OSU Extension in the City links research-based education with local knowledge and collaborators to improve lives and communities in Ohio’s largest cities.
Ohioans Live, Work, and Play in the City

Letter from the OSU Extension Director, Keith Smith

**Ohio’s unique urban-suburban-rural interdependencies**
With 11.5 million residents, Ohio is the seventh most populous state in the nation and presents unique urban-suburban-rural interdependencies. More than half of Ohio residents live in 10 of the state’s 88 counties, and many others travel to cities for work and recreation. Ohio’s largest cities and counties bring complex opportunities and challenges due to population density and the diversity of residents, labor force, community partners, and visitors.

**OSU: Addressing today’s priorities, while engaging in research to prepare for the future**
OSU Extension has a rich history in Ohio cities and continues to address today’s priorities, while engaging in research to prepare for the future. As part of the OSU College of Food, Agricultural, and Environmental Sciences, OSU Extension is the university’s community-based front door to the knowledge, expertise, and resources of The Ohio State University. The mission of OSU Extension is engaging people to strengthen their lives and communities through research-based educational programming.

**OSU Extension in the City: Primary and Emerging Areas of Focus**
OSU Extension in the City involves a statewide team working in Ohio’s most populated cities through research-based education, leadership, and collaboration on programs that are locally relevant, responsive statewide, and recognized nationally. Primary and emerging areas of focus are identified through various stakeholder groups, supported through campus and national networks, and approached through multi-disciplinary teams and resources.

- **Food & Agriculture in the City**: Ohio communities are making the production, processing, distribution, preparation, and celebration of food a catalyst for urban neighborhood redevelopment.
- **Health and Wellness in the City**: Extension empowers Ohioans with the knowledge, skills, and tools needed to make healthy choices, creating healthy people with healthy relationships and healthy finances at every stage of life.
- **4-H Youth Development in the City**: The OSU Extension 4-H Youth Development program offers educational opportunities in a variety of settings for youth ages 5–19, catering to urban audiences.
- **Sustainable Cities**: Extension specialists work with city leaders on economic, environmental, and social drivers that impact life in the city.

This Annual Highlights Report features a few highlights from cities across the state. For more complete results and stories of shared success, refer to the County Highlights and OSU Extension Annual Report.
Ohio’s Urban-Suburban-Rural Interdependencies

OSU Extension in the City

Metropolitan and Urban Area Definitions

A Metropolitan Statistical Area is a geographical region with a relatively high population density at its core and close economic ties throughout the area. These areas are defined by the U.S. Office of Management and Budget (OMB) - not the Census Bureau - for use by federal statistical agencies. A Metropolitan area consists of an area with 50,000 people or more, and a Micropolitan area is between 5,000 and 50,000 people. Ohio has:

- 9 Combined Statistical Areas.
- 16 Metropolitan Statistical Areas.
- 29 Micropolitan Statistical Areas.

According to the Census Bureau’s Urbanized Area and Urban Cluster designations, 81% of Ohio’s population is considered urban.

Linkages between urban, suburban, and rural communities include movement of people, resources, goods, capital and other social transactions. The population of Ohio is important for the future of the state because it serves as a cause and an effect of economic growth, public services, and the general quality of life.

OSU Extension in the City focuses on Ohio’s largest cities, such as the top ten with populations exceeding 64,000 and others in Ohio’s metropolitan areas throughout the state.

City Trends and Priorities

In addition to population trends, Extension professionals tap into a variety of sources to better understand city, county and regional trend indicators and priorities.

Ohio’s Largest Counties and Cities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Largest Counties</th>
<th>Population</th>
<th>Largest Cities</th>
<th>Population</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cuyahoga</td>
<td>1,278,024</td>
<td>Cleveland +</td>
<td>396,815</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Franklin</td>
<td>1,167,484</td>
<td>Columbus</td>
<td>787,033</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hamilton</td>
<td>801,350</td>
<td>Cincinnati</td>
<td>296,943</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Summit</td>
<td>541,788</td>
<td>Akron</td>
<td>198,402</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Montgomery</td>
<td>535,626</td>
<td>Dayton</td>
<td>141,527</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lucas</td>
<td>441,198</td>
<td>Toledo</td>
<td>287,208</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stark</td>
<td>375,593</td>
<td>Canton</td>
<td>73,007</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Butler</td>
<td>368,029</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lorain</td>
<td>301,108</td>
<td>Lorain</td>
<td>64,097</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mahoning</td>
<td>238,352</td>
<td>Youngstown</td>
<td>66,982</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>6,048,552</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>+ Cuyahoga</td>
<td></td>
<td>Parma</td>
<td>81,601</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ohio</td>
<td>11,533,561</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Local food programs promote healthy, sustainable and equitable food systems in Ohio’s largest cities. An OSU Extension team in Canton/Stark County, engages in a variety of projects, including production and business education for small and mid-size local producers. Seasonal high tunnels are now in inner-city neighborhoods in cities such as Cleveland, Columbus and Youngstown, where they help urban farmers and gardeners grow food almost year-round. OSU Extension provides technical support and marketing education to help residents utilize the tunnels to increase profitability.

Urban Agriculture
Many urban neighborhoods are turning to community gardens and small urban farms to use vacant land, create new businesses and improve access to fresh produce. OSU Extension provides technical support and marketing education to help urban farmers make the most of their land, including instruction on soil quality and season extension that allow food to be grown almost year-round. Efforts are ongoing to increase Ohioans’ access to healthy foods and to support local food councils.

In Cuyahoga County, OSU Extension provided 33 urban agriculture workshops attended by 452 community members and supported 239 community gardens that yield nearly $3.1 million in fruits and vegetables each growing season.

In Akron, 469 community members learned about the importance of native plants and pollinators in the landscape through nine different educational programs.

In Columbus, OSU Extension pilot-tested a Master Urban Farmer curriculum for producers interested in expanding their operations to meet the growing market demand for locally produced products.
Preparing Youth For Success

OSU Extension in the City

4-H Youth Development in the City
The OSU Extension 4-H Youth Development program offers educational opportunities in a variety of settings for youth ages 5–19. Each young person “learns by doing” through hands-on, experiential projects. Whether it’s a STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Math) project, Youth Outdoors, or other program, youth learn leadership, citizenship, and other life skills.

Real Money Real World is an active, hands-on experience that gives young people the opportunity to make lifestyle and budget choices similar to those they will make as adults. In Columbus/Franklin County, 2,200 youth were impacted by the program.

4-H Metropark Partnerships: Youth Outdoors, a partnership with Cleveland Metroparks, provided leadership for 532 outdoor adventure experiences for 31 urban youth groups in Cleveland. Youth and adults (10,027 total) participated in outings and special events, and 696 youth were engaged in ongoing clubs. One hundred nineteen youth provided 1,115 hours of service to others. Adventure Central, a partnership with Dayton MetroParks, is an education center for youth ages 5-18 to participate in after school programs; activity nights; day and overnight camps; and parent and family programs. Participants spend time connecting with nature in a positive youth development context for the intended outcome of creating caring, capable, and contributing citizens.

4-H Agri-Science in the City, provided by OSU Extension, introduces a new generation of students to the world of STEM education. Agriculturally based examples are used to teach science to elementary students in a hands-on way in the classroom. Students gain a broader understanding of where their food comes from, and that food and agriculture provide a wide array of career opportunities. In Cincinnati, more than 1,600 students participated in school and summer programs.

School Enrichment Programs seek to support learning in the classroom with 4-H, hands-on learning experiences. Approximately 2,000 Akron students participated annually in 4-H through STEM-based school enrichment programs.

The 4-H CARTEENS traffic safety education program for first-time juvenile traffic offenders is offered in many areas, including Butler County, where 555 teens attended one of 40 programs, accompanied by a parent or guardian. This program is a partnership between OSU Extension, county juvenile courts, and the Ohio State Highway Patrol. In Butler County, 21 teen volunteers gained leadership experience by contributing over 1,848 hours serving as planners and facilitators for the program.

OSU Extension in the City: Responsive Statewide
In Ohio’s 10 most populated counties, OSU Extension worked with more than 1,500 adult volunteers to serve more than 32,000 youth through 4-H clubs, camps, school enrichment and other programs.
Strengthening Families and Communities

OSU Extension in the City

**Health & Wellness in the City**
OSU Extension empowers Ohioans with the knowledge, skills and tools needed to make healthy choices, thus creating healthy people with healthy relationships and healthy finances at every stage of life.

**Healthy People**
More than 1,300 people from Ohio’s 10 largest counties participated in OSU Extension’s *Live Healthy Live Well* workplace wellness program that *encourages healthful habits to improve participants’ well-being, reduce the need for healthcare services, lower absenteeism rates at work, and help control costs for employers*. Surveys indicate that 92% of respondents are using the new information that they learned and over 80% have adopted one or more of the recommended practices.

More than 3,000 adults in 8 of Ohio’s most populated counties participated in the *Expanded Food Nutrition Education Program (EFNEP)*. *Improved nutrition practices* were reported by 91% of the participants. In addition, more than 8,900 youth in grades 6-12 in these counties participated in the EFNEP education and 86% reported *improvement in diet quality*. In 6 of Ohio’s most populated counties, 3,225 people participated in *Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program Education (SNAP-Ed)*. In the 4 counties using the MyPlate curriculum, 84% reported using the information to *make choices for a healthy lifestyle*. SNAP-Ed and EFNEP are federally-funded programs.

To improve healthy food access, the Cleveland-Cuyahoga County Food Policy Coalition, convened by OSU Extension in partnership with local agencies, expanded incentive programs and brought 260 new food assistance customers to farmers’ markets for the first time.

**Healthy Finance**
Homebuyer education is an example of OSU Extension healthy finance education. In Toledo, workshops are designed to equip buyers with the tools and knowledge needed to succeed at both home purchasing and home ownership.

**Healthy Relationships**
In Dayton, successful co-parenting programs reached 260 parents, agency representatives and youth. Participants reported increased awareness of the impact of divorce and separation on their children.

In Lorain, OSU Extension led a Youth and Families of Promise prevention program for youth ages 10–14 who have below-average school performance, poor social skills and/or weak family bonds. Sixty-four 5th-8th graders and their parents participated in the afterschool program. Three family night events were held, and parents, mentors and youth participated in a variety of activities aimed at strengthening their families.

**OSU Extension in the City: Recognized Nationally**
The Franklin County Extension team received a national award from the Joint Council of Extension Professionals for multi-disciplinary teamwork on urban community food systems.

Empowerment Through Education
u.osu.edu/cfaesimpact
extension.osu.edu
OSU Extension in the City

Green Industry
In the Cincinnati area, OSU Extension provides education for employers of garden centers, greenhouses, tree care, lawn care, sod production, golf courses, landscaping, and nurseries – an industry that annually pays Hamilton county employees nearly $350 million.

Master Urban Farmers
In Columbus, 109 participants completed a 9-week course to become Master Urban Farmers. As a result, 39% of participants planned to start a new business; 72% planned to produce more food from existing operations; 12% planned to increase family income; and 84% planned to produce higher quality or safer food from existing operations.

STEM Pathways OSU Extension Signature Program in Science, Technology, Engineering and Math improve youth participants’ curiosity, logical thinking, problem-solving, and team communication – workforce skills.

Sustainable Communities is an emerging group of the OSU Extension in the City team. OSU Extension works with community leaders to address their priorities. Sustainable communities seek to maintain and improve the economic, environmental and social characteristics of an area so its members can continue to lead healthy, productive, enjoyable lives there (Hart, 1999). Other frameworks contributing to this topic include thriving cities, community vitality, resilience, capacity, quality of life, and others. Extension engages public and private leaders in community vitality connections and development throughout the rural-urban continuum.

Local Leadership
The Local Government Leadership Academy is offered by OSU Extension Community Development in partnership with the Ohio Sea Grant College Program and communities in the Lake Erie Watershed.

Community Development
Extension's Community Development programs aim to engage people in strengthening their organizations, communities and ultimately social, economic, civic and environmental conditions to improve the quality of life in Ohio. One of those programs is the Business Retention and Expansion (BR&E) program.

Business Retention and Expansion
To assist local businesses in achieving their objectives and to improve the overall business environment, OSU Extension partnered with residents and leaders in the University District of Columbus, to conduct a Business Retention and Expansion (BR&E) program. More than half of respondents plan to increase investment and nearly three-quarters expect to grow.

OSU Extension in the City:
Improving Urban-Suburban-Rural Vitality
Extension professionals collaborate with community leaders, as well as campus-based professors, researchers, and students to improve economic, social, and environmental conditions along the rural-urban continuum.
Ohio State University Extension

OSU Extension brings the resources of The Ohio State University to every county. See extension.osu.edu for locations and contact information for all of our offices.

OSU Extension Administration

Keith L. Smith, Associate Vice President, Agricultural Administration; Associate Dean, College of Food, Agricultural, and Environmental Sciences; Director, Ohio State University Extension; and Gist Chair in Extension Education and Leadership

Julie M. Fox, Associate Chair, Department of Extension, OSU Extension in the City, College of Food, Agricultural and Environmental Sciences

fox.264@osu.edu

3 Agricultural Administration Building
2120 Fyffe Road
Columbus, Ohio 43210

Collective Impact

Partnerships included a mix of public and private organizations at the neighborhood, city, county, state and national levels. The traditional model of county, state and federal funding is frequently expanded in urban areas, with city, philanthropic, education, faith-based, and other community contributions playing an essential part in a diverse Extension resource portfolio.

cityextension.osu.edu