

Who We Are

The National Cooperative Extension System (CES) is the educational arm of the Land-Grant University system. It reaches 3,300 counties, boroughs, parishes, and geographic areas with over 7,500 educators who live and work in these communities. These Extension professionals have direct ties to thousands of campus-based research and Extension specialists, providing communities access to university resources, regardless of their locations.

Unique to Land-grant universities, Extension and research have symbiotic missions that intertwine to ensure research findings are shared and implemented to solve community problems. Extension informs research by bringing community and industry needs to universities, then translates scientific findings, and delivers research-based information back to people where they live and work. Without this translational Extension work, basic research findings might never find their way into day-to-day practices. Research needs Extension to ensure impact. Similarly, Extension needs research to remain a trusted source of information.

Together, highly trained and dedicated scientists and community-based educators develop and apply science-based solutions that improve the nation's agricultural systems, environment, public health, economy, and overall quality of life for all. An investment in the Land-grant system delivers a \$20 return for every \$1 invested. For more information, visit agisamerca.org.

An “Outcomes-Driven” Extension Roadmap

Working alongside our research colleagues, Extension leaders are developing clear goals and ambitious research and education outcomes to tackle some of our nation's most critical aspirations in the following six pillar areas:

- > **Nutrition and Health**
- > **4-H Youth Development**
- > **Community Economic Development**
- > **Sustainable Food Systems**
- > **Resilient Lands**
- > **Water Resilience**



This plan outlines bold and measurable objectives achievable through increased strategic investment to Land-grant universities. It will add researchers and Extension professionals who will collaborate to ensure cutting-edge research will result in practices and policies with a profound positive impact on our food system, workforce, environmental resiliency, public health, and community economic prosperity.

Cooperative Extension's National Imperative: Increased Investment in Expertise and Partnerships

Our nation faces a critical imperative: Ensuring individual and community vitality, national security, and global competitiveness. One direct way to do this is by increasing investment in Cooperative Extension and the research that informs it. Making up the lost ground in public investment to research and development is critical; however, without a comparable increase in Extension education, the scientific advances may not result in the desired improvements. Increased financial support is essential to promote transformative education and research and safeguard our nation's future.

Current Association of Public and Land Grant Universities budget requests call for approximately equal increases for Cooperative Extension and agricultural research. Increases in Cooperative Extension funding would require a multi-billion investment to match Chinese and European Union agriculture R&D investments, given current public funding and advancements by those actors.



Topical Pillars of Greatest Interest

Nutrition and Health – Before 2014, life expectancy in the United States trended steadily upward. Today, the United States ranks 48th in life expectancy, despite spending almost \$5 trillion yearly on health care. The Cooperative Extension System is uniquely positioned to address the threats to the nation’s health. Extension professionals, live and work in the communities they serve and are viewed as trusted sources. Cooperative Extension has the ability to not only influence the most important factors in human health and nutrition, but also has the ability to increase the use of screenings, immunizations, and ongoing health monitoring in their communities. Research has shown that every dollar invested in Extension programs focused on reducing diet-related disease (EFNEP and SNAP-Ed) saves nearly ten dollars in future healthcare costs. Over 200,000 individuals engage in Cooperative Extension programs yearly to improve their nutrition, increase physical activity and reduce sedentary behaviors. With additional investment, participation in these programs can be expanded to 500,000 individuals each year.

Community Economic Development – Since Cooperative Extension is already an integral part of local communities and are fostering their economic development, this outreach function of the Land-Grant Universities is positioned to serve as an important community partner in overcoming challenges and seizing opportunities. However, a purposeful investment will be required for Cooperative Extension to assist in increasing community vitality, increasing the quality of life, and realizing the promise afforded by expanded broadband access to remote areas. Cooperative Extension has the capability to significantly lead community economic development. However, it lacks the capacity necessary to meet challenges and advance future opportunities.

4-H Positive Youth Development – For our youth, the road ahead may be challenging, but youth who become 4-H alumni are succeeding. Data shows that compared to their peers, they're:

- 2x more likely to have the goal of being a leader
- 3x more likely to participate in community service
- 2x more likely to report living life with intentionality and purpose

Currently, five to six million young people are gaining critical life and work skills in 4-H that lead to their success, and we would like to double this number. The lack of Cooperative Extension Capacity prevents millions youth from participating in 4-H.



Water Resilience – Whether it’s too much or not enough water, communities will continue to face challenges with respect to water quantity and water quality. New innovations in flood mitigation, drought prevention, and reducing water pollution will require investments in research and Extension. We will need to partner with industry and government to solve these critical challenges and ensure communities have access to clean water. With new investment, Cooperative Extension can take the lead in the future to implement innovations at the individual, community, state, and a national scale.

Resilient Lands – As a global leader in agricultural production, the United States must strengthen the resilience of its agriculture and natural resources to better withstand the growing challenges of variable weather and extreme events. This requires production practices that regenerate soil, conserve water, and support biodiversity and community resilience. By adopting soil health principles, innovative technologies, and climate-resilient practices driven and delivered by Land-grant University research and Extension, we can safeguard natural resources, advance U.S. agriculture, and bolstering national food and nutrition security

Sustainable Food Systems – Cooperative Extension has provided education and support to this nation's agricultural producers for more than 100 years. While Extension has increased the efficiency in our production systems, the national and global population continues to grow and food security remains a challenge to some populations. Growing enough food to feed everyone in a sustainable and affordable way requires further investments in research and development as well as new Extension educational programs that help develop regional food production, processing, and distribution systems to protect national security and minimize hunger.

