

News Release

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Cooperative Extension Works to Improve Individual Health

New Study Highlights Impact of Cooperative Extension Programs in the North Central Region

WASHINGTON, DC – The North Central Cooperative Extension Association (NCCEA) issued a new study, prepared by the research organization Battelle, that highlights the importance of Family & Consumer Sciences (FCS) Extension. FCS Extension offers programming by Cooperative Extension, which provides non-formal education from the nation's land-grant universities to help Americans develop skills to live healthier and more productive lives. The study, titled *Analysis of the Value of Family & Consumer Sciences Extension in the North Central Region*, demonstrates the impact of FCS programming and prevention education by Cooperative Extension educators.

“Over 45 million Americans live in poverty; almost 79 million Americans are obese; and more than 117 million Americans face chronic health conditions. Since research-based prevention education programs are the cornerstone of our philosophies and methodologies, Extension educators and more specifically, FCS programs, are uniquely positioned to address these 21st century economic and health challenges,” said Dr. Chris Boerboom, Cooperative Extension Director at North Dakota State University and Regional Chair of NCCEA.

Nearly 40 percent of Americans worry about having enough money to pay their bills, and nearly 30 percent have saved less than \$1,000 for retirement. FCS Extension helps Americans develop basic financial management skills to assist with immediate financial problems and decision making. In 2014, Kansas FCS Extension provided education to Medicare beneficiaries to help them save \$26.69 on medical and prescription costs for every dollar spent on the program.

Innovative FCS Extension programs have also resulted in substantial economic returns for the Region. The Strengthening Families Program, developed by Iowa State University Extension, works to stop alcohol and substance abuse among 10-14 year olds. A paper published in the *Journal of Studies on Alcohol and Drugs* showed that the program generated long-term societal savings of \$9.60 for every \$1 spent.

Nationally, Cooperative Extension has been helping families make healthy choices since the late 1960s. The federally funded nutrition assistance program, Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program (EFNEP), is delivered by Extension across the country and in 2014, assisted nearly 63,000 individuals in the Region. The program cost \$14 million, and resulted in long-term cost savings over \$86 million. Through EFNEP and other nutrition education programs, FCS Extension likely reaches more people with nutrition education than any other source in the nation.

“FCS Extension employs a ‘train the trainer’ approach that focuses on sharing prevention education with service providers, teachers, and parents. By doing so, FCS multiplies its impact through a network of locally-based Extension educators,” said Daryl Buchholz, Associate Director of Extension at Kansas State University.

By training local community members who also provide assistance to target populations, FCS Extension maximizes the resources available in local communities. For example, the University of Nebraska-Lincoln developed an early learning program to help childcare professionals ensure that young children have the best possible learning environments. To date, more than 2,600 childcare professionals have participated, allowing them to bring the program to tens of thousands of children.

FCS Extension also coordinates with a vast network of government, non profit, and educational partners in local communities. FCS Extension is supported, in part, through funding from the U.S. Department of Agriculture’s (USDA) National Institute of Food and Agriculture.

The study reviewed the impact of 107 of FCS Extension programs and was organized around three primary areas of impact: Family and Human Development; Food, Nutrition, and Health; and Family Resource Management. FCS Extension programs help individuals, families, and communities change behavior, increase their life knowledge, and develop useful life skills, from stress management techniques to making healthy food choices for a family on a limited food budget. To read learn more about the study, please visit the [North Central Cooperative Extension Association \(NCCEA\)](#) or click [here](#).

For more information about the report:

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About Agriculture Is America (AgIsAmerica)

Agriculture is America. In short, the agriculture industry – sustained in large part by the American land-grant university system through Colleges of Agriculture, Agricultural Experiment Stations, and Cooperative Extension – is integral to jobs, national security, and health. To learn more, visit <http://agisamerica.org>.

About The North Central Cooperative Extension Association (NCCEA)

The North Central Cooperative Extension Association (NCCEA) is comprised of the Cooperative Extension Systems within the Land Grant Universities from the 12 north central states that include: University of Illinois, Iowa State University, Kansas State University, Michigan State University, University of Minnesota, University of Missouri, University of Nebraska, North Dakota State University, Ohio State University, Purdue University, South Dakota State University, and University of Wisconsin-Extension. NCCEA facilitates communication among its members, represents regional needs with their federal partners, and coordinates regional and multistate Extension activities.

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