



IMPACT 2022

Through Extension programs across the nation, Family and Consumer Sciences Extension Educators provide a multitude of Educational opportunities to meet the needs of diverse audiences.

COVID-19 Response

Extension professionals strive to create relevant, community-focused programming to meet local needs. Extension programs are often viewed as a trusted source of information. In 2020, community needs rapidly changed because of the spread of the novel coronavirus, variants and a global pandemic. Extension organizations and institutions quickly adjusted their delivery methods to address educational, food access and resource needs.

In **Texas**, Extension provided the following responses: 190 trained employees implemented contact tracing/data entry to prevent further virus transmission by quickly identifying and informing people who may be infected and contagious to take steps in preventing the spread. They also provided PPE (Personal Protective Equipment) with a total of 7,605 deliveries reaching 7,646 childcare providers.

To reach citizens with information related to COVID-19 and immunization, the University of **Delaware** utilized *EXCITE- Extension Collaborative on Immunization and Teaching Engagement*. The EXCITE initiative addresses vaccination disparities in underserved communities. The university is working with Haitian leaders and state health entities to increase education and health supplies (properly translated materials, masks, hand sanitizer, rapid tests, etc.) available for Haitian communities. The EXCITE team from **Maryland** engaged and educated over 14,000 residents about COVID-19 vaccinations with in-person outreach events, monthly newsletters, educational webinars and social media postings on Facebook and Instagram. They also interviewed 15 community stakeholders and surveyed 42 community partners as

part of a community needs assessment. From this data, they identified seven themes that prevent rural immigrant farm workers from getting COVID-19 vaccines. As a result, a local Haitian and Latino radio station hosted a call-in show with a local physician who spoke Haitian.

"It is important to have messages that are in individuals' languages and post on social media apps that they use."



Experiencing chronic stress can increase risk of experiencing mental health challenges such as anxiety and depression as well as physical health conditions such as heart disease, high blood pressure, and diabetes among others (National Institute of Mental Health, 2021). This webinar trilogy demonstrated **New Mexico** State University Cooperative Extension Service's ability to deliver information in innovative ways to improve physical and mental health by increasing participants' skills in managing chronic

stress caused by the pandemic. The multidisciplinary team consisted of county agents with family and consumer sciences and agriculture backgrounds and state specialists in family life, nutrition, and physical activity.

Kansas Extension created a *Check Your Credit* email program to reach isolated consumers during the pandemic. Through periodic emails, participants learned the importance of regularly checking their credit reports to identify and guard against identity theft. Information was also included on how and where to obtain free credit reports.

Operation Covid was launched in twelve counties in **Kentucky** after Covid restrictions shut down programming. Delivery methods for 84 FCS programs were developed and delivered through technology. The programs reached 7,797 directly, and 81,974 indirectly. Surveys indicated participants gained skills and appreciated the opportunity to continue to learn and access timely information. Another group of counties continued their tradition of a Holiday Road Show through grab and go bags. The purpose was to assist individuals in understanding and responding to stress resulting from holiday expenses and Covid-19 related issues. Participants reported after utilizing the information over \$4,000 was saved.

Don't Wait, Vaccinate was a joint effort of **West Virginia** University and West Virginia State University to improve vaccination rates and decrease vaccine hesitancy among grandparents raising their grandchildren. COVID-19 focused educational sessions were held with 63 grandparents in four rural counties reaching 141 children. More than 75% reported they are now comfortable with getting their grandchildren vaccinated.

Virginia Extension's *Balancing Life* series featured 79 30-minute sessions through weekly webinars reached 2,750 residents with timely information related to Covid issues. Topics include finance, remote working and

schooling, mental health impacts, family dynamics and stress management. Participants rated the webinars as very useful and indicated they plan to apply information learned to their personal and professional lives.

Wise Wisconsin virtual learning series connected over 500 participants socially while providing them with tools, resources, and skills to find joy and satisfaction in everyday life during the pandemic. Eighty-five percent of respondents indicated that they felt more connected to others after attending.

"This helps me so much to have these virtual classes. They are social as well as informative and I need that at this challenging time."



This report was compiled by Jennifer Bridge, University of Kentucky Extension Service, NEAFCS Vice President Public Affairs. For more information, email Jennifer.Bridge@uky.edu.

Raising kids, Eating right, Spending smart



National Extension Association of Family and Consumer Sciences (NEAFCS) provides professional development for Extension professionals who improve the quality of life for individuals, families, and communities and provide education in the areas of: Childhood Obesity Prevention; Community Health and Wellness; Diabetes Prevention and Management; Financial Management; Food and Nutrition; Food Safety; Healthy Homes and the Environment; Improving Children's Lives; and Protecting our Resources – Family Life. NEAFCS is an equal opportunity/affirmative action association. NEAFCS values and seeks a diverse membership. There shall be no barriers to full participation in this organization on the basis of race, color, gender, age, religion, national origin, disability, veteran status, or sexual orientation. Membership is not by invitation. (Strategic Plan 1993-97)