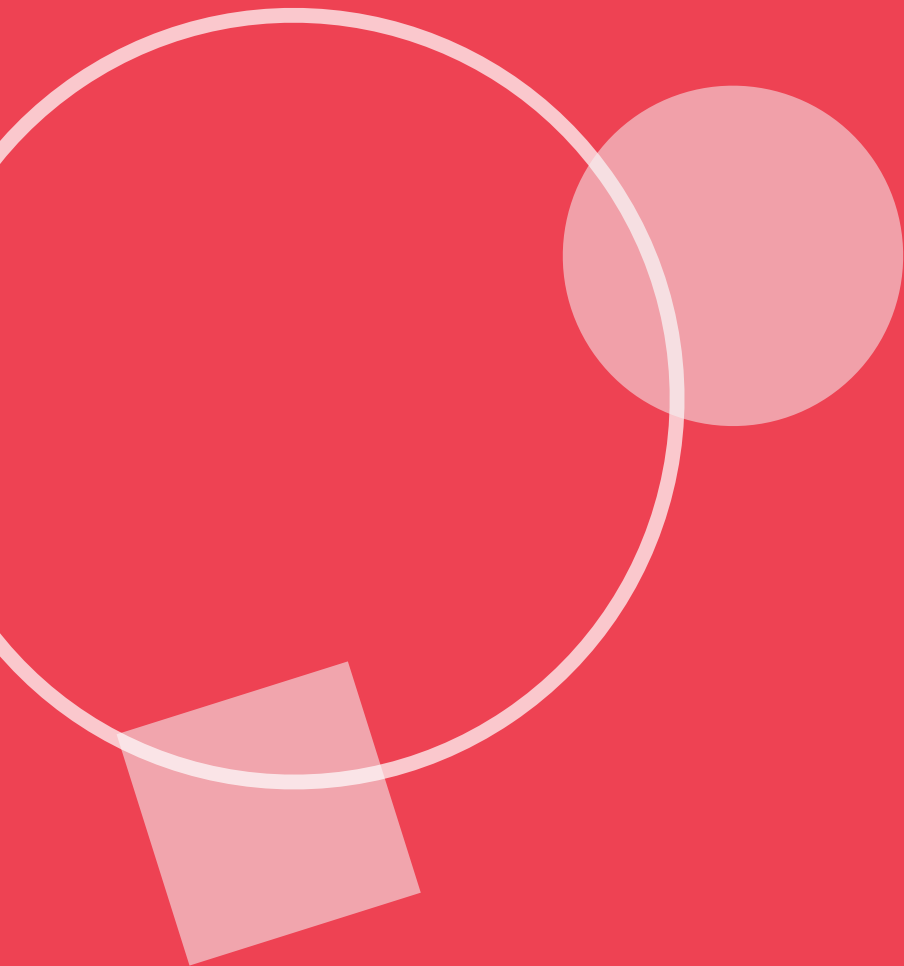
CHILDREN, YOUTH, AND FAMILIES AT-RISK

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The Children, Youth, and Families At-Risk (CYFAR) Program is funded by the National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA). CYFAR, a program of the Institute of Youth, Family, and Community in the Division of Youth and 4-H, allocates funding provided by congressional appropriation to Land-grant university Cooperative Extension for comprehensive community-based programs for children, youth, and families placed at-risk. Funded projects have youth placed at-risk at the center of the programming efforts. The program theory is based on the Bronfenbrenner Model which explains the social environment's impact on human development; in this case of the CYFAR program, the model explains the impact on a young person's life. Bronfenbrenner highlights the environment in which youth grow up and how the environment impacts all facets of life.

Youth placed at risk who participate in programs such as CYFAR are likely to improve social skills, increase academic achievement, increase self-esteem, and increase self-efficacy, according to Youth.gov. Many of the participating states with associated outcomes measure these constructs. These outcomes indicate improvement in psychological and behavioral constructs.

The CYFAR Program is aligned with USDA's Goal 5 which is to: Expand Opportunities for Economic Development and Improve Quality of Life in Rural and Tribal Communities. CYFAR also aligns with NIFA's Strategic Goal 2 which is: Enhancing research and investments in communities to ensure equity, reduce barriers to access, and advance opportunities to underserved communities.

State projects in 2022, considering the impact of COVID-19 and the pivoting that state and local programs did to accommodate the social distancing challenges, still addressed the lingering impacts that programs were attempting to overcome. Projects moved in positive directions to continue to serve and impact the lives of program participants. Stories regarding the impact of pivoting are included in this CYFAR Annual Report.

CYFAR has documented program impacts and outcomes through the CYFAR Annual Report and the CYFAR Outcomes Pages. The Outcome Pages document the Outcomes of CYFAR Projects in five areas including Basic Human Needs, Families, Food Nutrition and Food Safety, Literacy and Education, Youth Development and Workforce Development. The outcomes cover a 10-year period of program implementation; a thematic analysis conducted by USDA Pathways Interns using the Current Research Information System (CRIS). Some of the outcomes included 33% improved family life engagement and decreased family conflicts; 65% improved family life engagement and decreased family conflicts; 16% improved technology literacy; 40% increase in confidence and self-efficacy; and 56% increased workforce readiness among participants.

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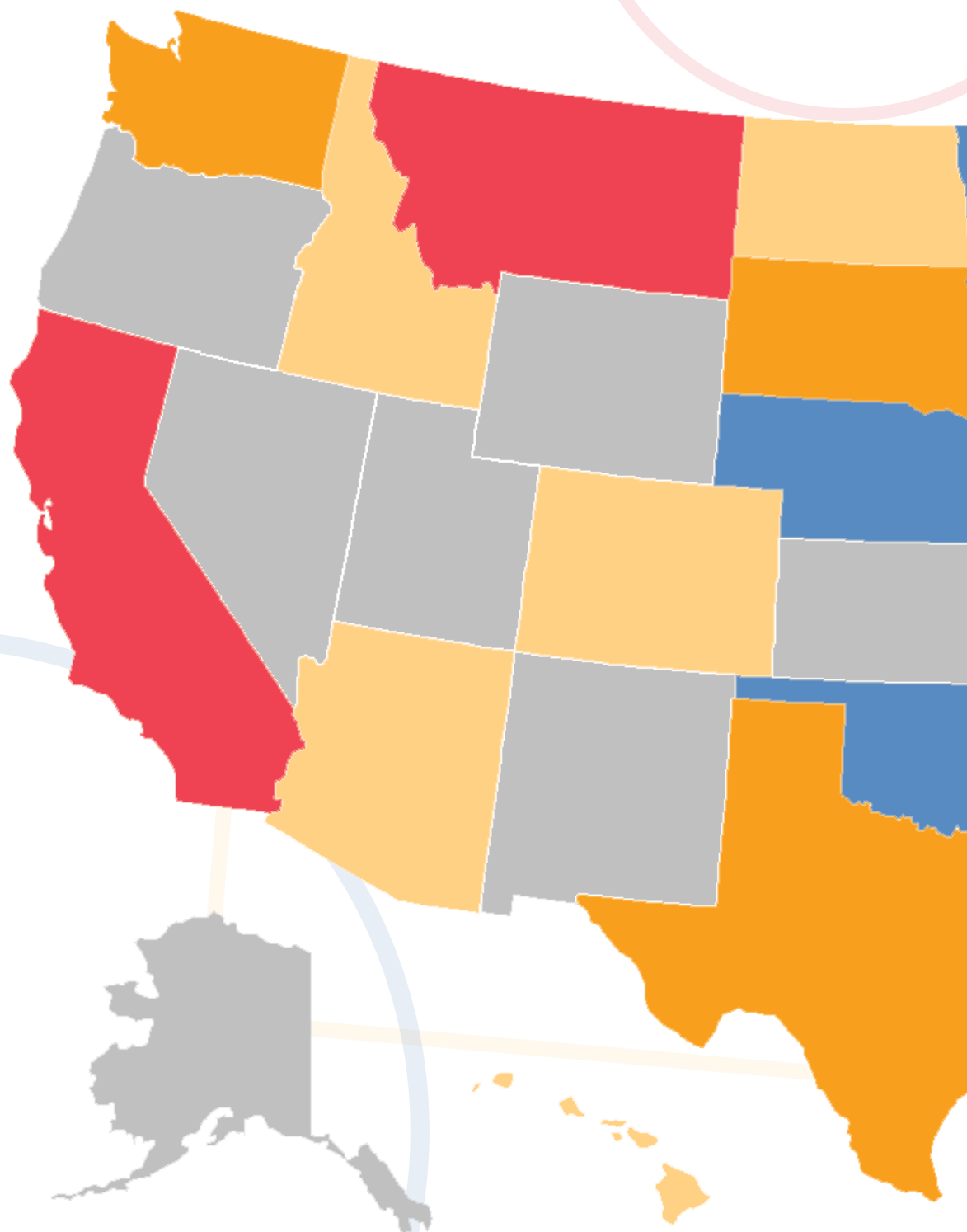
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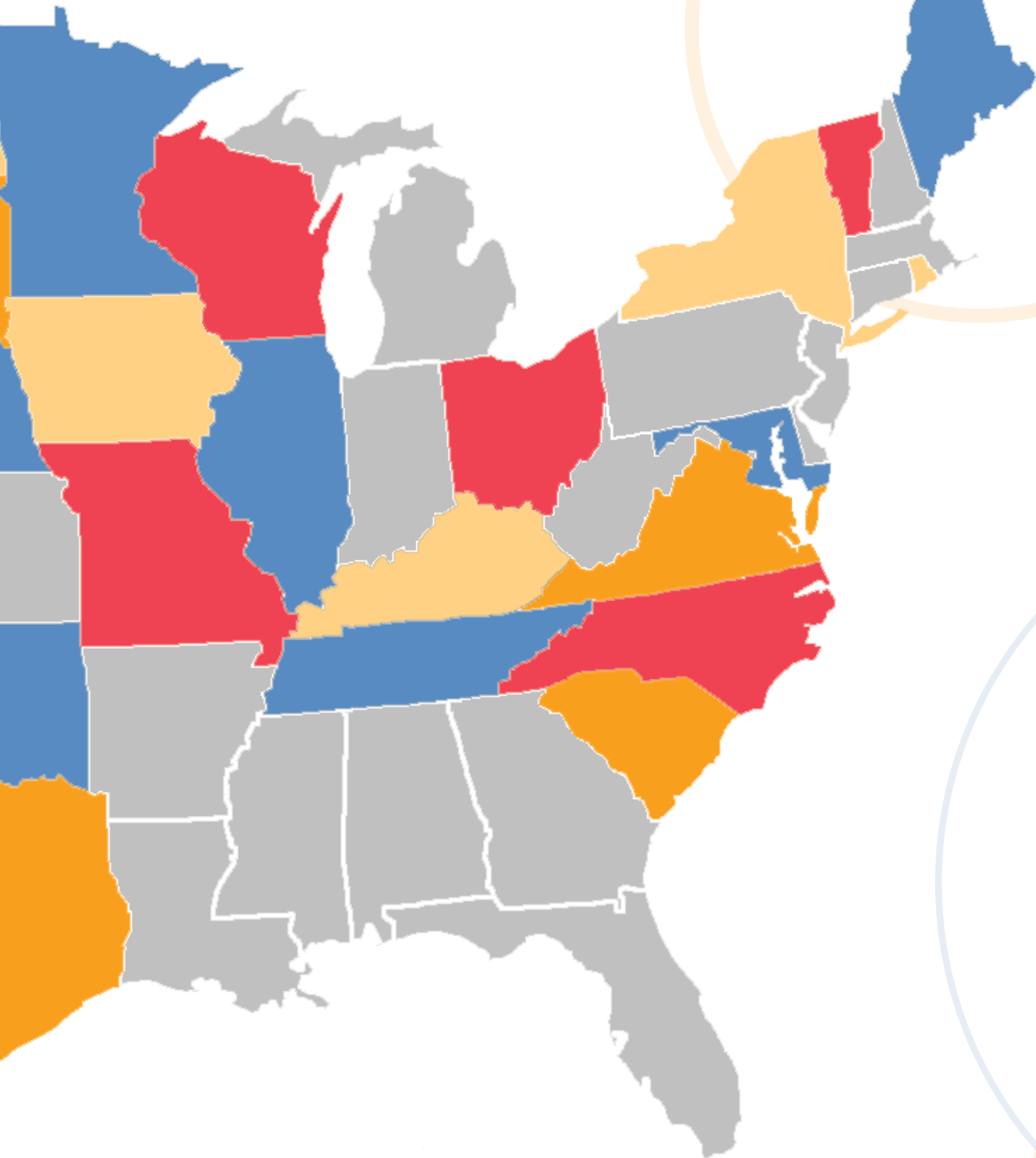
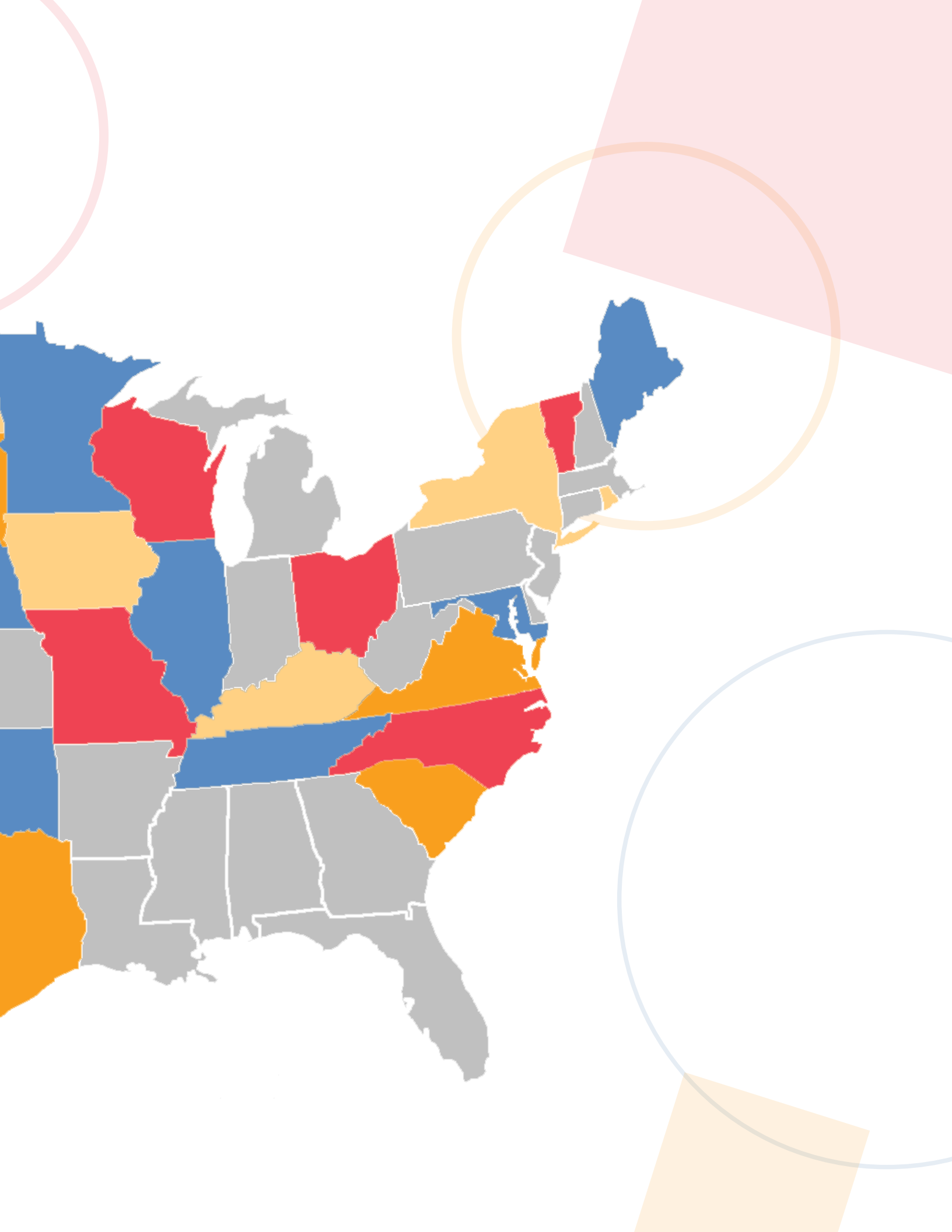
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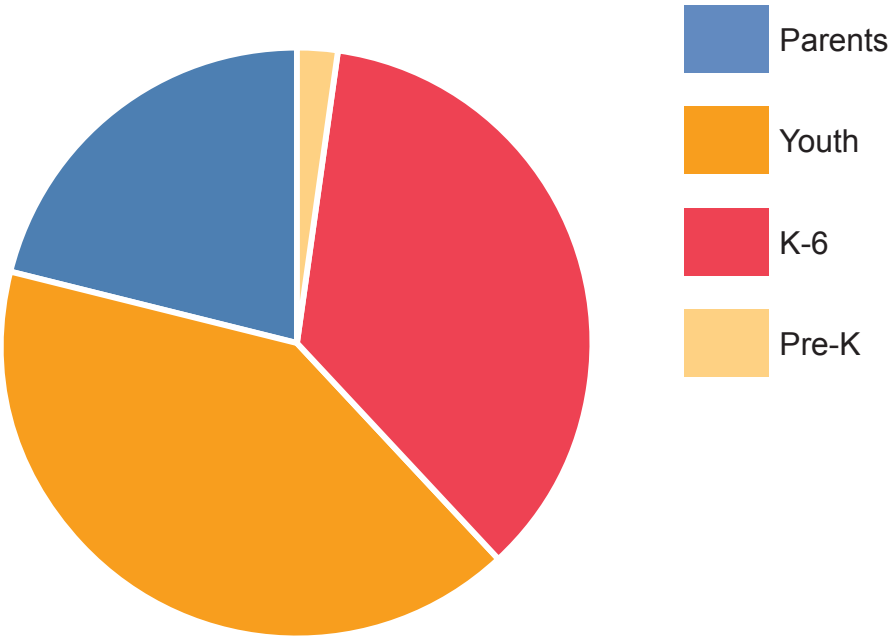
CYFAR Locations



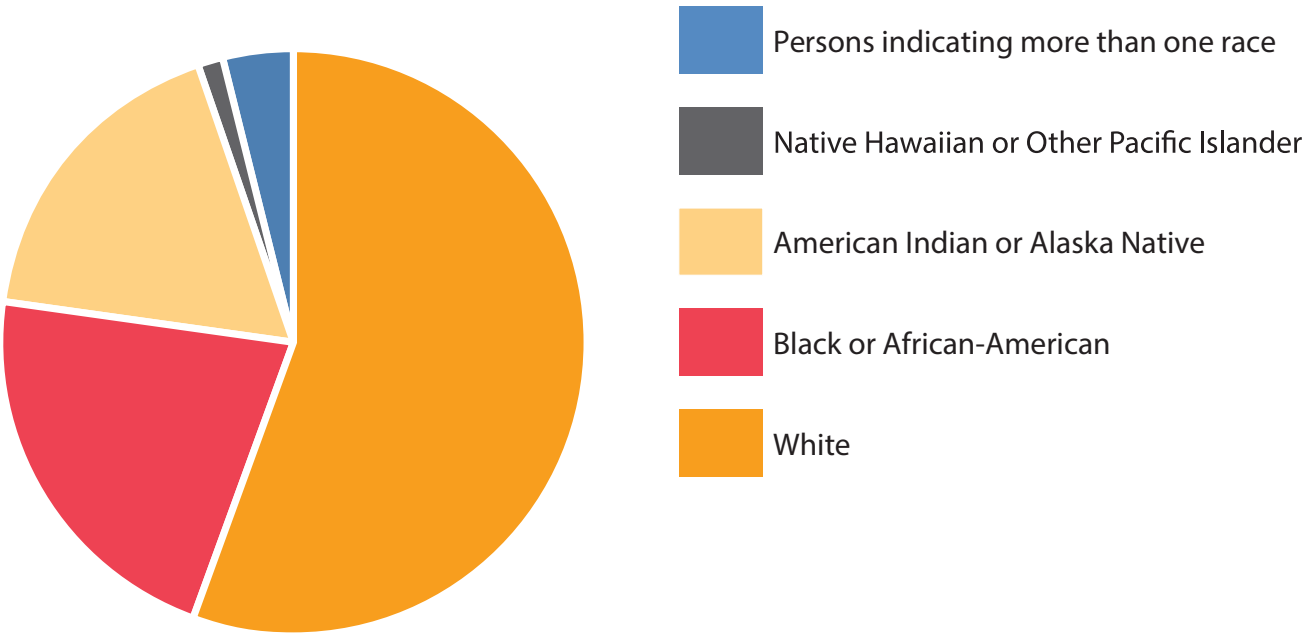


CYFAR Data

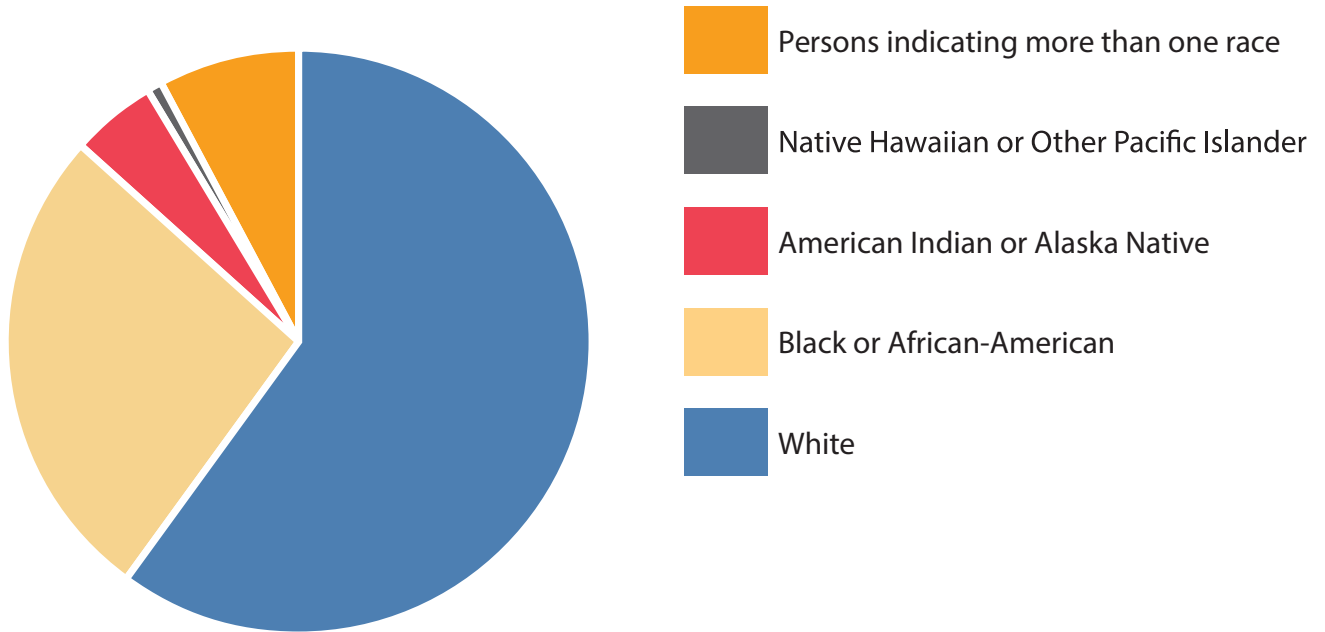
CYFAR Participants by Age



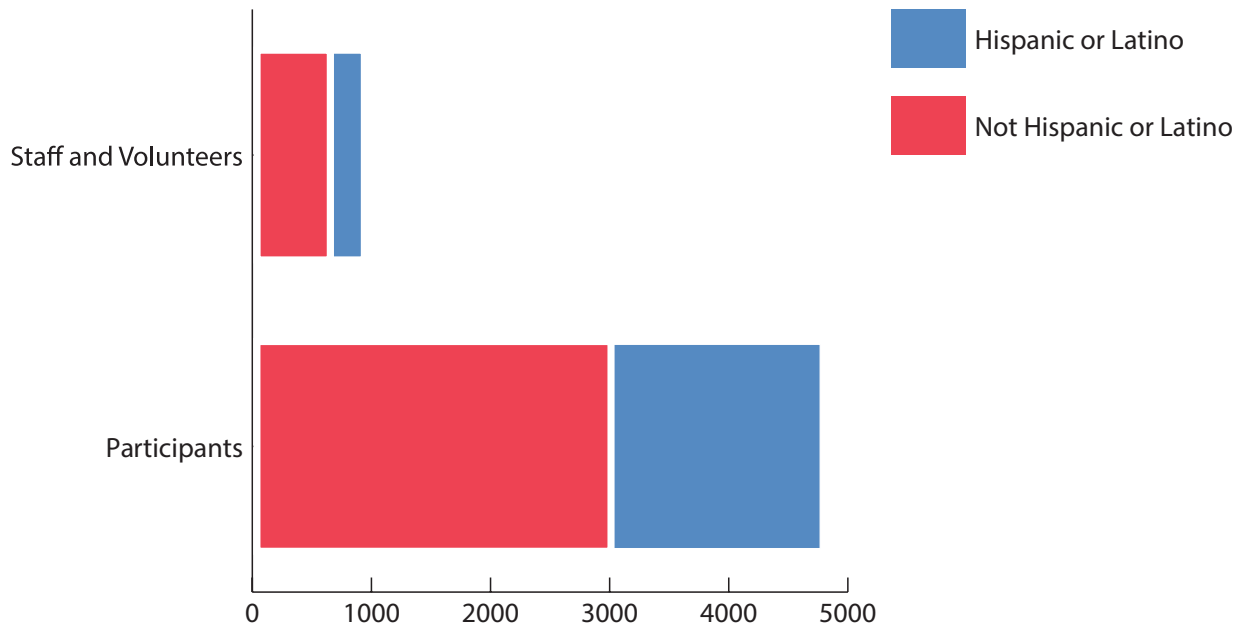
CYFAR Participants by Age



Staff and Volunteers by Race



CYFAR Ethnicity



State	Project Name	Percentage of Youth Served in Poverty (>50%)
Arizona	SCP to promote Early Language and Literacy Development in Native Communities	69.26%
California	4-H SNAC	79.81%
Hawaii	Creating a Village for Transition into Adulthood through Youth-Adult Partnerships, Teen Mentoring, and Community Sustainability	100.00%
Idaho	Juntos Idaho	70.00%
Idaho	DIVE4Tech Joint Sustainable Community Project: A University of Idaho (UI) and Washington State University (WSU) Collaboration	71.56%
Indiana	Juntos IN for Success	64.38%
Kentucky	Uplift: Empowering Today's Youth for Tomorrow's Future	71.87%
Maine	Maine 4-H Community Central: Engaging Teens in College Readiness and Workforce Development	56.65%
Maryland	Addressing Youth Mental Health of Latinx Families by Strengthening Family-Skills and Engaging in Sports	100.00%
Minnesota	Minnesota 4-H Youth Development CYFAR Project: STEAM Connect Club	100.00%
Montana	Montana Sustainable Communities: Social, Emotional, and Physical Wellness for Rural and Native American Youth (SEP)	65.37%
Nebraska	Youth Civic Engagement	88.73%
New York	4-H UNITY	94.17%
North Carolina	The Juntos Sustainable Community Project	50.03%

State	Project Name	Percentage of Youth Served in Poverty (>50%)
North Dakota	Building Community Capacity and Resilience through 4-H in ND Tribal Nations	100.00%
Ohio	Seed to Bloom (StB) 4-H S.T.E.A.M. Sustainable Community Project	100.00%
Ohio	Southside Simple Suppers Scale-up (S4): Expansion of a Validated Family Meals Program for At-Risk Children and Youth	58.31%
Oklahoma	CYFAR: Oklahoma State University and West Virginia University Sustainable Community Project (SCP): The United We Can: Youth Entrepreneurship Program	95.78%
Oklahoma	The United We Can: African American Youth Entrepreneurship Program	95.00%
Rhode Island	A Multi-Level Youth Out-of-School Intervention Stemming from Foods	76.28%
South Carolina	Clemson-South Carolina State Sustainable Community Project	98.75%
Tennessee	Tennessee SCP	100.00%
Vermont	Vermont Youth PROSPER	63.10%
Wisconsin	Nia: Pathways and Purpose for the Future	50.80%

CYFAR Budget

The total budget for the CYFAR Program equaled \$8,395,000, representing 38 Sustainable Community Projects (SCPs). These SCPs represented 82% (\$6,900,000) of the budget; this is inclusive of both new and continued awards. Eligible universities included both 1862, 1890, and 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 accounted for \$359,200 or 4% of the budget. The professional development and technical assistance for the CYFAR SCPs represented \$800,000, or 10%, of the budget dedicated to the Professional Development and Technical Assistance Center. Agency overhead made up \$335,800 or 4% of the budget.

CYFAR IMPACT STATEMENTS



DIVE4Tech Joint Sustainable Community Project: A University of Idaho (UI) and Washington State University (WSU) Collaboration

Idaho and Washington

CYFAR Topic Area: Leadership Development and Workforce Preparation

Program Report: The CYFAR 2022 Project Summary for Year 2 of the Juntos Sustainable Community Project—a collaborative effort between the University of Idaho and Washington State University—targets the CYFAR Teen Outcome. This initiative focuses on engaging middle and high school Latino students and their parents in a comprehensive club program designed to enhance academic outcomes, raise college and career awareness, and offer enriching activities for skill development. Utilizing the Juntos program model and curriculum developed by North Carolina State University (NCSU) Extension, the project operates across four sites: two in Idaho (Canyon County and Coeur d' Alene Reservation) and two in Washington (Chelan and Whatcom Counties). The DIVE4Tech (Diversity in 4-H in Technology) program aims to increase high school graduation rates and college aspirations among at-risk and vulnerable Latinx and Native American teens. Additionally, it focuses on boosting workforce readiness, technology skills, resilience, and social protective factors.

Lessons Learned: Regular UI and WSU joint Zoom meetings, including coaching sessions, have seen high attendance. Juntos personnel will participate in both virtual and in-person trainings, including those offered by CYFAR. Efforts are underway to update webpages, enhance resources, and develop a social media plan that encompasses all sites. State Project Directors have overseen the project, providing administration, facilitation, and reporting. All site personnel have completed mandatory university trainings, and the Site Director and Coordinators are collaborating with local partners and schools, actively engaging students and families in the 2022/2023 school year's activities across all sites. The university IRB process has been finalized, with a NCSU Reliance Agreement established.

Sustainability: Support for increasing academic achievement remains robust at all Idaho and Washington sites, with local foundations in both states showing interest and providing partial funding for the Juntos program. The UI Canyon County Educator and Idaho Project Director successfully posted and filled a bilingual/bicultural position, currently occupied temporarily, with plans to permanently fill it by spring 2023. The Coeur d' Alene Reservation Educator appointed a person to fill the 0.5 FTE Site Coordinator position. Similarly, Site Coordinators in Chelan and Whatcom Counties were identified, with a commitment to fund 25% of the position from local sources.

Uplift: Empowering Today's Youth for Tomorrow's Future

Kentucky

CYFAR Topic Area: Leadership Development and Workforce Preparation

Program Report: The Kentucky CYFAR grant provides a comprehensive life skills development program for high-risk youth. The primary goals are increased awareness, understanding, and application of critical life skills for self-sufficiency by youth. The life skills program promotes health and personal development, uses developmentally appropriate interaction teaching strategies, and encourages avoiding involvement in high-risk behaviors. The life skills content also encourages goal-setting and personal management skills as youth navigate the world around them and move toward adulthood. The program vision employs a multidisciplinary positive youth development and trauma-informed approach that views youth in the context of the family and community and develops programming that is both based on local needs and grounded in research.

Lessons Learned: COVID-19 created continued challenges for cementing relationships with partners, especially regarding conducting and facilitating collaborative programming. Solidifying partnerships and creating sure footing in programming was the highlight of 2022. Urban and rural youth have been overwhelmed with fatigue from the pandemic, grief, worry, technology, and social media. The heart of the Uplift program is to help youth interact, have fun, and gain critical life skills, and we have seen positive impacts of this programming in 2022. The Uplift team learned that being flexible and building relationships with youth was often more impactful in person. Establishing rapport and trust with youth through virtual programming was difficult or even impossible. Many of the youth we work with have difficulty trusting adults. Once we established ongoing, in-person programs, the youth participants formed strong, trusting relationships with the Uplift staff and have begun to seek more information about careers, college, and goal-setting. It has been challenging yet very rewarding during and after the pandemic to grow this life skills program with all partners and participants involved.

"This program has taught me how to express my feelings more around my family. We spent a lot more time over the summer talking to each other and learning more about each other."
– Youth Participant

Sustainability

Statement: Life skills are vital to future self-sufficiency and help youth learn to cope with the complexities of life as they move toward adulthood. Our program provides youth with knowledge, resources, and trusting adult relationships to help empower them to reach for their goals as adults. The 4-H Social Justice

Leadership Taskforce developed through this grant is on track to sustain itself through Kentucky 4-H. Not only is the Taskforce embedded in 4-H, but with the collaboration of other Extension partners and the UK College of Agriculture Office of Diversity, we are confident it will garner the support it needs over time. Community service opportunities for youth will be woven into numerous Extension programs. Key components

we are working to sustain include adult–youth and youth–youth mentorship opportunities, leadership training, continued Extension support to ongoing programming through Sunrise and

PURE in Hardin County, sustained life skills programs at Crawford and Bryan Station Middle Schools in Fayette County, and continuation of Critical Conversations developed by youth and CYFAR staff on this grant.



Maine 4-H Community Central: Engaging Teens in College Readiness and Workforce Development

Maine

CYFAR Topic Area: Workforce Preparation

Program Report: Maine 4-H Community Central reaches young people in Lewiston and Portland, Maine. Using the 4-H SPIN club model, teens participate in specialized clubs focused on teaching, social justice, civic engagement, STEM, and Maine food systems. Participants interacted with local leaders, community members, and critical individuals throughout their club work. Teens engaged in experiential learning; strengthening workforce, college, and career readiness skills; and completing service projects to enhance their communities and schools.

Lessons Learned: This year was the return to in-person programming; the difficulties in recruiting and retaining youth from previous years have disappeared. Staff are prepared and successful in the implementation of programming for youth. The program model of 10 youth to one adult is highly effective, as staff can customize participant experiences and connections. Youth are engaged and thriving, building social and cultural capital as evidenced by increased connection and programmatic satisfaction. The transportation barrier was eliminated at the Lewiston site due to strong community partnerships.

"I would like to thank you so much for helping me throughout this program. I have been inspired to do things I wouldn't have without the influence of this opportunity. Thank you!"

– Youth Participant

Youth are engaging in 4-H local, state, and national programs. A team of CYFAR youth participated in the 4-H Summit for Healthy Living in Washington, D.C. Youth identified inactivity and poverty as issues to address in their local community. Their project aims to counter poverty as a barrier to equitable access to sports for youth in their neighborhoods. The solution designed by the teens seeks to raise funds from local partners and supporters to provide enough equipment to host a free soccer clinic for elementary-aged students from a Portland Housing Authority site. Students identified existing partners who led a similar project called Kennedy Park Soccer Club. A team of four high schoolers went on to the True Leaders in Equity Retreat to further develop their project action plan. These connections between CYFAR programming and other 4-H initiatives indicate programmatic quality and success. Two Community Central youth were selected to be part of the Maine 4-H Youth Council, a group of youth leading programmatic efforts and influencing policy.



Sustainability Statement: Our team constantly seeks diversification of funding streams for this program. We are working on a potential partnership with Americorps to expand to future communities. This program model is a good fit for our sites, and we are working with community partnerships and building on our relationships to strengthen our programming further.

Family Engagement: Bringing Families and Decision-Makers Together for Collaboration

Colorado

CYFAR Topic Area: Leadership Development

Program Report: The Family Leadership Training Institute (FLTI) Dual Capacity Building CYFAR project bridges the gap between local families, partners, and decision-makers. Our 20-week cohort allows adults and youth to learn new leadership and civic skills and practice taking action in their local community. The class also allows local decision-makers to join specific sessions and explore leadership, civic systems, and essential local topics in partnership. FLTI connects community members to opportunities to reach their potential. This program model develops a synergistic relationship between the research-based, two-generation FLTI curriculum and a unique dual-capacity collaboration training for participants and public administrators. Interactive training sessions focus on leadership and personal development, community needs assessment, development of collaborative networks, communication using various media options, and how policy affects family outcomes. Adult and youth participants apply lessons learned by planning and implementing an individual community project that serves others.

In addition, curriculum and events provide critical networks for collaboration between families and decision-makers. Each participant applies their learning to a community-based project that reflects their passion(s). Class participants emerge as strong leaders and advocate for the community's children, youth, and families in their Colorado communities.

Lessons Learned: One major lesson learned this year was to provide youth facilitators with more training on working with youth and to support sites more strongly in selecting adult facilitators with youth work experience. One site had two new, inexperienced youth facilitators who struggled throughout the cohort. The principal investigator had concerns about one of the facilitators and shared those concerns, but the

site coordinator ultimately decided to go with that facilitator. Both agreed to pursue a better match and more training in the future. A second major lesson was that this was only the second cohort to go through the new shortened youth curriculum. Missing curriculum resources, curricular gaps, and areas in need of strengthening were identified. The new youth cohort in 2023 will experience the updated curriculum.

Sustainability Statement: Sustainability is a project priority. From the beginning, sustainability has been built into the model, and it is discussed at monthly team meetings. In addition, each local site has a community civic design team that supports implementation, program delivery, and sustainability. Local sites work diligently to recruit diverse partners and community members to join the civic design teams to connect this project to broader local community

needs and goals. Each local civic design team meets quarterly. One unexpected benefit of having a local civic design team during COVID-19 made transitioning to online classes and recruiting for one-time courses much more straightforward. In addition, it has helped one site identify many donors and resources to support implementation and future sustainability.

“The goal of my project is to reactivate counselors and recruiters not only informing counselors about Red Rocks Community College programs but to restructure it with information and training for counselors to act according to the needs of each student/family. I want to ensure that students and families will not hesitate to take the next step and start a college education.”

– Jefferson County Participant



A Multilevel Youth Out-of-School Intervention Stemming from Foods

Rhode Island

CYFAR Topic Area: Nutrition and Science

Program Report: Project stRide: Science and Technology Reinforced by Innovative Dietary Education is a hands-on and engaging summer camp program (grades 4–5) that reinforces STEAM content learned over the school year while helping youth to improve their dietary behaviors. Youth were engaged for 1 hour per week for 5 weeks during the summer. Based on lessons learned from the Project stRide program pilot, the program model was changed to a books-and-bins model to facilitate camp staff delivery and allow flexibility in lesson length and group size and composition (i.e., grade level). A significant outcome of this was the creation of five new lesson books (Eat the Rainbow; Think Your Drink; STEAM is Everywhere; Go, Slow, Woah; Fat Activity Book) with corresponding hands-on activities and worksheets (December–June 2022). During April 2022, a Project stRide one-time table event occurred at the BGC Newport to interact with families and share information about the Project stRide summer program, including a fun and engaging STEAM activity. Notably, the BGC Providence South Side site served as a sustaining site, and a camp counselor cotaught Project stRide with technical assistance from CYFAR staff to test the train-the-trainer model. Overall, Project stRide process measures (dose, reach, fidelity, reliability), alongside qualitative feedback from community partners, underscored the success and acceptability of Project stRide during summer 2022. Results of a questionnaire given after the lesson indicated

“I learned about fat in arteries and how blood moves in the body.”

– Youth Participant

that students grasped lesson content, with over 70% of youth answering seven of the ten questions correctly. Youth and community partner feedback was used between September and November to inform book changes, including shortening and simplifying books and having them be more youth-led to support sustainability.

Lessons Learned: Before this summer, significant changes were made to the program model to facilitate program delivery and allow flexibility for lesson length and group size and composition (i.e., grade level). During the summer of 2022, the revised Project stRide program was delivered at two new sites and one sustaining site where a camp counselor cotaught Project stRide with CYFAR staff. Feedback from community partners and youth includes (a) minor revisions to the curriculum (i.e., shortening books), (b) modifying the STEAM evaluation measure to be more appropriate for youth, (c) opportunities for activities to be simplified and more youth-driven to optimize program sustainability and ensure that the program is fun and engaging, (d) adjustments to sustainability plans to understand how Project stRide books-and-bins kits can further align with a 4-H format and be delivered in summer camp and after-school settings to promote further reach and engagement.

Sustainability Statement: Sustainability has been a significant emphasis of Project stRide since its inception to ensure that it can be feasibly delivered and impact youth after the grant period. The original sustainability plan was to have our core CYFAR team of nutrition educators and 4-H staff train and provide technical assistance to camp staff at a sustaining site. During 2022, after COVID-19-related delays, this plan was implemented at a BGC Providence (South Side) while regular staff implementation occurred at two additional sites: BGC

“It was helpful that children were able to create and build rather than just sitting while learning.”

– Community Partner Staff

Newport and BGC Providence (Fox Point). Overall, this training and transition experience with BGC South Side provided critical information about additional Project stRide training and technical assistance needed to promote

program sustainability. Staff provided feedback on how the curriculum and books could be simplified further and provided other suggestions for making activities more youth driven and aligned to their interests. They also suggested expanding the books-and-bins kits to the BGC after-school program to impact a broader youth community at these sites and be used throughout the year. Looking ahead, during spring 2023, these revised kits will be tested at after-school programs by the CYFAR team to understand further how these can be used and sustained as part of the University of Rhode Island 4-H program in both summer camp and after-school settings beyond the grant period.



Vermont Youth PROSPER

Vermont
CYFAR Topic Area: Parenting

Program Report: Vermont is implementing PROSPER, an evidence-based, partnership model that helps partner communities build strong family bonds and supports youth to avoid risky behaviors. Vermont continued to see transitions this grant year with partners, personnel, and community sites; thus, little programming occurred. Most efforts were spent building relationships and setting up new community partnerships in anticipation of launching programming that includes a family program called Strengthening Families Program Ages 10–14 (SFP 10–14) and Botvins Lifeskills. A facilitator training for SFP 10–14 was held for a new site, Coventry Village School, to launch programming in 2023.

Lessons Learned: Previous community sites signed MOUs to codify our relationship and expectations. Despite the MOUs, leadership changes and teacher burnout were too strong to uphold the relationships and continue the partnership. Involving more community members separate from the school sites may be beneficial to better sustain programming efforts.

Sustainability Statement: Due to the previously mentioned staff turnover, new community sites

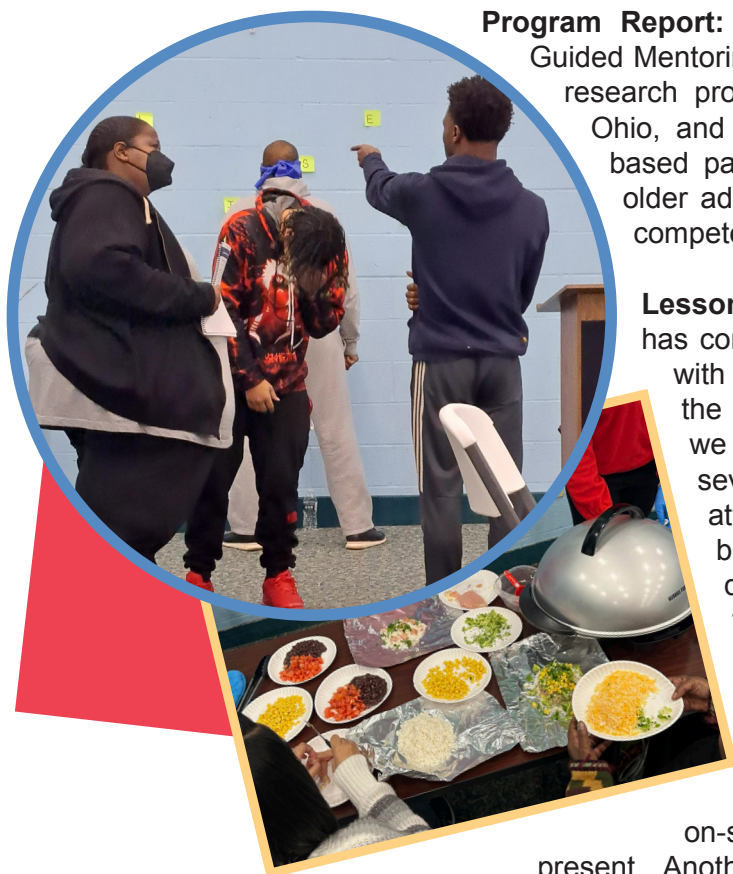
have had to be cultivated during the 3 years of the 5-year project. The PROSPER team continues to work on training a large number of people to sustain programming through teacher attrition. Efforts will be made to involve more community members separate from the school to join the community teams. We held a facilitator training in the summer that trained five new SFP 10–14 facilitators for the two CYFAR sites and intend to hold at least two more trainings this coming year. We are also holding a recertification training with eight trainees.

The community team at Miller's Run continues to expand in partnership with Lyndon Town School; they are part of the same supervisory union, and many of the community organizations that support the district would attend each community team meeting. While programming is separate, Miller's Run can now leverage input and support from a sustained, previous CYFAR program. The Camel's Hump site has added a new community member that runs the My Community Cares summer camp. A volunteer connection will now be providing childcare services during the program this fall, and an additional parent volunteer has been recruited.

Bridge2Health: An Intergenerational Mentoring Program

Ohio and Virginia

CYFAR Topic Area: Leadership Development



Program Report: Building Relationships Intergenerationally through Guided Mentoring (Bridge2Health) is an intergenerational mentoring research project located at communities in Cuyahoga County, Ohio, and Amherst County, Virginia, that utilizes community-based participatory research (CBPR) to improve teens' and older adults' health and resilience by strengthening life skill competencies.

Lessons Learned: Since December 2021, Bridge2Health has continued its planning by utilizing the CBPR approach with partners in Ohio and Virginia. We were reminded of the importance of clear and consistent communication; we found that recruitment of participants required several events as some potential teens and adults attended early information or programming sessions but subsequently decided not to commit to a program delivered throughout the school year. We also learned the importance of duplication of skills among team members while Extension staff working with one site were trained to administer consent and surveys. Because we needed multiple recruiting events that participants sometimes arrived late to or left early, however, not all forms could be completed on-site when these IRB-authorized team members were present. Another on-site team member consistently completed the IRB training so that they could do additional scheduled and ad hoc form completion with participants. Creating infrastructure that supports communication, such as scheduling monthly meetings with key personnel, ensured that project directors were tuned into the context of site partners, helping to build trust and maintain communication.

Sustainability Statement: Our team prioritizes program sustainability by utilizing a CBPR approach and model grounded in promoting sustainable community programs. The team helped choose curricula approved for 4-H so that practitioners could continue delivering the program after the funding period. Staff are also completing trainings, such as mental health first aid, that will certify them as trainers of youth and adult peer supporters, maintaining a focus on teen and adult wellness. Some team members completed the CYFAR spiderweb exercise to identify areas for improvement to enhance sustainability. The state leader is planning to use the sites where Bridge2Health launched this year to form 4-H clubs in the future. Using CBPR, constant communication between the research team, the state leader, and potential partners is essential for a sustainable program. In addition, the selected curriculum will be tailored to fit the community's specific needs and have 4-H approval for continued delivery after grant funding has ended. Bridge2Health has adopted the Get Experience in Mindfulness (GEM) 4-H curriculum that can lead to sustainable program implementation within 4-H.

FDLTCC Bimaaji'idiwin (Saving Each Other's Lives) Harvest Sustainable Community Project

Minnesota

CYFAR Topic Area: Leadership Development

Program Report: Focusing on leadership through harvest, our Bimaaji'idiwin Sustainable Community Project borrows from the strength of multigenerational learning and community integral to Anishinaabe culture. Using the connecting thread of harvest, both in food sovereignty and traditional cultural events, we will work with our sites to ground youth in community and skills that build resilience. Our programming will focus on the National CYFAR Teens Outcome. Our programming will connect teens to the community, culture, and skills contributing to positive leadership. Community stakeholder input collected during the

"I have enjoyed working in the farm cannery helping prepare the food during the community Farm Feast. It was hard work, but it was great to see my community enjoy the food and the farm."

– Youth Participant, Gitigaaning Farm, 2022

2020 Environmental Institute Strategic Planning meeting emphasized that serving youth in those critical teen years is a need in our community. Previous youth programming has helped to pilot a model of outreach that integrates culture-based activities to motivate Native youth toward healthier lifestyles for the betterment of themselves, their families, and especially their community. The foundation of programming is a cultural connection, youth engagement, cultural events, youth mentorship, and leadership, all built around a holistic understanding of harvest. Using seasonal harvests of traditional foods and organic agricultural production, students will gain skills, knowledge, and connection through understanding food sovereignty. This project focuses on one of the most fundamental and often overlooked protective factors for communities experiencing disparate health stresses: incorporating culture-based, traditional activities into outreach programs. Cultural interventions address wellness in a holistic sense, recognizing the balance between one's tradition, culture, language, and community.

Lessons Learned: During the 2021–2022 project year, we moved from project planning to the beginning of implementation of activities at each of our CYFAR project sites. As one of our partner sites has had staff turnover, we have learned that more frequent partner meetings, especially one-to-one, in-person contact, are essential to ensuring that our project progresses promptly.

Sustainability Statement: Our project is built around the partnerships and relationships between our institutions, youth, and community. The sustainability of our project will be achieved by normalizing our shared community events, communication between our partners, and building a network of community mentors. The activities and projects that youth are part of now are something that either our organizations or community have expressed interest in continuing in the future through support from the Fond du Lac Band and Fond du Lac Tribal and Community College.



Building Community Capacity and Resilience Through 4-H in North Dakota Tribal Nations

North Dakota

CYFAR Topic Area: Leadership Development, Science, Technology, and Workforce Preparation

Program Report: Indigenous peoples need to be better represented in STEAM careers. Tribal communities in North Dakota have little exposure and access to high-quality STEAM educational resources. The CYFAR program allows youth to participate in hands-on STEAM activities, including coding, robotics, drones, graphic design, etc. Program staff collaborate with local schools to deliver educational learning in classrooms and after-school settings where youth build skills necessary to be successful in STEAM careers, including problem-solving, critical thinking, collaboration, leadership, and teamwork. Youth are exposed to the many career options available in high-tech fields. More importantly, through participation in these programs, they learn to picture themselves pursuing postsecondary STEAM education and being successful in STEAM careers. Community volunteers and school staff ensure that all programming is culturally relevant.

Lessons Learned: Youth in ND Tribal communities are hungry for more opportunities to participate in STEAM-related activities. Because many communities are highly remote and rural, the ability to provide classroom programming is imperative to reaching more youth. Program staff has learned that positive working relationships with schools, educators, and the community are vital to the program's success and sustainability. When school is not in session over breaks and the summer, however, it is much more difficult for youth to attend programs in these remote areas. Staff members do their best to come to youth, putting hundreds of miles on personal vehicles. Reliable transportation readily available for staff would be beneficial and significantly increase the program's reach. Successfully navigating working relationships between 1890 and 1994 institutions remains challenging.

Sustainability Statement: Program staff will continue to build positive relationships with local schools. This partnership with school administration and educators is crucial to building program sustainability beyond the 5-year grant. In the Standing Rock Sioux communities,

school and school activities are a powerful way to connect with the larger community. Educators currently conduct follow-up lessons to the weekly classroom STEAM activities that program staff provide. They are active participants and are being trained to deliver these activities. Educators are excited about additional resources, high-quality curricula, and cutting-edge technology activities. After the grant period, they will be well-equipped to continue incorporating the activities in the classroom.

"I am just as smart as a boy and can be a drone pilot!"
 – Youth Participant



Wisconsin Sustainable Communities: The Growing Connections Program

Wisconsin

CYFAR Topic Area: Leadership Development and Workforce Preparation

Program Report: Growing Connections, a UW-Madison, Division of Extension in Milwaukee County program, is built on youth participation in three intersecting and multilevel educational approaches: (a) youth-led gardening education and food production, (b) youth leadership development focused on action planning and community leadership, and (c) youth-centered community engagement with a focus on goal setting and teamwork. These approaches are realized by employing youth during the summer months, connecting them with adult mentors, and providing structured programming and leadership opportunities in garden spaces and their communities. Examples of program content include exposure to herbal and foraged plants and possible careers in conservation, natural science, culinary and fine arts, gardening, and farming. Partnership with community-based, youth-serving agencies is at the heart of the program, resulting in increased capacity for the partners and educational, enrichment, and employment opportunities for the young people they serve.

Lessons Learned: Growing Connections is grounded in neighborhood-specific programming and has increased the amount of cross-site programming, connecting Extension resources in youth leadership development, community development, nutrition, and horticulture. The Growing Connections program will build on success in engaging youth in consistent programming and providing employment opportunities during

“A garden in a local neighborhood empowers and engages young people and their community to take pride in the spaces they beautify and the things that grow; it fosters a place of social gathering. During the program, youth developed knowledge of environmental players in the food production cycle, leading to their development as gardeners.

. . . With Growing Connections, youth have the opportunity to learn more about the communities they live in. Moreover, it contributes to the development of community relationships while providing youth with employment opportunities.”

– Local evaluator

the summer months. To promote retention, program staff are exploring options to extend youth’s employment period and/or increase wages. The Growing Connections program director is working with an Extension environmental education specialist to integrate professional-grade equipment into the program for continued skill development, storytelling, artistic expression, and evaluation efforts. The program also benefits from regular multilevel meetings (state and local Extension and partners) to share organizational updates, share best practices, reflect on evaluation and data, and plan for future programming.

Sustainability Statement: In the coming year, the Growing Connections project will build from strong program and partnership engagement, expanding programming to additional programming sites and focusing on long-term sustainability to replicate programming elements and build capacity across Milwaukee.



Southside Simple Suppers Scale-Up (S4): Expansion of a Validated Family Meals Program for At-Risk Children and Youth

Ohio

CYFAR Topic Area: Nutrition

Program Report: Simple Suppers is an evidence-based family meal program focused on improving family mealtime routines. We deliver the program to families enrolled in Head Start.

Last year, we delivered three iterations of the 8-week (fall, winter, spring) program in its hybrid mode. Participants alternate coming in person and engaging online weekly. We have termed the new hybrid format teach one, do one. On Week 1 of the program, families attend in person and are engaged in hands-on and interactive educational activities led by a Simple Suppers teacher (teach one). Then on Week 2 of

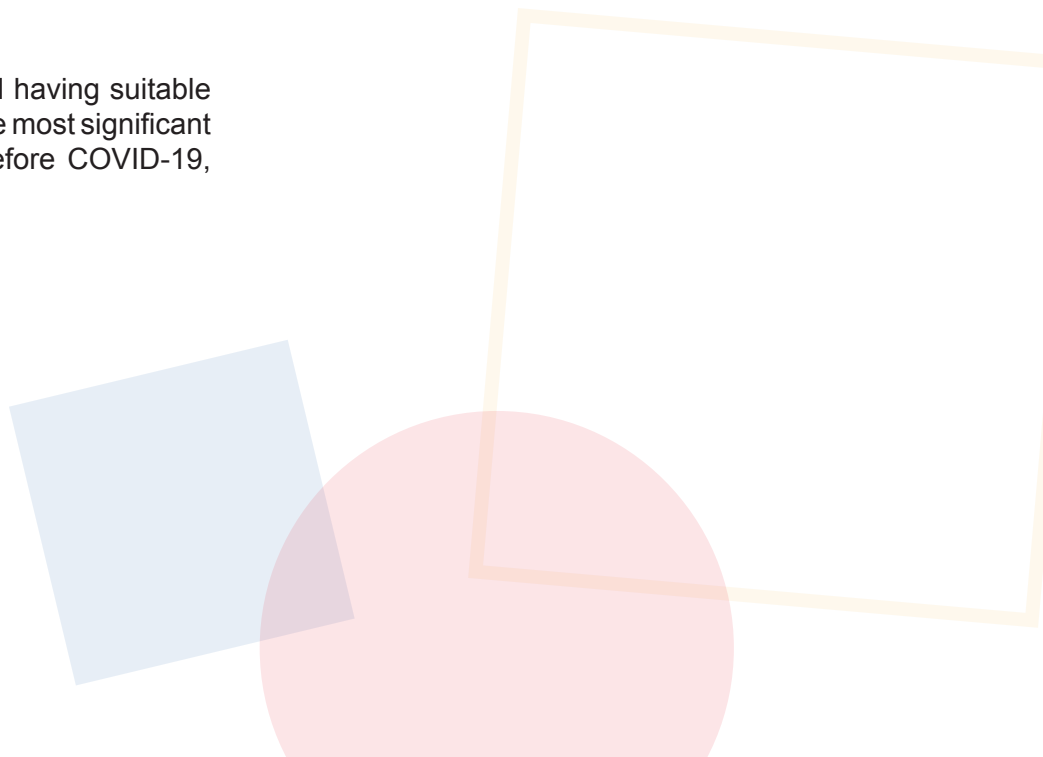
My “kids love it, they ask when can we do it again, and they love doing the cooking activities!”
-- Parent

programming, families receive the tools they need to implement what they learned in programming at home (do one). The process repeats until the end of the 8 weeks of programming. Significantly, on the week families learn remotely (i.e., do-one weeks), Simple Suppers educators call families to touch base and talk through key learning objectives.

Lessons Learned: Being flexible and having suitable communication methods have been the most significant lessons learned among our team. Before COVID-19,

the Simple Suppers program was delivered in person. During the pandemic, we transitioned the program to be online. Then, using a process informed by evidence from participants and the community, we moved to the hybrid version. The switch in delivery of the program from in-person to online to hybrid has positioned us to conduct a cost-effectiveness analysis to identify the mode of delivery that produces the best participant outcomes for the cost. Preliminary findings demonstrate that the hybrid version may be the most cost-effective mode of delivery, particularly for caregiver outcomes.

Sustainability Statement: The sustainability plan has several components. Leaders utilize pieces from the Simple Suppers curriculum at monthly Head Start parent meetings, serve Simple Suppers recipes at monthly Head Start parent meetings as refreshments, add Simple Suppers healthy tips to the monthly Head Start newsletters, and sync Simple Suppers Digest with the topic at the monthly parent meeting.



Addressing Youth Mental Health of Latinx Families by Strengthening Family-Skills and Engaging in Sports

Maryland

CYFAR Topic Area: Parenting

Program Report: Familias Activas is a Sustainable Community Project that aims to improve the mental health of youth (10–14 years old) from Latinx families by strengthening healthy parenting practices for parents and caregivers, positive youth development, and engaging youth in organized sports. This program is led by the School of Public Health and the University of Maryland Extension. The program has three main components: (a) culturally and linguistically appropriate family life education is part of the Padres Preparados, Jóvenes Saludables (Prepared Parents, Healthy Youth) curriculum, which consists of eight educational sessions for parents and includes topics such as healthy parenting practices, communication, conflict management, developing parent–youth connection, parenting across cultures, and nutrition and physical activity. Padres Preparados engages Latinx youth and their families, given the need for more culturally informed, evidence-based programs that include parents and their children. In 2021, the current project, Familias Activas, added a soccer component to engage youth. Both projects are related because they both engage Latinx families and at-risk youth. The second component, (b) positive youth development programming that focuses on mental health, was implemented during the soccer sessions. Soccer coaches use positive affirmation strategies that aim to enhance youth mental health. Having trusted adults as coaches also allows youth to express their emotions and feelings in a safe environment. The third component is (c) youth physical activity sessions (soccer practices). The program aims to enhance Latinx youth’s mental health through these three components.

Lessons Learned: Parents and youth are interested in learning more about physical and mental well-being. The model is culturally responsive in involving both parents and youth in programming. Both parents and youth reported meaningful gains in the program’s targeted skills and attitudes. Although the evaluation was more straightforward than

initially planned, our pilot implementation has provided valuable formative feedback that will influence the ongoing development of this program. As the community becomes familiar with this Familias Activas identity, we seek to build a trustworthy program that is recognized for providing outstanding opportunities for positive youth development in the Latinx community.

Sustainability Statement: The program has been strengthening our collaboration with the CASA de Maryland organization. They are interested in replicating this program in their networks in Maryland. In addition, we are in conversations with Extension EFNEP in Montgomery County and Baltimore City as part of the nutrition programming; they are also interested in replicating this program. We are approaching local foundations that can fund social service agencies and schools to support these activities financially.



Sustainable Community Project for a Family-Inclusive Lifestyle Program for Teenagers in Rural Colorado

Colorado

CYFAR Topic Area: Nutrition and Parenting

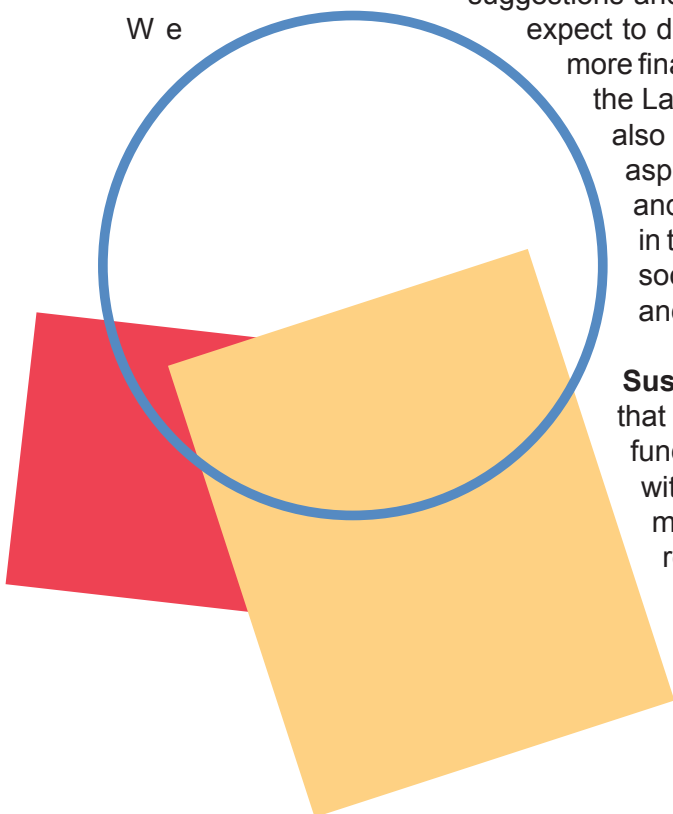
Program Report: The overarching objective of this project is to disseminate the Healthy Living Program (HeLP)/La Vida Saludable to teens in rural, low-income communities. HeLP is a family-inclusive lifestyle program that addresses healthy lifestyle habits within the family context to support teen mental health and healthy weight through 26 contact hours. The project builds on our formative community-based participatory research in rural Southwest Colorado with diverse community stakeholders. It also draws on 10 years of HeLP design and implementation in urban Colorado Latino communities. The outcome “to support teens in demonstrating the knowledge, skills, attitudes, and behaviors necessary for fulfilling and contributing lives” directly aligns with the top 10 critical issues in a 2021 community needs assessment conducted by the State of Colorado/Extension. HeLP includes the whole family in program delivery because families affect teens’ knowledge, skills, attitudes, and behaviors, making parent and caregiver education an essential aspect of empirical programs to ameliorate teen mental health and obesity. Family-inclusive programs, as opposed to those centered on youth alone, are more culturally acceptable and effective among Latino and Native American communities. Latino and Native American teens are disproportionately affected by mental health concerns, obesity, obesity-related preventable chronic diseases, and limited access to research-based lifestyle programs. This project seeks to address these disparities by leveraging the community-engaged partnerships of Colorado State University’s Extension System with Latino and Native American communities of rural La Plata and Montezuma Counties to disseminate HeLP in ways tailored to cultural values and rural context.

Lessons Learned: A major lesson learned is the value of a slow initial rollout to obtain feedback from families participating in the program and facilitators and making sufficient time to respond to these suggestions and revise the materials and plans for the subsequent cohort.

We

expect to do this about two more times before we feel that we have a more finalized curriculum for delivery in this rural area with outreach to the Latino and Native American communities in particular. We are also excited to continue leveraging technology to support each aspect of the program, from training facilitators to recruitment and marketing to supporting families through their participation in the program and beyond, creating opportunities for sustained social connection and centralized referrals. These are complex and will be a work in progress, but they can add value.

Sustainability Statement: Extension receives some funding that can contribute to the project’s sustainability, including funding earmarked for rural health efforts. We are also working with partners, such as CookingMatters, who can supply materials and staffing and other school and community resources. Further, we plan to apply for more federal, state, and foundation funding to lend more resources to the work.



The Juntos Sustainable Community Project

North Carolina

CYFAR Topic Area: Leadership Development, Parenting, and Workforce Preparation

Program Report: The Juntos Program consists of four components, all of which were implemented during this reporting period. At its core are Family Engagement and the Juntos 4-H Club, both of which must be implemented for a program to be considered Juntos 4-H. The Family Engagement piece starts with either a 6-week high school series or a 5-week middle school series through which parents and youth participate in facilitated conversations regarding the school system. The middle school series focuses on transitioning to high school. Once the series is over, coordinators will engage families through scheduled family nights where different topics will be discussed, such as financial aid support, college applications, and cultural celebrations. The Juntos 4-H Clubs allow our youth to experience different life opportunities through our resources and partners during club time.

Students have developed their leadership skills through roles and projects such as coordinating a holiday float for a Christmas parade in Sampson County, hosting a community-wide scholarship night in Catawba County, and participating in a fundraiser in New Hanover County. Academic success coaching sessions were held virtually or in person throughout the school year. The annual summer academy was held in person in 2022, the first time since the pandemic started. We hosted 82 students and introduced them to various opportunities through career workshops, skills-building activities, and xnetworking mixers.

Lessons Learned: Our programming this year focused on rebuilding in-person relationships as parents and youth could meet in person for family nights and workshops. In addition, this meant that our county sites could focus more intensely and intentionally on partnership building. In December 2021, the Juntos state office hosted a partners' luncheon at North Carolina State in partnership with College Advising

“During my time in Juntos, I was able to connect with a new community in New Hanover County and inspire students in many ways that I was not aware of. . . Juntos gave the students at New Hanover County a sense of home among them. . . Juntos is an excellent resource for our youth because it is a wonderful [way] for the students to learn [alongside] their family members.”
– New Hanover Coordinator

Corps. This event allowed for partners that support Juntos to come together to hear from students affected positively by the program. The results of this luncheon led to 2-year funding for key program positions in danger of being cut. Due to the continued efforts of the coordinators and the state staff, Juntos could offer students a STEM day in partnership with North Carolina A&T University in April of 2022 where students were exposed to engineering projects like learning to code drones to fly through obstacle courses.

Sustainability Statement: Our sustainability guide is scheduled to be finished in the spring semester of 2023. Once completed, the guide will serve as a blueprint for how coordinators, supported by CYFAR and funded alternatively, can bring together their resources to maintain their program in their community in North Carolina and nationally.

Portions of the guide have already been developed and used at our CYFAR sites. Establishing partners is a crucial point for our sustainability guide, and our CYFAR sites conducting programming are actively creating partner advisory committees that meet multiple times a year. The meetings cover success stories, community and programming needs, and opportunities to come together as a group to support the Juntos program. We also explored sustainability through the community college and public school systems that serve our sites and have received positive feedback about the potential of expansion through those partnerships.



Juntos Idaho

Idaho

CYFAR Topic Area: Leadership Development, Science, Technology, and Workforce Preparation

Program Report: The University of Idaho's Sustainable Community Project (UISCP) focuses on the CYFAR Teen Outcome, involving middle and high school Latinx students and parents in a robust club program, improved academic success, college and career awareness, and enriching skill-building activities. The UISCP uses the Juntos 4-H program model developed by North Carolina State University Extension. Two central Idaho sites, Blaine and Twin Falls Counties, are served. Twin Falls and Blaine educators and staff completed state 4-H in-service training October 25–26, 2022, in Boise, Idaho. A 3-day North Carolina State University Juntos 4-H curriculum training was planned, organized, and presented on February 14, 2022, and held at the College of Southern Idaho.

The training covered four Juntos components: (a) teen and parent workshops, (b) 4-H clubs and community activities, (c) one-on-one success coaching, and (d) campus visits introducing academic and career pathways. The Jerome County 4-H coordinator and family and consumer science educator presented their experiences in implementing Jerome County Juntos 4-H successfully. Presentations were given by three Juntos 4-H students graduating from Jerome High School. Their meaningful journey and shared

experiences in the Juntos 4-H program were included. The Twin Falls South Hills Middle School Juntos 4-H program was successfully reestablished and flourishes with in-class and after-school 4-H clubs and activities.

Lessons Learned: COVID-19 fallout had long-lasting repercussions, including community, school, and youth educational loss. The Juntos site in Twin Falls successfully adapted and adjusted program delivery programs at the local school, South Hills Middle School.

“Juntos 4-H is so important to my 8th-grade daughter, she told me I needed to come to the family engagement night to experience Juntos with her.”

– Twin Falls South Hills Middle School Parent

The partnership with Canyon Ridge High School faltered. Blaine community and school partnerships were stretched beyond capacity. New partnerships were identified and developed with the Hansen School District to meet the needs of Latinx students' academic gaps.

Sustainability Statement: County Extension site directors work with community members to redevelop and strengthen partnerships. Blaine County partnerships were challenged by COVID-19. The Wood River Valley Middle School would like to collaborate in the future. We welcomed Tina Miller, Twin Falls 4-H educator, in fall 2022. She brought strong leadership and experience in implementing Juntos 4-H as a former 4-H coordinator. Her expertise and leadership quickly reformed partnerships with local middle schools to reestablish Juntos 4-H opportunities. Strong partnerships with Jerome County Extension and Hispanic-Serving Institute College of Southern Idaho have been maintained. Twin Falls County Rural Hansen School District has an unmet need in serving Latinx youth and families. Strong Twin Falls Extension and school partnership have developed, and discussions to address this unmet need have resulted in planned Juntos 4-H implementation in spring 2023.

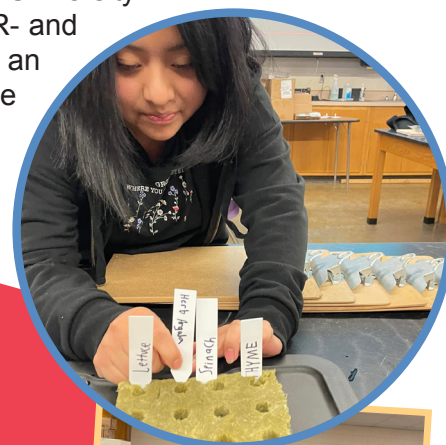


Juntos IN for Success

Indiana

CYFAR Topic Area: Leadership Development, Parenting, Science, and Workforce Preparation

Program Report: The Juntos 4-H program is an initiative that focuses on improving the school experience for students and their families by providing resources and a built-in support system within the community. Ultimately, the goal is to raise graduation rates and provide more opportunities for postsecondary education within the Latino community. In January 2022, all three sites in Indiana were up and running. Marion and Lake Counties recruited their first cohorts of families in early 2022, provided family engagement workshops, and started their respective 4-H Clubs. Both counties graduated their first cohorts of families in the spring of 2022. Jackson County recruited its second cohort of families in the fall of 2021, and the program ran strong through the winter and spring of 2022 with family nights and 4-H Club meetings. Juntos 4-H members from Jackson, Lake, and Marion Counties attended the Purdue Agribusiness Science Academy at Purdue University on June 2. Fifty-five total Juntos 4-H members attended this event from CYFAR- and non-CYFAR-funded sites. The Juntos 4-H Agribusiness Science Academy is an excellent partnership established with the Purdue College of Agriculture's Office of Multicultural Programs. Some students from Juntos 4-H also attended 4-H Academy and 4-H Round Up at Purdue University. Youth and families participated in local 4-H activities through the summer, including local county fairs, Junior Leaders meetings, and project workshops. In fall 2022, family engagement nights were held for Jackson, Lake, and Marion Counties. All sites have implemented the 4-H Club component of Juntos 4-H, which is active each month. Each county has an established 4-H Club that meets regularly. In late fall 2022, the second cohorts of families in Lake and Marion counties graduated from family engagement nights. The third cohort of families in Jackson County graduated from family engagement!



Lessons Learned: We have learned a great deal throughout the entire process of implementing Juntos 4-H in the state of Indiana. We learned that there are barriers to providing culturally relevant programs and worked through eliminating various barriers for families to participate in the program in the future entirely. We learned that school systems want to support their youth and will work hard to ensure programs are in place beyond the school day to make this a reality. Community partners in each county have come together to benefit our Indiana Latino families.

We have learned about the importance of bringing additional resources to the Juntos 4-H program and have built great partnerships with the Indiana Commission for Higher Education, Farm Credit Mid-America, Indiana 4-H Foundation, the Office of Multicultural Programs within Purdue's College of Agriculture, and countless local connections at each site.

"I think Juntos has made a difference for me and my family because I wasn't really looking forward to college. And they talk about stuff, they bring in people, and they tell us more things about college and things you can take. That motivates me." – Juntos 4-H Student

Sustainability Statement: All sites have identified community partners, local businesses, and school corporations to support the program in the future. We will continue working with community partners, Indiana 4-H Foundation, school corporations, and local businesses and corporate sponsors to sustain and expand Juntos 4-H and make it as accessible as possible to communities in the state of Indiana. The Purdue Extension Offices in these three communities support this program with staff time and resources.

Strengthening the Heartland: Promoting Life Readiness in Rural Youth

South Dakota

CYFAR Topic Area: Workforce Preparation

Program Report: Youth who possess life skills are critical to filling the expected increase in vacancies in the rural workforce. Social-emotional learning (SEL) skills such as emotion regulation and self-awareness reduce anxiety and allow youth to combat stress and focus on life readiness skills needed in the workplace. In the current year of programming, community site staff continued implementing the Second Step SEL program for middle school youth. Additional lessons for the third volume of the new life readiness curriculum for high school students, LaunchSkills, were developed and distributed to community sites. New lessons in the third volume completed the career exploration and academic success sections. In addition, lessons focused on physical wellness were added to the holistic wellness section. A total of 100 lessons are available in the new volume. The second round of our newly developed career exploration activities, Careers in a Box and the virtual career camp, were distributed to all community sites. The virtual camp and Careers in a Box kit highlighted careers within the food, agriculture, natural resources, and human sciences fields. Five more webinars in our how-to series were presented to youth professionals. Topics included addressing suicidality in youth, navigating ADHD, supporting foster youth, promoting grit and resilience, and navigating nonsuicidal self-injury. A positive youth development at-home training series produced additional training opportunities for youth professionals. Forty-five prerecorded training webinars were made available online for professionals. The SCP team also disseminated our process via multiple avenues.

“The LaunchSkills is fantastic! I used several different pieces to put together a 1-day career building program. I look forward to using it more in the fall as a multiweek program.”

-- 4-H Extension Professional

Lessons Learned: In the 2nd year of developing the Careers in a Box exploration activities, we had the opportunity to work with Agriculture Education and Family and Consumer Sciences Education undergraduate students again to develop more lessons highlighting careers in food, agriculture, natural resources, and human sciences. Additional feedback from youth professionals nationally was requested to increase the relevance of the LaunchSkills and Careers in a Box. Following their formative feedback, we are working to increase the representativeness of the graphics and examples and develop simple onboarding instructions.

Sustainability Statement: The project team is committed to continuing to refine educational materials to support sustainability. In the latest round of Careers in a Box lessons, an effort was made to simplify the supplies needed for the activities and increase the number of reusable materials. This will ensure that current and future community sites can continue using the activities with multiple youth cohorts. Our growing library of recorded webinars and at-home professional development training series will remain accessible online and can be shared with new professionals. The SCP team has also been exploring more partnerships to continue the development of life skills and career exploration materials.



Seed to Bloom (StB) 4-H S.T.E.A.M. Sustainable Community Project

Ohio

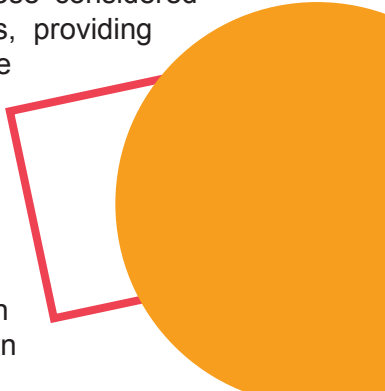
CYFAR Topic Area: Leadership Development, Nutrition, Science, and Technology

Program Report: The project goal is to provide 4-H after-school experience in positive youth development (PYD) to underserved and at-risk youth living in urban and rural communities through experiential learning activities in STEAM education, healthy living, community and civic engagement, and career preparedness. The long-term goals are for youth to be functional, responsible citizens and caring adults. The project objectives include (a) creating and developing a strong community partnership that fosters positive youth development based on the needs and strengths of youth, their families, and communities; (b) encouraging youth to improve their dietary habits, nutrition, health and wellness, and physical activities; (c) gaining access to healthier foods through hands-on activities in gardening and healthy food preparation; (d) introducing activities in science and agriculture and nutrition and food preservation; and (e) providing opportunities for youth to develop life and workforce preparation skills (to include teen leadership, mastery, self-esteem, and self-determination skills).

The expected project outcomes include enhanced community partnership and relationships with Seed to Bloom 4-H after-school programs, increased frequency of healthy eating habits, decreased unhealthy eating habits, and increased community involvement in changing food consumption patterns. At all the sites, students completed lessons in flying drones and their application in agriculture and robotics using the Lego Education Essential and Prime (Lego Education Products) during the after-school and summer periods. As part of the teen leadership development program, a total of 25 students and five adult counselors (chaperones) were recommended from all participating sites to attend the 2022 Citizenship Washington Focus program.

Lessons Learned: The hands-on activities, such as learning about the germination process and growing seeds using household materials and learning about beehives and describing the different habits and parts of a bee, have been engaging for the students and provided them with new knowledge and skills. It is

worth highlighting that for some students this program provided their first exposure to growing and eating their own food, which can impact their health and well-being. Overall, the impact data and quotes suggest that Ohio's Seed to Bloom 4-H STEAM programs positively impact students, particularly those considered underserved populations, providing them with valuable knowledge and skills for their future. For one student, it was the first time he had tasted lettuce. For most students, it was the first time they had eaten something they had grown themselves.



Sustainability Statement: Central State University (CSU) Extension support is strong at the faith-based community sites and the public school sites within the Cleveland Metropolitan School District. Faith-based communities work with 4-H youth on agricultural and natural resource issues. The after-school programs at these faith-based communities will be run as 4-H clubs, and several of the evaluation components reflect the 4-H model; for example, following a 4-H demonstration example, students will show what they have learned in a public setting.

Students participating in CSU Seed to Bloom Ag-STEM Institute (a residential summer camp) will learn lifelong skills that will improve their health and wellness, and their families and community will also benefit. The volunteer base will continue growing as more community members engage in the project. The project will serve as a pipeline to enroll youth into CSU Extension summer camps and CSU college programs.

New partnerships were explored to expand programming opportunities in Dayton, Ohio, where programming was piloted at the Northwest Branch of Dayton Public Library and Westwood Elementary School after-school program.

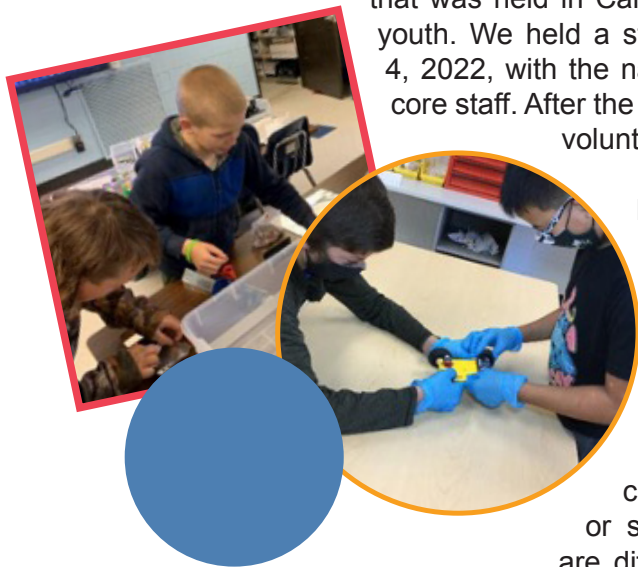
Prairie View A&M University Sustainable Community Project

Texas

CYFAR Topic Area: Leadership Development and Workforce Preparation

Program Report: Prairie View A&M University is partnering with the Juntos program out of North Carolina State University to empower Latino youth and their families to prepare for high school, achieve high school graduation, and gain the resources needed to access and succeed in higher education. Juntos is a family engagement and 4-H youth-development-based program that engages cohorts of Latino youth in an intensive curriculum from eighth through 12th grade. The four components of Juntos are (a) Juntos family workshops and bimonthly check-in family nights, (b) bimonthly after-school 4-H club meetings, (c) monthly one-on-one success coaching and mentoring by college-age mentors, and (d) summer programming at 4-H camps, college-campus visits, and other educational conferences. We were still in our planning year in 2022, and implementation began in the fall. Both grant sites, Cameron County and Bexar County, were recruiting in the spring of 2022 and began implementing in the fall of 2022.

In this 2nd year of the program we focused on training site coordinators and volunteers, building collaborations, meeting with local leaders, running after-school 4-H clubs, holding family engagement workshops, coordinating with volunteers to help run the Juntos program throughout the year, and planning a Juntos summer academy that was held in Cameron County. This year we recruited 10 volunteers and 60 youth. We held a statewide train-the-trainer workshop during the week of April 4, 2022, with the national Juntos team from North Carolina coming to train our core staff. After the initial training, each site coordinator returned and trained their volunteer staff to begin implementation in the fall.



Lessons Learned: One of our challenges was finding a time and date for the family workshops that would accommodate most of the Juntos families. Secondary students have a variety of extra-curricular activities in school and out of school, and not all parents work an 8-5 pm work schedule. Scheduling parent sessions and workshops was a challenge from the start. Another scheduling challenge we continue to face is student field trips. The Berta Cabaza Middle School campus is currently not allowing field trips during learning or school time, which has limited us to Saturdays. Saturdays are difficult since not all colleges or universities are available for weekend tours or programs. Additional lessons learned have been

the importance of open communication between the university and the site school, letting the school know our process for payment and timeline, and coordinating with the university to ensure all paperwork is submitted promptly.

Sustainability Statement: Grant leadership, site coordinators, and the local community advisory groups are working to develop strategic sustainability plans. We have long-term relationships with the school districts and various community partners. We are bringing together these partners in each county to form a local advisory group to find additional funding and resources for the project. These individuals meet quarterly during Years 2–5 to plan and effectively carry out their sustainability plans in each community. Evaluation results from each community will be shared via an annual report in school, community meetings, and national conferences.

Adapting Strengthening Families (SFP 10–14) for Legalized Marijuana Context

Washington
CYFAR Topic Area: Parenting

Program Report: Adaptation of Strengthening Families (SFP 10–14) for Legalized Marijuana Context aims to design and complete two adaptations to increase the impact of SFP 10–14 on youth marijuana use. The first adaptation will develop and create content for the current SFP 10–14 program (now virtual) specific to the communication of marijuana use and consequences in the context of legalized marijuana. The second adaptation is collaborating with colleagues at Colorado State University to implement an online marijuana personalized normative feedback (PNF) tool. The PNF tool aims to correct marijuana use misperceptions and provide youth and caregivers with strategies to prevent marijuana use.

“[My daughter] absolutely loved spending time with everyone these last few weeks. She has been struggling with her mental health for the last few years, and we love it when she finds a group that is supportive of her and that she enjoys being with. We really appreciate you all!”

– Parent

During the reporting period, our team implemented SFP 10–14 virtually three times in Snohomish County, reaching 42 caregivers and 35 youth. In addition, SFP 10–14 Cannabis was implemented four times in Spokane, reaching 15 caregivers and 18 youth. Finally, the team at Washington State University (WSU), which will serve as a control site, administered the PNF tool during two implementations of SFP 10–14 Cannabis and one of SFP 10–14. Four caregivers across the three implementations fully completed the pre- and postassessments.

Lessons Learned: Program implementation was postponed due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The WSU team attempted to recruit participants for fall 2021 implementations in Snohomish and Spokane counties; however, due to public health guidelines and overburdened schools and families, recruitment numbers were not high enough to facilitate

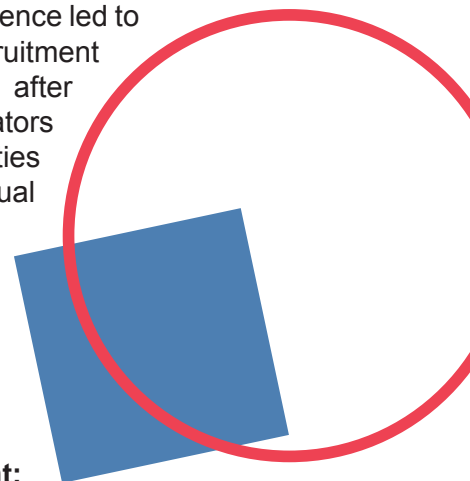
programming. This experience led to increased and varied recruitment efforts for spring 2022 after discussion with facilitators in Washington counties with successful virtual implementations. With these adjustments, we are on track to implement four times in Year 4, outside the current reporting period.

Sustainability Statement:

This project has and will contribute to developing virtual SFP 10–14 delivery materials. This work enables future SFP 10–14 implementations to meet community needs by allowing flexible program delivery. An SFP community of practice was created for professionals and facilitators in Washington State. The community of practice LISTSERV and group were created to help professionals and facilitators connect with WSU and current research and provide access to resources. During the reporting period, WSU sent out newsletters sharing upcoming training and professional development opportunities, celebrated successful implementations, and helped solicit facilitators for implementations across the state. The community of practice will share virtual and substance-use adaptation materials with facilitators. Lastly, two additional facilitators were trained in SFP 10–14. This will increase the state’s capacity to deliver programming and potentially buffer against workforce turnover.

“A mom shared with me on our last session that she stopped smoking cannabis 4 weeks ago because of the curriculum. She wanted me to know how impactful the program has been for her and her family.”

– Facilitator



Creating a Village for Transition Into Adulthood Through Youth–Adult Partnerships, Teen Mentoring, and Community Sustainability

Hawaii

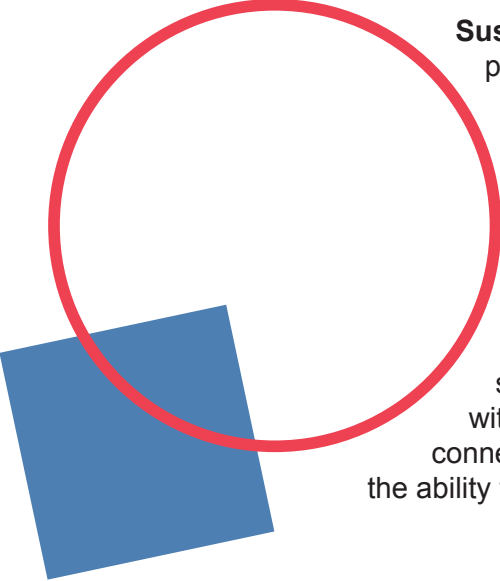
CYFAR Topic Area: Leadership Development, Nutrition, Parenting, Science, Technology, and Workforce Preparation

Program Report: Creating a Village is a multilayered educational intervention for middle school youth that provides opportunities to enhance their workforce preparation and life management skills. The program is delivered within a supportive environment that includes their peers, a youth–adult partnership team with teen mentors and an adult partner, and community-based experts. The program is designed to develop education, mentorship, and leadership development opportunities through program interactions.

"They're not going to learn it all, but they're going to know that there's someone in the community that they can go to. Isn't Maui a village of its own anyway? For the students themselves, they actually get to see that there are people out there that care about their future."

-- Community Member

Lessons Learned: The program has been delivered in a variety of ways as adaptations to COVID-19-related circumstances, yet participants have continued to show improvements in prosocial behavior and workforce development skills and increased connections to peers, which reinforces the format of the youth–adult partnership team as the foundation in developing a safe, familiar environment. To ensure this is protected in program deliveries moving forward, we will increase training for staff and volunteers on its importance. Improvements have been made in communication channels, collaboration opportunities, and access to information through online tools and resources, increased training, and more frequent team progress checks.



Sustainability Statement: The program has reached a point where it has compiled a substantial collection of resources and program materials that can be used to create a program replication manual, which is currently in progress. Additional tools have been developed to allow the grant team and program staff to communicate when practical. These tools, such as collaborative documentation, online databases, structured roles and responsibilities, and shared resources, allow the program not only to move forward but also to create a sustainability structure that will allow new teams to deliver programming without direct oversight. With a robust evaluation system and connections between new programs, this team will strengthen the ability to maintain program quality.

Montana Sustainable Communities: Social, Emotional, and Physical Wellness for Rural and Native American Youth (SEP)

Montana

CYFAR Topic Area: Leadership Development and Technology

Program Report: The Social, Emotional, and Physical Health and Wellness (SEP) program model provides at-risk youth with tools to increase and enhance social-emotional learning through training that helps youth learn coping skills, increase emotional intelligence, address and solve social problems, and build leadership and life skills. The model includes training related to mental health using the Youth Aware of Mental Health (YAM) curriculum. This evidence-based, pilot-tested curriculum increases students' knowledge about depression and anxiety and enhances the skills and emotional resilience needed to deal with stress and crisis.

The proposed CYFAR sites have agreements with schools to offer YAM, and the Extension staff who will deliver the training are YAM-certified facilitators. Each year, facilitators have selected up to five YAM-trained youth to be part of a peer and leadership group. Despite challenges produced by the COVID-19 pandemic, it is noteworthy that programming has continued and community exposure has increased. Also, student cohorts have demonstrated willing leadership to adapt programming to their design and style. The CYFAR team (project director, site managers, and coach) hold biweekly meetings to discuss progress and strategies moving forward.

Lessons Learned: The Rocky Boy site has experienced continual challenges during 2022 related to vacancies in program administration and key community partnerships. The current project coordinator was trained in the YAM curriculum in August 2022. After continued communication efforts, they are now poised to deliver the YAM curriculum and begin recruiting the new cohort of CYFAR students.

Flathead initially delayed its YAM curriculum due to the new COVID-19 strain in spring 2022. Simultaneously, the YAM curriculum underwent significant enough changes to necessitate new IRB approval from both Montana State University and the Stone Child College IRBs. Nonetheless, the project coordinator successfully delivered the curriculum and recruited a new cohort of CYFAR (Teens for Emotional Awareness) students.

Sustainability Statement: For both sites, one method of sustaining our projects is to purchase equipment outside of normal budget allocations and train school personnel and students to use it. We have purchased video production equipment, wide format

poster printers, and virtual reality headset projects for students who need additional soothing/calming. We want to see virtual reality technology integrated into long-term use sustained by school personnel and future students. We will continue to meet to discuss novel ways to sustain resources and programming in both communities.



"I didn't know these things!"

– Student at Ronan Mental Health Fair

Nia: Pathways and Purpose for the Future

Wisconsin

CYFAR Topic Area: Leadership Development and Workforce Preparation

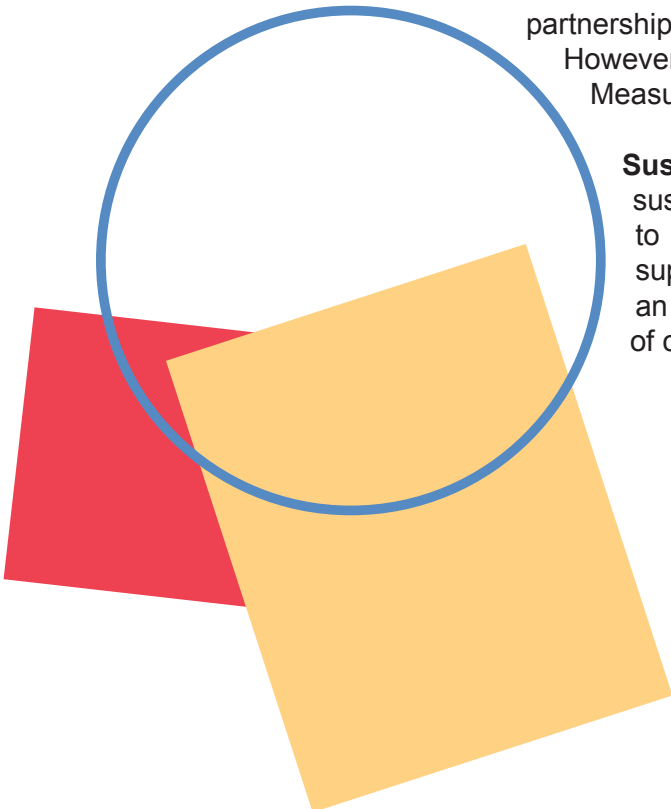
Program Report: Across program sites, the Nia project succeeded in helping youth explore post-high-school pathways in a culturally responsive setting, prioritizing Black youth and other youth from minority backgrounds. We made great strides during this hybrid planning and implementation year both administratively and programmatically. First, we incorporated youth voice in several ways, including focus groups, implementation design, and leadership opportunities, such as having a student from each state travel to Chicago to present alongside staff at the CYFAR professional development event in June 2022. In addition, we have implemented an intern model that allows older youth (college students) to serve as near peers for middle-school- and high-school-aged participants and contribute to curriculum design. As a team, we continue to meet regularly to share and plan—a strategic challenge considering we represent two universities in two states and six counties with several community partners affiliated with each site.

“I spoke with my principal yesterday, and he had the pleasure of witnessing the amazing work y’all are doing and stopped by my office to impress upon me how grateful he was for the work y’all are doing. He said there was one interaction he witnessed that reminded him why he does what he does—I want them all to know the impact and impression they are making on students and leaders alike.”

— School Liaison regarding the work of Nia college interns at Jamestown Middle School

Lessons Learned: In North Carolina, economic circumstances challenged our hiring process for county coordinators even though we anticipated that possibility. In order to avoid similar issues in the future, we are looking to expand our internship model across sites as a supplement to paid project staff. We also hope to learn from our Wisconsin colleagues as they work to implement an Americorp VISTA model. Our partnership with Jamestown Middle School has been incredibly productive. However, we are still getting approval to collect CYFAR Common Measures data from the school district.

Sustainability Statement: In North Carolina, we are promoting sustainability by (a) ensuring that our processes are documented to support replication, (b) exploring diverse funding streams to supplement continued program implementation, and (c) developing an intern recruitment and training model to ensure a consistent pool of culturally responsive front line workers to implement Nia.



Clemson-South Carolina State Sustainable Community Project

South Carolina

CYFAR Topic Area: Science and Technology

Program Report: Children in Grades 3 through 8 participate in STEAM activities twice a week during the school year. Leaders direct the programming at each site. Depending on the site's location, the leaders are community members or school staff. During the first session of the week, a lesson from our curriculum is selected, and a session including background information needed to complete the activity is led. During the second session of the week, the activity from the curriculum is completed through a hands-on approach with the guidance of site leaders. Activities include individual and group activities, particularly for younger youth.

In addition, during the summer, students attend summer camp through Clemson's Youth Learning Institute, a weeklong technology camp for youth. Approximately 40 students attended summer camp this year. The desired long-term results are to (a) involve community partners in improving educational outcomes for students from multiple counties, (b) integrate STEAM into the everyday experiences of children, (c) integrate CYFAR youth participants into the 4-H Youth Development Program, and (d) create a self-sustaining program after the project.

Lessons Learned: Many lessons were learned from implementing our CYFAR program. Most notably, COVID-19 changed how we implemented programming, and we had to learn to be adaptable and integrate technology as programmatic delivery methods shifted. Programming shifted from in person to virtual, followed by a hybrid model, and finally back to in-person programming. We learned that consistent communication with staff and regular site visits were significant factors in running a successful program. The

importance of community stakeholders was especially emphasized with COVID-19 as they helped us learn about the communities and how to make plans for programming that best fit each site.

Sustainability Statement: The project will be sustained differently across sites. For example, one site has applied for and received a 21st century learning grant which will provide funding for at least 4 years. Another site is developing a sustainability model that will include other funding sources and a sliding scale payment option for parents from low-income families. We will continue to provide technical support to sites around sustainability. We are also exploring a mix of funding opportunities that include 4-H STEM grants and local government grants.



Youth Civic Engagement

Nebraska

CYFAR Topic Area: Leadership Development

Program Report: In 2022, we reached 15 youth through Youth Arise, a program fostering youth civic engagement. Youth from a primarily Latinx middle school participated in 15 hours of experiential learning across 10 weeks to better understand how individuals can participate in collective actions that impact the broader public. For example, youth participated in interactive programs where they learned about the election process, how campaigns are mounted, and how collective decisions are reached. Youth Arise was an after-school program and included activities that encouraged youth to explore their strengths and characteristics, gain information about civic participation, and practice their collective decision-making through real-world civic activities (e.g., simulating campaigning for office). The program culminated in a family night where youth participants received their certificates of completion.

Lessons Learned: This year's program was implemented with youth from a low-resource community. Several youth participants also needed additional guidance in school (e.g., behavioral challenges). This year's lessons were as follows: (a) incorporating a mix of activities was critical in engaging youth, mainly as the program was intensive and implemented after the youth had already participated in a full day of schooling. Incorporating physical activities and a mix of experiences was critical in keeping the youth engaged; (b) partnerships with schools and related entities were critical in this year's program. As we were working with some youth with additional challenges, a multifaceted approach that included program staff and a school liaison was essential to ensuring program quality.

Sustainability Statement: Much of our effort is to prepare for next year's sustainability phase. After the various iterations of the program and testing the curriculum with new implementers, we are now ready to develop a finalized curriculum that can be released as a stand-alone curriculum that others can implement. We are curating tested activities and engaging in conversations with various potential entities that might continue this program. A potential route we are exploring is incorporating the program as part of a critical initiative/work group within Nebraska Extension that focuses on entrepreneurship for youth. As Youth Arise includes an element of the entrepreneurship process as part of collective problem-solving, this program can be incorporated into the youth entrepreneurship work group. Key leaders' feedback suggests a gap in their current program for the middle school age.

Concerning curriculum writing, we are also in the process of aligning activities with Nebraska Education Standards, engaging layout artists for design, and discussing a potential online presence for the program.



Robots, Energy, and Agriscience: Advancing Equity and STEM Growth Mindset in Rural STEM Education

North Carolina
CYFAR Topic Area: Science

Program Report: The Robots, Energy, & Agriscience: Advancing Equity and STEM Growth Mindset in Rural STEM Education initiative convenes a multidisciplinary team from two land-grant universities, one Cooperative Extension System, and four local education agencies to serve middle school youth, teachers, nonformal educators, and families by transferring knowledge and technology to increase STEM literacy and civic engagement through the formal and nonformal implementation of peer-reviewed, research-based 4-H curricula. Youth explore their interests through rigorous science and engineering practices within 4-H STEM curricula aligned with K–12 state standards. Youth learn fundamental science content, build STEM skills, and apply science concepts to real-world questions around alternative energy (e.g., The Power of Wind, Biofuels), epidemiology (e.g., Microbes on My Mind), and food production (e.g., Poultry Experimenting, Bee Keepers).

“The grant will allow us to implement research-based STEM curricula in Grades 6–8 in rural communities in four North Carolina counties, bring youth in these communities to both North Carolina State and North Carolina A&T State to meet with research faculty, and develop a statewide robotics competition.”

– Dr. Autumn Cano-Guin, Principal Investigator

Connecting STEM content to issues that matter to youth and their communities encourages youth to envision themselves as active participants in the future of agriscience. Youth work with their peers to develop positive social norms as they engage in meaningful discussions about STEM-related issues. Robotics components introduce youth to engineering and coding in an environment that values iteration and productive failure. Through robotics, youth develop leadership skills as they demonstrate mastery and engage in learning to prepare for competitions. The annual robotics competition expands youth’s cultural and social influences by introducing them to others who share their interests and exposing youth to college and career paths. During the annual STEM academy,

youth spend a day on campus to learn about cutting-edge research from STEM researchers and content specialists. Finally, take-home science and robotics activities encourage and support the primacy of family relationships and promote family learning.

Lessons Learned: On October 1, 2022, the original project director for the program retired. Project directors at North Carolina State University and North Carolina A&T State University, in their commitment to a genuinely joint project to impact equity in STEM education, convened an executive team that includes seasoned educational professionals. This team has worked closely with university contracts and grants teams to set up accounts and has met regularly to provide training, discuss next steps, and explore potential challenges as they prepare to hire site directors and train teachers at four middle schools to deliver selected STEM curricula. The team met with the national CYFAR coach monthly to discuss progress. The evaluator and project director met with the CYFAR PDTA Center evaluation team to discuss the evaluation and begin the process of building required evaluation tools into the program evaluation plan and move through the required IRB processes.

Sustainability Statement: The team is focused on building relationships among site teams, community leaders, and project staff early in the program cycle to increase community buy-in. The team will visit sites, hire local STEM program assistants, and gather input from site teams. STEM program assistants will ensure that community voices are heard so that project objectives and activities remain responsive to local needs. State staff and STEM program assistants will regularly inform school boards, city councils, county commissioners, and other local leaders about program impacts. To ensure program longevity beyond the funding period, the training plan transfers pedagogical and content knowledge in STEM to schoolteachers and local 4-H educators. The robotics program and STEM academies will train youth to serve as community mentors and leaders. In addition, strengthened partnerships with local Cooperative Extension programs will build capacity among educators and club leaders by providing access to materials.

Sustainable Community Project (SCP) to Promote Early Language and Literacy Development in Native Communities

Arizona

CYFAR Topic Area: Parenting

Program Report: Our project is a community-based program to promote young children's early literacy in two rural American Indian communities in Arizona: four Navajo Nation communities near Sanders, Arizona (the Nahata'Dziil, Wide Ruins, Pine Springs, and Houck Chapters), and the communities of the San Carlos Apache Tribal Lands. We have developed six complementary program components: (1) Early literacy handouts and quick tip videos; (2) Storytime videos; (3) Drop-in family literacy events; (4) Professional development workshops; (5) Multisession family literacy program; and (6) Multisession care

“Just feeling comfortable being Indigenous. It's great to see that there is a Native influence in language and literacy that we can all relate to.”
-- Participant

provider literacy program. This combination of program components allows parents, grandparents, other primary caregivers, and childcare providers of young children a range of opportunities to engage with our program. Each of these components has been developed in collaboration with our communities. In both communities, we have convened and regularly met with community advisory boards and have solicited feedback from parents and childcare providers in the communities through pilot sessions of the programs. Preliminary evaluation findings suggest that we are reaching our target population, participants enjoy our programming, and we provide unique and valuable programming.

Lessons Learned: One of our most important lessons this year was the value of community partners. This year our community partners were instrumental in helping us receive tribal approval to collect evaluation data, hire qualified program staff, and advertise the program. We are well-positioned to begin offering several multisession programs across the San Carlos Apache Tribal Lands in 2023, primarily because of our community partners. It took months of hard work connecting with others in the community to build relationships that can support our program. Our program

staff has learned to engage creatively with others in the community. We attempt to build reciprocal relationships from which both sides benefit. We do this by promoting our partners' programs to our participants, looking for opportunities to collaborate on providing programming or developing educational materials, participating in community events hosted by other organizations, and maintaining regular communication.

Sustainability Statement: We are using several sustainability strategies. Community advisory boards in both communities meet regularly to enhance preexisting partnerships within the community sites. We regularly communicate with our program champions to share our successes and accomplishments. For example, we distribute a newsletter to Extension administration and community stakeholders. We plan to make our program materials available online for use after the funding period. Finally, we are working with our community advisory boards to explore opportunities to integrate our materials into existing programs and to secure future funding for our programming. We have identified a funding opportunity through First Things First, Arizona's Early Childhood Development and Health Board, that appears to be an excellent fit to sustain the program in San Carlos beyond the 5 years of CYFAR funding and will apply for this funding in March 2023.



University of Arizona: Reducing Family Stress Sustainable Community Project

Arizona

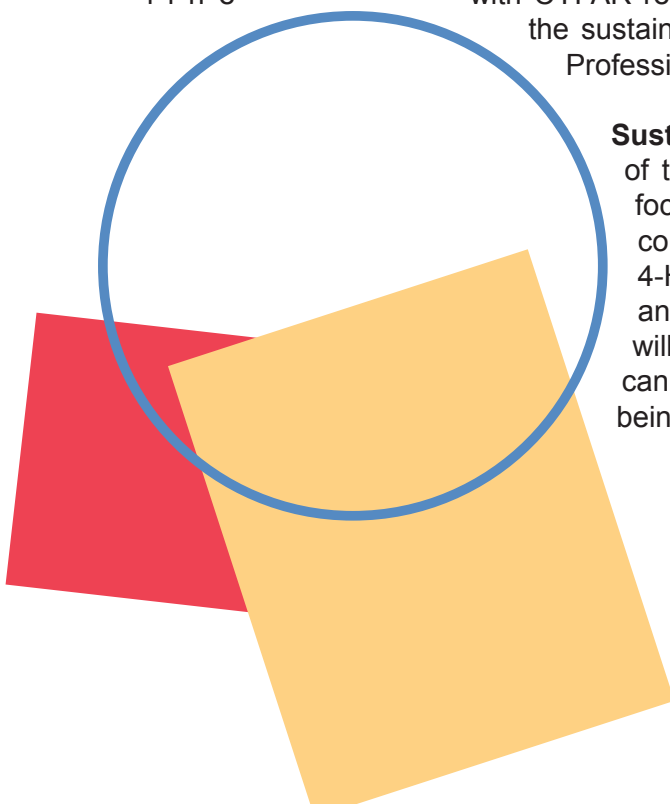
CYFAR Topic Area: Parenting

Program Report: The University of Arizona Reducing Family Stress Sustainable Community Project uses a two-generation approach, is trauma-informed, and is grounded in the theoretical framework of the Family Stress Model (Masarik & Conger, 2017), recognizing that economic stressors contribute to adverse parenting. This project is a multifaceted program model that leads to positive parent-child interactions and the emotional and financial well-being of the family. This program uses research-based curricula and experiential learning to help parents use positive parenting practices that result in financial socialization within the family unit. We enhance family connectedness to community resources by promoting an interface between families and the local social support system and helping develop opportunities for positive youth development through 4-H programming. This CYFAR program serves 60–70 families annually with family-centered, intergenerational, and community-engaged programming, emphasizing positive parenting of teens, financial literacy and parenting, youth financial education, and community connectedness.

“I can’t wait to connect with you more to discuss this great program and how Earn to Learn can be a part of this project.”
– Community Partner

Lessons Learned: Year 1 of this 5-year project is a planning year. Therefore, the Reducing Family Stress CYFAR project team is developing a multifaceted research-based program model incorporating positive parenting and financial literacy components that will result in positive parent-child interactions and the family’s financial well-being. We are designing a program evaluation in line with CYFAR requirements and have worked towards the assessment of the sustainability of this project using tools provided by the CYFAR Professional Development and Technical Assistance team.

Sustainability Statement: Sustainability is a crucial element of the development of this project. Locally, the program will focus on developing long-term relationships with Extension for continued program outreach and fostering the development of 4-H clubs. In addition, we intend to have products developed and sustained because of this 5-year program. The curriculum will focus on the financial parenting of teens so that parents can more successfully help their teens reach financial well-being.



CYFAR: Oklahoma State University and West Virginia University Sustainable Community Project (SCP) – The United We Can: Youth Entrepreneurship Program

Oklahoma
CYFAR Topic Area: Workforce Preparation

Program Report: The United We Can (UWC) program increases academic performance, reduces high-risk behaviors, and increases workforce preparation by coaching underserved minority youth in essential life skills such as goal setting, problem-solving, and self-control and equipping them with an entrepreneurial mindset. Success coaches help youth set goals and learn to overcome barriers through regular coaching sessions. Community partnerships expose youth to career opportunities and give youth opportunities to form positive peer relationships. Family workshops coach parents to be more involved and supportive in their youth’s academic performance and promote positive family relationships.

Ongoing success coaching provides youth with a caring adult in their lives and an experienced guide who can help them navigate their current and future decisions. For instance, UWC success coaches work with parents and youth every year to help them apply for federal and state financial aid to attend postsecondary education. Because most of our youth and parents would be first-generation college students, they often need someone to encourage college attendance or give advice on accessing the resources needed to fund their education. The UWC program helps

low-income and underserved youth bridge this gap and gain access to higher education.

Lessons Learned:

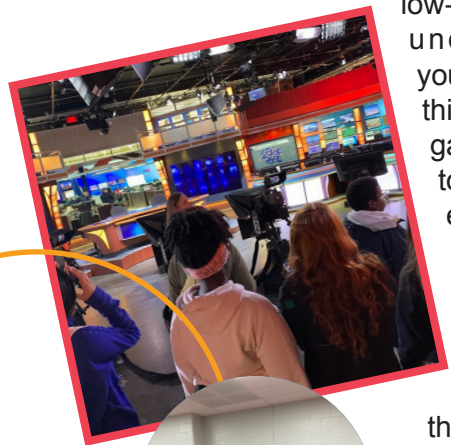
We were reminded this past year that the person interacting with youth and their families is just as crucial to the program’s success

as the program itself. This point is significant when working with a diverse audience that includes children and families who are English language learners. From curriculum selection and translation to enrollment and IRB forms, it has taken time and consideration to ensure that communication and educational opportunities are delivered to promote equality, equity,

*“Unidos changed my life for the better. Something I am super grateful to Unidos for is helping me with filling out my Oklahoma promise so that I could receive a scholarship for my college. . . I also remember them making family parties and activities that were supper fun! I was able to make lots of friends during this time, and up to this day, I am still friends with [them]. If you are given the opportunity to join Unidos please do as it will be super helpful and fun for you. You will not regret it.”
– Youth Participant*

and inclusion. Moving forward, we will invest more heavily in professional development activities to help staff acquire new skills and further hone those they already have.

Sustainability Statement: We have created strong partnerships with community organizations that have seen the impacts of the UWC program, and they have provided funding to help advance aspects of the program. For instance, the Tulsa Opportunity Project provided us with funding to work with youth in an after-school setting, and the Zarrow Foundation gave us money to support our summer programming. We will continue strengthening the network and membership of our advisory boards to help direct programming and identify and diversify funding opportunities.



Tennessee Sustainable Community Project

Tennessee

CYFAR Topic Area: Leadership Development, Parenting, Science, and Technology

Program Report: The mission of the University of Tennessee’s Sustainable Communities Project is to enhance educational curricula, develop linkages to support families, and provide technical assistance and training for after-school staff. The project focuses on middle-school-age youth and seeks to improve their knowledge, skills, attitudes, and behaviors necessary for fulfilling, contributing lives. The program targets school-age, high-risk youth and their families who are experiencing trauma-inducing environments, academically challenged, potential dropouts, more likely to engage in delinquent behaviors, and lacking prosocial and emotional learning skills and strong positive role models. The sites the project serves have many children who live in poverty. The primary content utilized focuses on three primary areas: (a) social-emotional learning (SEL); (b) student academics through STEM agriculture, STEM nutrition, STEM robotics, and STEM engineering programming; and (c) intensive family engagement programming. Nonacademic topics such as leadership, decision-making, positive relationships, and increased self-work are also emphasized. The philosophy of this project believes youth must first address their social-emotional needs before academic gains can occur.



Lessons Learned: Transitioning from virtual classrooms to face-to-face programming has been challenging. The primary challenge has been getting students excited about after-school programs again. With our other after-school programs, we noticed that there is some lethargic behavior amongst students and families statewide—more so with middle school students. We have had to be much more creative and intentional with our programming. We have learned that more small group activities are needed to provide a more focused teaching approach. We have also discovered that more social-emotional learning activities are necessary as many students and families are experiencing mental illness.

“I really appreciate the program’s focus on social and emotional topics. I’ve seen a big change in our son’s ability to focus better in class, and his behavior scores have improved, which is amazing. I think this is what has helped [his] grades [get] better too.”

– Parent

Sustainability Statement: With our experience, proposed curricula, and evaluation plan, we believe we will successfully gain additional support via funding and community support. Grants that support our programs currently include Tennessee’s Lottery for Education: Afterschool Programs, the Department of Children’s Services Building Stronger Brains Innovation Grant (RULER Grant), and the Tennessee free snack program. We have pursued various avenues to establish sustainability beyond the 5 years of CYFAR funding. For example, (a) all school districts have

pledged to fund the site director and teacher positions at the rate of 20% per year, culminating in 100% funding by the end of Year 5, contingent on program growth and impact. (b) To help offset any positions that are not wholly funded by the end of Year 5, we have begun developing a college internship. (c) Many partnerships are already in place, and we have commitments from them to provide some services and supplies. We have found it relatively easy to develop partnerships over 5 years that will be able to support the program’s needs (curricula, office supplies, etc). We will continue this strategy with these programs.

Therapy Program for Custodial Grandchildren and Custodial Grandparents

Iowa

CYFAR Topic Area: Leadership Development, Parenting, and Technology

Program Report: In 2022, CYFAR targeted grandparent–child dyads throughout Iowa and adjusted our program sessions from six to four sessions. This change was made after participant feedback suggested that attending six sessions was difficult for families with busy schedules. Although specific emphasis was placed on Woodbury County, Story County, and Black Hawk County, marketing materials were distributed in communities throughout the state. The two cohorts held in the fall (October and November) of 2022 reaped the benefits of the shift in program offering and marketing efforts. Between the two cohorts, 24 families (27 adults and 25 children) completed interACT. The program continued to see positive responses as the first cohort, 2023, was filled.

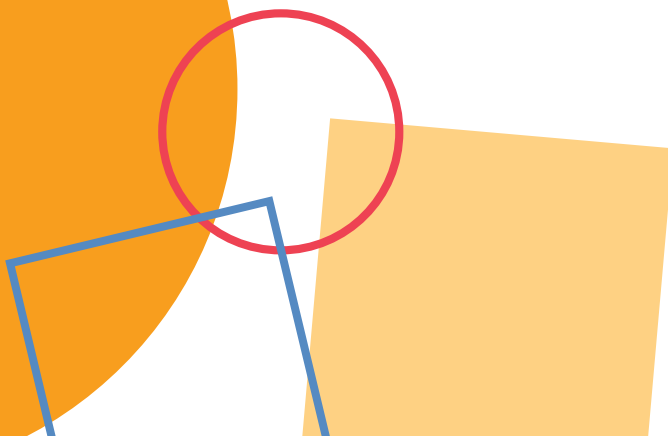
The CYFAR team has continued to grow in 2022, and all new team members have completed technological and online training to assist with program implementation. In our quarterly team meetings with the CYFAR coach, the team discussed the implemented recruitment strategies and brainstormed new methods to mold program offerings to fit the needs of Iowans.

Lessons Learned: We learned that most grandparents and children who participated in the program needed technology lessons before participating actively. Sometimes participants needed help handling technology (i.e., joining the Zoom meeting without technical issues). Some families reported having broadband issues as they reside in rural areas.

Another lesson we learned was about the attrition rate. We initially recruited over 100 grandparent –child dyads, but most grandparents had to drop out due to scheduling conflicts. This challenge led us to consider offering the program using an asynchronous (self-paced) website.

Finally, we learned the importance of training. As we have experienced staff turnover, newly hired team members have completed technological and online training to assist with program implementation. Facilitators who had been trained were asked to retrain as a refresher. Most team members appreciated the training opportunities.

Sustainability Statement: We started a collaboration with sustainability partners to support programs during and beyond the grant period. Specific activities included disseminating findings with referral partners and key stakeholders, starting strategic planning meetings with new and existing project partners for sustainability, developing partnerships and standardized referral policies and processes, disseminating the online program for both custodial/foster parents and their custodial/foster children, and submitting a state grant to support the program for foster parents in Iowa.



Expanding 4-H to Urban Latino/a Audiences

Missouri

CYFAR Topic Area: Leadership Development and Nutrition

Program Report: In 2022, the Juntos 4-H and Soccer for Success programs were implemented in the Greater Kansas City area, serving 15 families in Juntos and engaging 112 youth in healthy activities involving soccer. Four professionals were trained to mentor the youth and deliver the Juntos and Soccer for Success programs designed to serve Latino/a communities. The youth reached are 4-H members and families engaged in communication and college goal setting with their children.

Lessons Learned: The University of Missouri 4-H team learned after site visits that program quality depends on the youth program associates and volunteers that run the program and engage families. These are the drivers of success. They work as a team, care about the youth and parents, and implement the program with fidelity.

“When I first joined Juntos, one of the first things they focused on besides high school preparation was family. Just because of Juntos, my mom and I have a better relationship, and we understand each other better. We barely argue and instead communicate clearly, express our emotions.”

– Youth Participant

The program quality is outstanding although the reach could be improved. We are learning that to expand in reach, we need our expert program delivery associates to train others.

Sustainability Statement: We have received funds from the 4-H Foundation to continue Juntos in Boone County and Jackson County.

4-H UNITY

New York

CYFAR Topic Area: Leadership Development and Workforce Preparation

Program Report: 4-H UNITY (Urban Neighborhoods Improved Through Youth) uses Cornell Cooperative Extension’s 4-H Signature Program, Youth Community Action, to address generational poverty in two high-need New York communities. The approach focuses on the needs of vulnerable teens and their parents working together with a unifying goal of strengthening families, improving the community, and breaking the cycle of generational poverty.

Lessons Learned: Lessons learned are applied as part of UNITY’s iterative sustainability planning and, as such, serve as the basis for continuous process improvement and a program ready to be sustained after CYFAR funding ends.

Sustainability Statement: Both UNITY projects in Broome

and Monroe counties have commitments from community partners to be sustained after CYFAR funding ends.

“You have excelled in business and in life throughout one of the most challenging times in our history, and your accomplishments in Broome County have not gone unnoticed.”

-- Award nomination for program coordinator



The United We Can: African American Youth Entrepreneurship Program

Oklahoma

CYFAR Topic Area: Workforce Preparation

Program Report: The United We Can (UWC) program increases academic performance, reduces high-risk behaviors, and increases workforce preparation by coaching underserved minority youth in essential life skills such as goal setting, problem-solving, and self-control and equipping them with an entrepreneurial mindset. Success coaches help youth set goals and learn to overcome barriers through regular coaching sessions. Community partnerships expose youth to career opportunities and give youth opportunities to form positive peer relationships.

Family workshops coach parents to be more involved and supportive in their youth's academic performance and promote positive family relationships.



An example of program impacts can be seen in our 8-week summer program that led youth through diverse workshops on topics such as financial planning and cultural awareness and exposed them to different STEM-related careers. The program culminated with a trip to Oklahoma State University where youth could learn what it's like to be a university student through experiencing campus life and workshops taught by graduate students and faculty. One workshop titled Reality Check randomly assigned youth to different life scenarios (e.g., professions,

salaries, number of children) and then guided them through creating a budget for things like health insurance, groceries, a vehicle, living arrangements, recreational activities, charitable donations, etc. The reality check arrived when an auditor examined their choices regarding their monthly income. If they were over budget, they would have to go back into the game and figure out how to make their life work given their income. Seeing how many youth had to return to the vehicle station and trade in their expensive car or truck for a more modest mode of transportation was amusing. After the activity, there was a lively group debriefing session reviewing lessons learned, including the importance of preparing for the life they would like to have. This hands-on experience was immensely impactful for the youth. At this age, youth are very interested in what they call adulting, that is, in learning how to be an adult. For many youth, this was the first time they had had an opportunity to manage money, and it was eye-opening.

Lessons Learned: There is often much focus on the program's effectiveness and whether the program is evidence-based or not. The assumption is that youth and families will benefit if the program is good. Much less attention is given to the person or people who deliver or facilitate the program. The person or people interacting with youth and their families are just as crucial to the program's success as the program itself because how it is delivered matters. In response to this reminder, we have invested more heavily in staff training and professional development in terms of materials and time dedicated to learning new skills and further honing existing skills.

Sustainability Statement: We provide value to the school that makes our program highly desirable to teachers, administrators, parents, and funders.

*"I didn't know you could have so many different jobs in science."
– Youth Participant*

For instance, published findings document the effects of UWC on reducing or delaying initiation into drug use in a 4-year longitudinal study. Furthermore, another published study documents the potential for the UWC program to affect children's drug use in a given school, even if they are not involved in our program, by affecting the school's culture. This suggests that the impacts of this CYFAR program reach far beyond the students who are enrolled in the program.

Helping Youth PROSPER and Avoid Opioid Misuse in Virginia

Virginia

CYFAR Topic Area: Parenting and Workforce Preparation

Program Report: The primary outcome of the CYFAR PROSPER project is that middle-school-aged youth will demonstrate knowledge, skills, attitudes, and behaviors necessary for fulfilling, contributing lives. The CYFAR PROSPER project in Virginia aims to improve decision-making and problem-solving skills, enhance positive attitudes and school engagement, strengthen parent-child relationships, and reduce risky behaviors such as substance misuse and violence or delinquency. Programming for youth and their families has included life skills training, family-based models, camps, college visits, and workshops both in and outside school. We also have

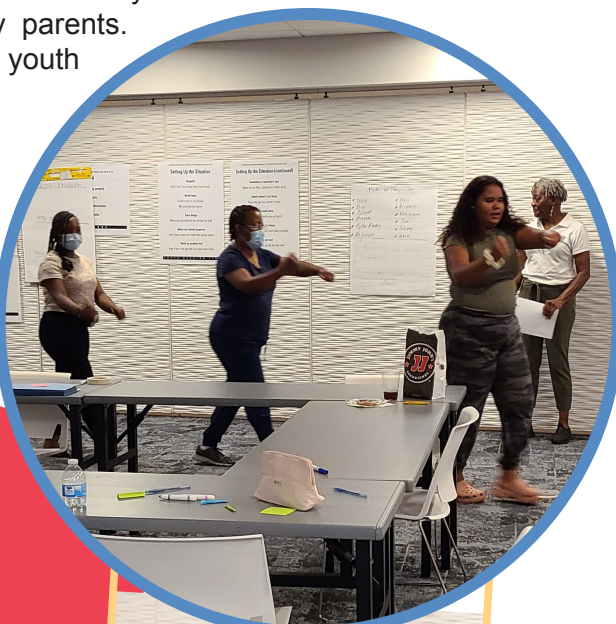
“If you don’t have a good relationship with your parents or parent, then you can do this program to, like, get a stronger relationship. It really helps.”
– Youth Participant

continued the weekly Balancing Life webinar for adults seeking information, resources, and tools. Results of participation in the youth programs have shown a statistically significant increase in youth’s knowledge about the dangers of substance use, including alcohol, cocaine, and tobacco. They also show an increase in self-efficacy in knowing how to handle anxiety. Youth

also showed statistically significant improvement in their life skills related to problem-solving and decision-making. As opportunities arose, youth attending additional programs reported knowledge gain in other arenas. For example, the visit to Virginia State University to experience campus life and participate in sessions on goal setting was impactful to many youth and families. Some feedback received included youth stating they gained comfort speaking in front of people, learned about college scholarships and what it takes to get into college, increased their understanding of 4-H program offerings, and felt excitement about being on a college campus. Parents attending the session expressed similar comments and also shared an appreciation for being able to attend their child’s first college visit with them. A protective factor for youth is good relationships with supportive adults, especially parents. This project continues to see parents and caregivers and youth growing stronger together.

Lessons Learned: There have been many lessons learned in this project. Both planning and flexibility from start to finish are essential. Preparation for personnel changes within the project and among community partners is also necessary. Planning more frequent team meetings earlier in the project may have also uncovered some red flags sooner.

Sustainability Statement: Each of the local site teams, along with the state support personnel and stakeholders, continue to build and strengthen relationships and strategize and align resources to continue the programming beyond the life of this CYFAR award.



Minnesota 4-H Youth Development CYFAR Project: STEAM Connect Club

Minnesota

CYFAR Topic Area: Leadership Development and Science

Program Report: Ka Joog 4-H STEAM Connect clubs ignite youth interest in science, technology, engineering, arts, and mathematics and help them imagine and plan their education. The out-of-school time club setting helps youth foster healthy peer relationships. It targets 30 Somali-American teens living in Minneapolis and Moorhead, Minnesota. Two adults facilitate the clubs and meet twice weekly during the school year. Youth develop inquiry skills through an engineering-oriented curriculum. Youth are empowered to preserve Somali culture through performing arts, cultural arts, and spoken word. Youth also engage in activities that equip them with the mindset and personal leadership skills needed to pursue higher education and careers. Participants deepen their learning through a 4-day summer residential campus experience at the University of Minnesota where they learn about student life, explore academic interests, identify the steps toward college readiness, and meet faculty and students in STEAM fields. Throughout the program, youth develop portfolios that capture their growth over time and present them at public showcase events. The public showcase engages their families and community leaders with each youth's plan for postsecondary education and increases their excitement and commitment to helping youth achieve their goals.

Lessons Learned: The onset of the pandemic disrupted initial plans to have community leaders trained in positive youth development lead the youth programs. Turnover in program youth workers resulted in diminished attendance and late cancellations. For the last 16 months, careful attention to staffing has resulted in consistent youth workers at each program site. Two of them are former youth participants. These young people participate in training, attend professional development opportunities, and actively recruit youth participants. Since then, we have had a spike in youth participants (by 50% at each site), and youth have attended consistently. This has laid the foundation for more engaged and immersed learning like field experiences.



Sustainability Statement: UMN

Extension 4-H and our community partner, Ka Joog, have a strategic coimplementation strategy to support program sustainability. Each local 4-H educator working with the program sites includes CYFAR programming into their everyday portfolio of work, structurally embedding content into implementation cycles: e.g., volunteer training, provision of curriculum resources, invitations to leadership events within 4-H, access to local 4-H program funds and scholarships

to support programming. The program model is shared throughout the state of Minnesota and with national colleagues, sustaining the impact of the grant by making it accessible to and replicable by other Extension faculty, staff, and youth workers.

4-H SNAC

California

CYFAR Topic Area: Leadership Development

Program Report: The Robots, Energy, & Agriscience: Advancing Equity and STEM Growth Mindset in Rural STEM Education initiative convenes a multidisciplinary team from two land-grant universities, one Cooperative Extension System, and four local education agencies to serve middle school youth, teachers, nonformal educators, and families by transferring knowledge and technology to increase STEM literacy and civic engagement through the formal and nonformal implementation of peer-reviewed, research-based 4-H curricula. Youth explore their interests through rigorous science and engineering practices within 4-H STEM curricula aligned with K–12 state standards. Youth learn fundamental science content, build STEM skills, and apply science concepts to real-world questions around alternative energy (e.g., The Power of Wind, Biofuels), epidemiology (e.g., Microbes on My Mind), and food production (e.g., Poultry Experimenting, Bee Keepers).

Connecting STEM content to issues that matter to youth and their communities encourages youth to envision themselves as active participants in the future of agriscience. Youth work with their peers to develop positive social norms as they engage in meaningful discussions about STEM-related issues. Robotics components introduce youth to engineering and coding in an environment that values iteration and productive failure. Through robotics, youth develop leadership skills as they demonstrate mastery and engage in learning to prepare for competitions. The annual robotics competition expands youth's cultural and social influences by introducing them to others who share their interests and exposing youth to college and career paths. During the annual STEM academy, youth spend a day on campus to learn about cutting-edge research from STEM researchers and content specialists. Finally, take-home science and robotics activities encourage and support the primacy of family relationships and promote family learning.

Lessons Learned: On October 1, 2022, the original project director for the program retired. Project

directors at North Carolina State University and North Carolina A&T State University, in their commitment to a genuinely joint project to impact equity in STEM education, convened an executive team that includes seasoned educational professionals. This team has worked closely with university contracts and grants teams to set up accounts and has met regularly to provide training, discuss next steps, and explore potential challenges as they prepare to hire site directors and train teachers at four middle schools to deliver selected STEM curricula. The team met with the national CYFAR coach monthly to discuss progress. The evaluator and project director met with the CYFAR PDTA Center evaluation team to discuss the evaluation and begin the process of building required evaluation tools into the program evaluation plan and move through the required IRB processes.

Sustainability Statement: The team is focused on building relationships among site teams, community leaders, and project staff early in the program cycle to increase community buy-in. The team will visit sites, hire local STEM program assistants, and gather input from site teams. STEM program assistants will ensure that community voices are heard so that project objectives and activities remain responsive to local needs. State staff and STEM program assistants will regularly inform school boards, city councils, county commissioners, and other local leaders about program impacts. To ensure program longevity beyond the funding period, the training plan transfers pedagogical and content knowledge in STEM to schoolteachers and local 4-H educators. The robotics program and STEM academies will train youth to serve as community mentors and leaders. In addition, strengthened partnerships with local Cooperative Extension programs will build capacity among educators and club leaders by providing access to materials.



FIFTH YEAR OUTCOMES

The Juntos Sustainability Community Project: A collaboration between NC State University, NC A&T, and University of Idaho

The Juntos Sustainable Community Project, a collaboration between NC State University, NC A&T, and the University of Idaho, is a comprehensive program aimed at enhancing the academic success, technology proficiency, and postsecondary access of Latinx youth and families in North Carolina and Idaho. Through a structured curriculum involving family engagement workshops, individualized coaching, 4-H club meetings, and immersive college experiences, the project seeks to achieve six primary goals: increasing academic success and attendance, fostering a sense of belonging, enhancing family engagement, promoting technology skills, boosting college enrollment, and ensuring long-term program sustainability.

The project has shown significant positive outcomes, with Latinx high school graduation rates surpassing national averages and a notable increase in college enrollment among participants. Additionally, students have demonstrated increased confidence in securing financial aid and navigating postsecondary education pathways. The program has also facilitated community building, with families reporting enhanced comfort within the school system. Through initiatives like the Summer Academy, students have gained valuable career skills and exposure to technology, preparing them for the demands of the 21st-century digital economy. With a network of 17 partners across CYFAR sites, the program exhibits strong collaborative leadership and strategic funding, ensuring its sustainability and continued impact on Latinx youth and families in the participating communities.

Clemson - South Carolina State Sustainable Communities Project

The Clemson - South Carolina State Sustainable Communities Project, established in 2018, aimed to enhance afterschool programs for at-risk rural youth in South Carolina by implementing an evidence-informed STEAM curriculum. Throughout its duration, the project successfully engaged community partners across four rural counties, delivering STEAM activities and integrating technology into the curriculum. The initiative also provided technical assistance and professional development to enhance the capacity of participating organizations and conducted summer technology camps. By aligning with existing resources and integrating 4H programming, the project identified strategies for sustaining its impact post-completion.

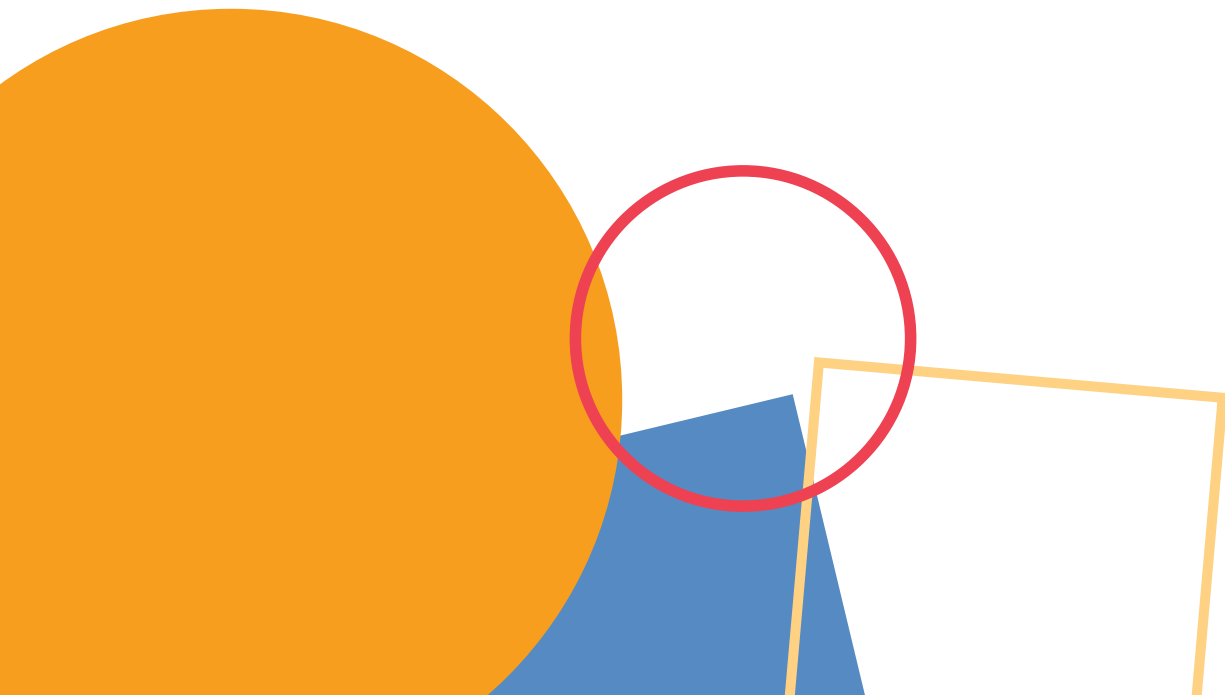
The collaboration between Clemson University and South Carolina State University strengthened ties between the institutions and bridged research divides, particularly in rural communities. Data from participant surveys illustrated positive outcomes, including increased interest in STEM careers, improved confidence in science and technology subjects, and a decrease in the perception of math difficulty. The findings underscore the project's success in fostering educational opportunities and technological proficiency in underserved rural communities, with potential implications for future research and outreach endeavors.

4-H UNITY (Urban Neighborhoods Improved Through Youth)

4-H UNITY (Urban Neighborhoods Improved Through Youth) is a program implemented in Endicott and Rochester, New York, targeting vulnerable teens and their parents to combat generational poverty. By combining positive youth development, civic engagement, nutrition, and parent education, UNITY aims to equip teens with the skills and mindset needed for successful high school graduation and future endeavors in college, careers, and citizenship. The program focuses on sustainability by fostering ongoing partnerships with local government leaders, businesses, and community organizations, ensuring its continuation beyond grant funding.

Teen leaders involved in UNITY demonstrate leadership and workforce readiness through community projects, job shadowing, and internships, resulting in increased college enrollment among graduates. Evaluation data indicates significant positive outcomes, with nearly all teen leaders reporting learning applicable career skills, improved communication and leadership abilities, and a stronger sense of community connectedness. Moreover, the program has received external recognition, such as the Youth in Action Award and the establishment of the Diversity Café at Union-Endicott High School, showcasing its impact on both individuals and communities. Teen leaders also actively participate in advocacy efforts, such as the New York State Youth Mental Health Listening Tour, where they share their experiences and recommendations with mental health professionals and policymakers.

Looking ahead, 4-H UNITY plans to leverage partnerships with entities like WSKG Public Broadcasting to amplify youth voices through podcasts addressing mental health issues and create impactful initiatives like the anti-violence video “Stop the Violence.” Additionally, individual success stories highlight the program’s ability to empower and support youth in pursuing higher education and community improvement efforts. Through its multifaceted approach and collaborative partnerships, 4-H UNITY continues to make significant strides in empowering youth, strengthening communities, and breaking the cycle of poverty in Endicott and Rochester.



Seed to Bloom (StB) 4-H S.T.E.A.M. Sustainable Community Project

The Seed to Bloom (StB) 4-H S.T.E.A.M. project at Central State University focuses on providing positive youth development experiences to underserved and at-risk youth in both urban and rural communities. Recognizing the importance of creativity and problem-solving skills in today's high-tech society, the project aims to intervene early to support the full potential of young individuals, from building careers to becoming civic leaders.

The project's objectives span various domains, including promoting healthier dietary habits and physical activities, introducing youth to science, agriculture, and nutrition, and providing opportunities for life and workforce preparation skills development. Through experiential learning activities in S.T.E.A.M. education, healthy living, citizenship, and career preparedness, the project seeks to empower youth and foster their growth into functional, responsible citizens and caring adults.

Since its inception, the project has successfully forged strong community partnerships, with schools and community organizations embracing its model. Utilizing innovative techniques such as hydroponic systems and container gardening, the project has engaged participants in afterschool activities and summer camps, fostering hands-on learning experiences.

Adult volunteers have also benefited from the project through training sessions and the establishment of 4-H clubs, further extending the project's reach and impact within the community. The project's influence has sparked interest in establishing community gardens and expanding positive youth development initiatives through 4-H clubs.

In addition to promoting healthier lifestyles, the project has provided high school students with service-learning opportunities and civic engagement experiences, including participation in events like Citizenship Washington Focus. Notably, several students have pursued Ag-STEM disciplines in higher education, showcasing the project's impact on shaping career paths.

Furthermore, the project emphasizes the judicious use of technology, exposing students to coding, robotics, and drones, aligning with 21st-century workforce demands. Central State University college students have also contributed as mentors and counselors, enriching the educational experiences of younger participants.

Looking ahead, the project prioritizes sustainability by integrating its initiatives into the university's land-grant Extension plan. By highlighting successes, best practices, and lessons learned, the project aims to ensure its continued impact and relevance in the years to come.

In summary, the Seed to Bloom project exemplifies a holistic approach to youth development, leveraging education, community partnerships, and innovative technologies to empower young individuals and nurture their potential as future leaders and contributors to society.



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4-H SNAC

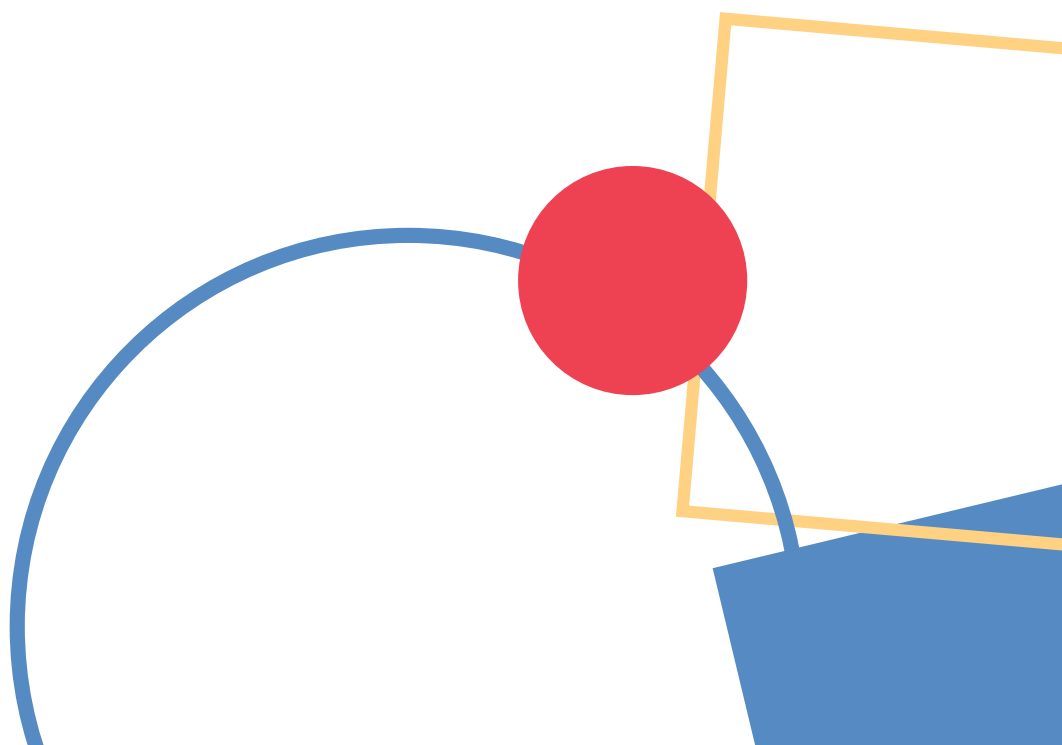
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