

K-STATE
Research and Extension

Sedgwick County

2024 Impact Report



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Our Mission

Since 1914, K-State Research and Extension has provided practical, trustworthy education to the people of Kansas. The Extension Education Center serves as the headquarters for all Extension programs in Sedgwick County. The Extension staff, agents, program assistants, nutrition assistants, support staff and volunteers conduct educational programming for adult and youth residents of Sedgwick County.



K-State Research and Extension has identified five grand challenges facing every Kansan: global food systems, health, community vitality, developing tomorrow's leaders, and water. Our research and extension efforts focus on addressing these challenges to help better our county, state, country, and world.

Food



Over 73% of the land area in Sedgwick County is in farms. 82% of the land in farms is for crop production and another 12% for pastureland. With the bulk of our land dedicated to crop, hay, and livestock production, agriculture is vital in our community.

Through crop schools, pre-plant meetings, workshops, demonstration plots, field visits, and one-on-one meetings with farmers, we are working to provide the agriculture industry with accurate, research-based information. Specifically, the extension wheat plots educate growers on the numerous varieties marketed in South-Central Kansas. In 2024, the plots contained 3 repetitions of 28 different varieties in 3 locations across the county, totaling 252 individual plots. Yield data, collected from each plot, was made available to farmers to aid in variety selection.



Besides traditional programming methods, the Sedgwick County Agriculture Programs are making information more readily available to producers. A farmer unable to attend the wheat plot tour misses an abundance of valuable information. One of the ways we are working to make this information more available is with the Interactive Wheat Plot. This tool is available online and allows farmers to choose a variety, hear audio comments from specialists, access past and present yield data, and receive information provided by the seed companies and K-State. Information, on all 28 varieties, compiled into one place to help farmers educate themselves.



Food



Food Access

Healthy Corner Store Initiative (HCSI) – Aims to bring expertise and resources together to improve food access in underserved communities and build relationships with small food retailers through training and education to store owners willing to sell and market healthy products and believe these changes can be sustainable and profitable.

WSU Community Engagement Institute asked Extension agents to serve as the nutrition consultants for this city initiative where they will be working with 11 corner stores throughout low-income low access communities in Wichita to provide healthier food options and assist stores with the capability of offering WIC and SNAP benefits to their customers, which will in turn increase store revenue.

Healthy Corner Store Initiative



Plant A Row for the Hungry

Our Plant A Row for the Hungry Program collected 4,404 pounds of fresh produce in 2024.

- Equivalent to 3,670 meals, and a dollar value of over \$8,456
- The Community Gardens Committee supported over 20 community gardens across the county and also participated in K-State pepper trial variety research, donating 520 pounds of peppers to the Plant A Row For The Hungry Program in partnership with the ICT Food Rescue.



Health



Kitchen Restore

The Kitchen Restore program provides kitchen starter kits to low-resource households to prepare and eat healthier meals at home. Adult participants in the nutrition education programs that serve individuals at or below 185% of the Federal Poverty Level (FPL) are eligible for a kit after completing 4 lessons. Recipients are asked to fill out a brief survey to identify which kitchen items and small appliances they need to tailor kits to their household needs.

In 2024, 138 kits were provided in partnership with 15 community-based organizations. Partnerships included Habitat for Humanity, The Treehouse, Family Promise, Wichita Children's Home Emergency Youth Shelter, Child Start, COMCARE, and many more. \$33,000 in grant funds were secured in 2024 to sustain the Kitchen Restore program.



Kitchen Restore recipients have shared the following impacts of receiving a kit.

- **“We were missing lots of items so it's nice to have them now. We're eating healthier now and we're eating more at home. It helps us save money eating at home.”**
- **“I had nothing to start with and it is helping me a lot to cook at home. I am cooking healthier, homemade food now.”**
- **“It has made it easier for us. Going to the [nutrition] class, I know different things I can use the items for. The extra pots and pans have helped me have more things to cook with.”**
- **“We are eating healthier meals.”**



HeartCorp Member

HeartCorp Members serve their communities by providing the training needed to educate about improving nutrition, managing blood pressure, obtaining life-saving CPR skills, and much more.

- Sedgwick County is the first county in Kansas to host a HeartCorp Member.
 - Olga Lesnik, HeartCorp Member, has provided 1,125 hours of learning and programming opportunities for the residents of Sedgwick County.

Health



Chronic Disease

Hypertension Initiatives - According to the American Heart Association, nearly 50% of US adults have hypertension. In Sedgwick County, 34.6% of adults have been diagnosed with hypertension. Research consistently demonstrates that self-measured blood pressure (SMBP) monitoring, combined with clinical support, significantly helps individuals with hypertension lower their blood pressure. This approach also improves access to care and enhances the quality of healthcare for individuals managing hypertension.

- Hypertension Awareness & Prevention program (HAPp) - Participants learned how to properly monitor and manage blood pressure.
 - Collaborated with Tara Sharon, Chronic Disease Health Educator from the Sedgwick County Health Department to implement the program at the 9th Street location as well as the Clearwater Senior Center.
- Reached a total of 24 participants.

"The daily monitoring of my blood pressure, with the monitor you provided, was key! I became much more aware of my readings and saw improvements in my readings with the tips/knowledge provided." -HAPp program participant



Libraries with Heart - Blood pressure monitors were made available in the Wichita, Clearwater, and Mt. Hope Public Libraries for patrons to check out and self-measure their blood pressure at home. Since the beginning of the program, 55 blood pressure kits have been checked out. One participant reported that he never would have known how to check his blood pressure and where to get a monitor without this program.



Do you or someone you love have diabetes? Need help making the best choices for your health? If so, we can help!

Dining with Diabetes - Participants learned skills to promote good health including identifying foods that contain carbohydrates, understanding appropriate portion sizes, proper meal planning, and reading nutrition labels.

Health



SNAP-Ed and EFNEP

Sedgwick County EFNEP and SNAP-Ed leverage resources to serve limited-resource clients throughout the lifespan, focusing on basic nutrition, food budgeting, food safety, and physical activity. In addition, policy, systems and environmental change work target gaps in access to nutritious foods.

EFNEP and SNAP-Ed reduce barriers to food security, nutrition security, and meal security. Meal security is the gap between having groceries and being able to prepare a nourishing meal, taking into consideration what resources are needed to make a meal such as kitchen equipment, time, and knowledge. To address meal security, EFNEP and SNAP-Ed have partnered with Kitchen Restore to supply participants with kitchen kits tailored to each household's needs.

Total Partnerships: 91; Total Participants: 1,433

SNAP-Ed Adult Participants - Sedgwick County

- 67.6% increased their fruit consumption to 2 or more times a day
- 56.3% increased their vegetable consumption to 2 or more times a day
- 76% increased their physical activity to 3-5 days per week for at least 30 minutes a day

EFNEP Adult Participants - Sedgwick County

- 76% showed improvement in 1 or more physical behaviors
- 73% showed improvement in 1 or more food safety practices
- 47% showed improvement in 1 or more food security indicators

“I've learned how to read the nutrition labels on foods. I am trying to eat more veggies and protein. I see great value in making meal plans and then shopping accordingly.”

“My kids and I sit down on Sunday to plan for the week. The kids help me prepare the meals. I notice I have extra money because we are not eating out as much as when we didn't plan.”



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This institution is an equal opportunity provider.



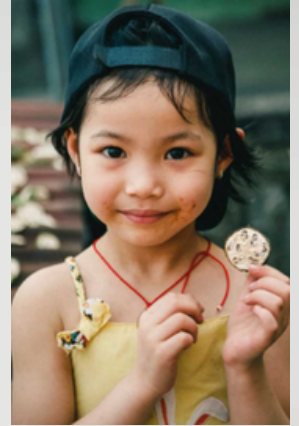
Health



Mental Health and anti- Adverse Childhood Experiences

The costs associated with every victim of child maltreatment who lives is comparable to other costly health conditions such as stroke, which has a lifetime cost per person estimated at \$159,846 or type 2 diabetes, which is estimated between \$181,000 and \$253,000.

Child maltreatment can also be linked to many emotional, behavioral, and physical health problems. Associated emotional and behavioral problems include aggression, conduct disorder, delinquency, antisocial behavior, substance abuse, intimate partner violence, teenage pregnancy, anxiety, depression, and suicide.



Classes to address mental health and Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) have been developed by Sedgwick County Extension. These courses are taught in multiple languages which include English, Spanish, Kiryardwanda, Dari, Arabic, and Sudanese Arabic.; the course audience consists of parents, seniors, people with mixabilities, and refugees.



Information is also shared in the following ways: TV-KWCH/ Univision Hispanic TV, Radio Lobo-Hispanic radio, El Perico-bilingual newspaper, Enlace Latino-quarterly multistate e-magazine, and the Tavo Nuñez YouTube channel.

What Are ACEs?

Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) are a collection of potentially traumatic events, such as violence, abuse, or neglect, that occur in childhood (0-17).

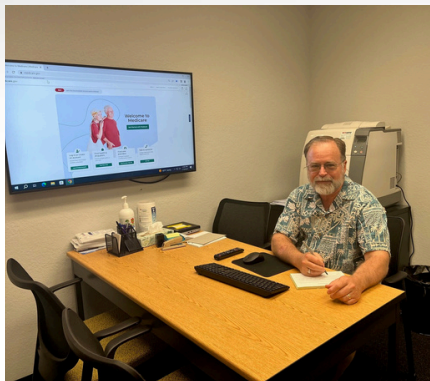
Community vitality



SHICK

Senior Health Insurance Counseling for Kansas (SHICK) is a free program offered by K-State Research and Extension-Sedgwick County to Butler, Harvey and Sedgwick counties. SHICK provides an opportunity to speak with a trained volunteer to get answers to your questions about Medicare and the other insurance that works with Medicare. SHICK helps people to stay informed of changes to Medicare and to help cut through the confusion.

In 2024 three satellite offices were opened in the county to reach out to more people: Cheney Public Library, WSU Metroplex, and the Oaklawn Community Center.



Fast stats:

Counseling Appointments:

- Cheney 43 answered
- WSU 316
- Oaklawn 73
- Extension 1666
- Derby 81
- Total people seen 2179

3021 phone calls answered
2509 hotline calls

4 Medicare Options classes
had a total of 96 attendees

22 volunteers worked a total of 2577 hours and saved the citizens of Sedgwick County \$2,323,034.01

Grant writing support

Nonprofits, educational, and government organizations struggle to find the resources to fund priority projects. According to The Foundation Directory (Candid), foundation dollars available for all subjects in Kansas increased 284% from 2014 to 2019. Kansans have been offered an opportunity to learn the basics in grant writing through online or in-person classes across the state.

Participants at grant workshops reported:

- 92% have greater confidence to write a successful grant.
- 98% learned new sources of data to document community need.
- 97% learned new sources for finding grants.
- 93% have greater confidence to evaluate and measure their grant success.



Community vitality



Kansas Community Empowerment (KCE)

Kansas Community Empowerment allows for each community to address its own unique needs, what they would like to preserve, create, or improve, as well as utilize and develop its own unique assets. And then it strives to assist community volunteer organizations in their local vitality efforts through education, leadership development and recognition.

In Sedgwick County, several communities have utilized this program. Currently, Mt. Hope and Viola participate in this opportunity.

Bonding thru Board Games

Learning through play is transformative. In Bonding thru Board Games, skill-building and connection happen naturally, turning each game into an opportunity for families to bond while developing key life skills. Game time becomes more than just play; it's a foundation for stronger families, resilient communities, and a generation equipped with the soft skills to thrive.

During this past year, 756 people engaged in Bonding thru Board Games, both in person and online, at events held across Uniontown, Belleville, Wichita, Parsons, and Pittsburg. Local partnerships made this possible, with events hosted at elementary and high schools for Family Nights, ESOL summer schools, senior centers, groups with disabilities, Greenbush Education Service Center, as well as with Parents as Teachers (for both parents and staff), foster care support programs, and community resource fairs. This outreach is paving the way for learning that feels like fun but makes a lasting impact in each individual as well as in each family.



Community vitality



Master Gardeners

- 400 Extension Master Gardener Volunteers
- Recorded over 27,628 hours of volunteer service
 - largest total number of volunteer hours ever recorded in Sedgwick County
- Attended over 6,103 hours of continuing education
- And shared that knowledge with over 96,242 residents of Sedgwick County
 - largest total number of contacts ever recorded in Sedgwick County - 4,000 more contacts than the record last year
- Garden Hotline assisted over 2,695 community members alone.
- This level of volunteer service is the equivalent to 13.3 full time extension staff positions donated in volunteer service.
- These volunteer hours are the equivalent of \$925,261.72 in salary cost savings through donated volunteer service.
 - The current estimated national value of each volunteer hour is \$33.49 according to independentsector.org
- A return dollar value equivalent of 112.1% of the Sedgwick County's total 2024 appropriation



Community vitality



Community Outreach Through Educational Booths

In order to help increase the educational outreach of the Extension Master Gardener Program in 2024, the program formed a new committee called the Community Booth Outreach Committee. This team was tasked with the goal of attending community events, and sharing research-based information related to water conservation, drought tolerant plants, supporting pollinators, invasive plants, and microgreens. Booths with these educational focuses were hosted at a total of 17 community events in 2024, allowing this committee to reach more than 3,908 total contacts in 2024.



Community Education Through Social Media

In order to help increase educational outreach in the community in 2024, the Extension Master Gardener Program formed a new committee to create educational content for social media platforms. Over the course of the year this team created 50 posts that were shared on Facebook and Instagram with residents of Sedgwick County that emphasized water conservation, timely gardening reminders, and best management practices. These horticulture posts had combined reach of over 101,647 total views from community members.

“Great info! I never knew this rose care tip!!!”

“Love what you do!”

“I’ve been wanting to do something like that. Now I have some references!”

Gardening Tip Of The Day



Water Deep & Infrequently

K-STATE Master Gardener
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Gardening Tip Of The Day

Sun Loving Perennials:



Shade Loving Perennials:



Consider Planting Colorful, Drought Tolerant Perennials

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Gardening Tip Of The Day



Continue To Monitor Plants For Drought Stress To Minimize Long-Term Damage

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Developing tomorrow's leaders



The National 4-H Council conducted an eight-year longitudinal study (2002-2010), surveying over 7,000 adolescents from diverse backgrounds across 42 U.S. states. This comprehensive study highlights the significant role 4-H plays in fostering positive youth development through its hands-on, experiential learning approach.



As part of the state's 4-H Thriving Model evaluation, 80 youth from Sedgwick County participated. Their responses aligned closely with the state findings.

Key findings:

- 84% feel a sense of belonging in the program.
- 82% report forming lifelong relationships.
- 94% say 4-H increased their social awareness and growth mindset.
- 97% report improved personal standards and greater contributions to the community.



Sedgwick County 4-H impacted over 3,258 youth through diverse programming. Open to youth ages 7 to 18, 4-H offers experiential learning opportunities that foster leadership, citizenship, and personal development.

Key initiatives include:

- 4-H Clubs: 16 clubs engage over 600 youth in leadership, project work, and livestock programs.
- School Enrichment Lessons: Research-based, hands-on learning taught in 16 schools and Envision Child Development Center, reaching more than 1,000 additional youth.
- In-School 4-H Clubs: Monthly classes in Wichita's special education classrooms.
- After-School Program: Daily 4-H activities for military youth at McConnell AFB, supported by professional development from 4-H staff.

Developing tomorrow's leaders



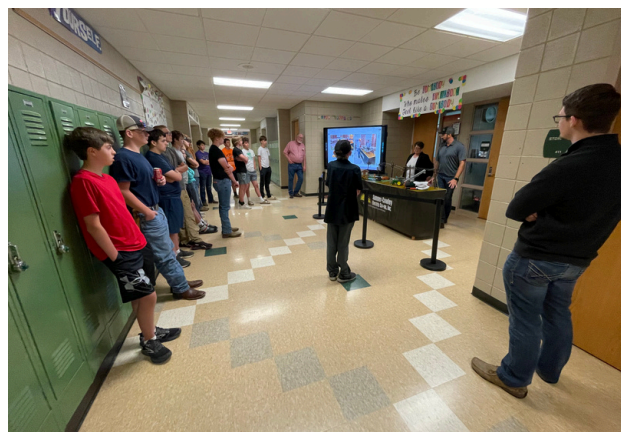
School & Community Gardening

The Extension Master Gardener Youth Education Committee conducted 3 different plant-centered School Enrichment lessons in a total of 58 classrooms, across 21 schools, and presented on plants to over 1,145 classroom students & adults.



Tractor safety

14 and 15 year olds planning to do farm work for someone other than a parent or guardian must take a tractor safety course following the U.S. Department of Labor requirements before being employed for certain hazardous farm tasks. Sedgwick County Extension offers this course each year.



Water



Water quality and water quantity are both major concerns for residents of Sedgwick County. The concerns were heightened in the summer of 2024, with the City of Wichita moving into Stage 2 Drought restrictions. This left citizens of Sedgwick County to navigate mandatory outdoor water use restrictions for all City of Wichita and municipal water users. In preparation of this, Horticulture Agents partnered with the City of Wichita to develop communication strategies to help educate citizens about both correct watering techniques and how to conserve water in the landscape.



Prior to the implementation of water restrictions, Extension agents worked with the City of Wichita to develop a communication plan in order to help educate citizens about both correct watering techniques and how to conserve water in the landscape. The efforts created websites such as SaveWichitaWater.com and Sedgwick.KSU.edu/Drought, which showcase research based watering information. These websites provided the community extensive lists of water conservation tips and resources, instructions for correct watering practices, videos, K-State publications, and other resources to manage water restrictions.

In addition to creating online resources, horticulture agents pivoted their programming in order to provide numerous public presentations and media interviews to address water conservation efforts. Agents participated in four City of Wichita City Council Meetings to deliver news briefings, delivered two statewide news releases to various media outlets, and have completed six separate TV interviews on water conservation tips for local news stations. These educational efforts helped the community reduce overall water usage by 14-18.5% per week since water restrictions were implemented, while also preserving the health and beauty of their landscapes and trees.

Water



K-State Garden Hour

The K-State Garden Hour is a free webinar series that helps the community increase their gardening knowledge and improve their gardening success. Since the K-State Garden Hour began in 2020, we have delivered a total 74 webinars in which over 88,737 people have participated.

In 2024, many of the webinars focused on the topics of drought and water conservation, including webinars on “Gardening for a Changing Climate” and “Understanding Water Sources for Your Garden”. In 2024 the K-State Garden Hour recorded over 4,830 unique registered participants, and over 13,115 total participant views, with Sedgwick County residents accounting for approximately 20% of total participants. As a result of these webinars, 70% of participants reported implementing five water conservation practices to reduce water use, and 72% of participants reported making five efforts to improve water quality.



Horticulture Industry Training

Throughout the year horticulture agents work with members of the horticulture Industry to provide training and support for local landscapers, arborists, greenhouses, garden centers, sports turf managers, and other green industry businesses. One such event was the 2024 Commercial Pesticide Applicator Training Workshop, hosted at the Sedgwick County Education Center. This educational event allowed commercial pesticide applicators from Sedgwick County and around the state of Kansas to attend classes related to pesticide safety and use, while also earning credits towards renewing their pesticide licenses. Over 275 horticulture industry participants attended the workshop. 165 of the participants were licensed pesticide applicators who collectively logged over 1,587 hours of recertification credits towards renewing their pesticide licenses. Another 110 participants were trained registered pesticide technicians continuing their education and on the job training. As a result of this training, 73% of participants planned to make changes to their horticultural practices.

“The most useful aspect of this workshop is that I learn something new every time. Very good speakers. The event was well-coordinated; with beneficial handouts.”

- workshop participant



Agents and staff



- JENNIFER BRANTLEY, PHD
DIRECTOR AND COMMUNITY VITALITY AGENT
- ELIZABETH BRUNSCHEEN-CARTAGENA
FAMILY LIFE AND RESOURCES AGENT
- ABBEY DRAUT
FOOD CROPS HORTICULTURE AGENT
- AMY DRAUT
EXPANDED FOOD AND NUTRITION (EFNEP) AGENT
- STEPHANIE HAYS
4-H AND YOUTH DEVELOPMENT AGENT
- MATTHEW MCKERNAN
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NUTRITION, HEALTH AND WELLNESS AGENT
- JEFFREY SEILER
AGRICULTURE AND NATURAL RESOURCES AGENT

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CATHY JONES - 4-H PROGRAM ASSISTANT

BARBARA WINGFIELD - 4-H OFFICE PROFESSIONAL

DEBRA HARRIES - MASTER GARDENER COORDINATOR

ANGIE BROOKS - AGRICULTURE/HORTICULTURE OFFICE PROFESSIONAL

JENNIFER EXLINE - FCS OFFICE PROFESSIONAL

JULIE CARVER - SHICK COORDINATOR

GAIL COGGINS - SHICK COORDINATOR

LINDSEY SIMON - SHICK ASSISTANT

SNAP-ED/EFNEP:

ALICIA BRUSTER, LAURIE CARR, NANCY GARDNER, HAYLEY CARILLO,
IRMA ROSAS

OLGA LESNIK - HEARTCORPS MEMBER

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Sedgwick County



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Kansas State University Agricultural Experiment Station and Cooperative Extension Service

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