

# EXTENSION FOND DU LAC COUNTY APRIL 2025 HIGHLIGHTS



**Extension**  
UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN-MADISON  
FOND DU LAC COUNTY

## COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

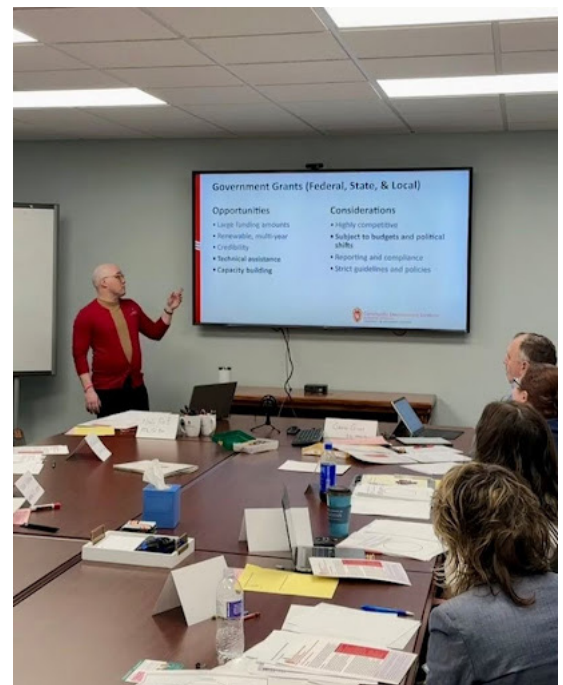


*Community Development provides educational programming to assist leaders, communities, and organizations realize their fullest potential. We work with communities to build the vitality that enhances their quality of life and enriches the lives of their residents. We educate in leadership development, organizational development, food systems, community economic development, local government education and much more. In short, the Community Development Institute plants and cultivates the seeds for thriving communities and organizations.*

*Noah Reif, Community Development Educator*

A non profit financial development workshop for nonprofit leaders with the Fond du Lac Area Foundation. The goal is to support local nonprofits in their own efforts to diversify their funding sources, build organizational capacity to meet expanding community needs, and become more financially sustainable.

A single-session workshop on Nonprofit Financial Development was held on March 26, 2025 and attended by 7 people from 6 organizations. The workshop covered different skills that are needed to effectively meet financial goals and create fiscally sustainable organizations. Participants were asked to fill out a pre-workshop evaluation where they would rank on a scale from 1 to 5, with 1 being the lowest and 5 being the highest, their fundraising skills, capacity to meet financial goals, ability to connect with potential donors, and organization's long term financial sustainability. After the session, they would be asked to answer the same questions. Evaluation shows that on the whole, participants feel more confident in their fundraising skills (3 of 5 before; 4.2 of 5 after), capacity to meet financial goals (4 of 5 before; 4.6 of 5 after), and ability to connect with donors (3.6 of 5 before; 4.2 of 5 after). Long term financial sustainability scored a 3.6 of 5 in the before and the after workshop evaluations. Participants were also asked to rate the educator's facilitation of the workshop on a scale from 1 to 5, with 1 being poor and 5 being outstanding. The educator's facilitation was rated as a 4.8 out of 5.



"I feel more equipped to tackle the financial goals my organization has. Specifically, the tools on donor engagement were very helpful! I also learned about some gaps in our sustainability practices that we can improve."

- Workshop Participant

## FOOD SECURITY, HEALTHY EATING, AND HEALTHY LIVING



*FoodWise* advances healthy eating habits, active lifestyles and healthy community environments for families with limited incomes through nutrition education at the individual, community and systems levels. *FoodWise* reaches individuals and families through local community partners by providing nutrition classes in-person and virtually, indirect education (newsletters, etc.), and social media/marketing. *FoodWise* is an obesity prevention program that addresses policy, system and environmental changes through local and state public health efforts.

*FoodWise* is federally funded by the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program-Education (SNAP-Ed) and the Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program (EFNEP).

*Health & Well-Being* works to catalyze positive change in Wisconsin families through evidence-based programs focused on nutrition, food security and safety, chronic disease prevention, mental health promotion, prevention of substance abuse and health insurance literacy. Local health coalitions efforts are supported by coalition capacity building tools and health equity frameworks. Rooted in both urban and rural communities, we're working together to help solve the state's most pressing well-being needs and to ensure that all Wisconsinites live stronger, healthier lives.

*Amanda Miller, FoodWise Coordinator, Health & Well-Being Educator*

Development of a new fruit and vegetable prescription program in collaboration with Network Health, Downtown Fond du Lac Partnership/farmers market, and the Fond du Lac Public Health. The goal is to increase access to local, healthy produce for community members experiencing food insecurity.

According to the 2024 Fond du Lac County health assessment, 52% of adults consume at least two servings of fruits in a day and 21% of adults consume at least three servings of vegetables in a day. The goal is to increase the fruit and vegetable intake of Fond du Lac County residents, which can contribute to prevention of overweight/obesity and chronic disease. For the past 7-8 years, Amanda Miller has collaborated with the Downtown Fond du Lac Farmers Market and Living Well FDL/ Fond du Lac County Public Health to implement a fruit and vegetable prescription program. These are evidence-based strategies to increase access to fresh, local produce among those that may have food insecurity. The general idea is that fresh produce is a healthy way to address health concerns, particularly identified by medical providers. Last summer, the team partnered with Network Health to develop a brand new fruit and vegetable program. Network Health committed to providing \$2,000 total in \$5 coupons that were distributed at healthcare clinics and local Fond du Lac County organizations, such as Boys and Girls, WIC, and the Senior Center (to name a few.) Recipients of the \$5 vouchers were able to redeem the prescriptions at the local farmers market. The group is currently planning this year's program. Last year, a total of 55%, or \$1,095 dollars in 219 vouchers was used to access fresh farmers market produce. The planning team hopes to increase that redemption rate even more this year with the new program by helping recipients better understand the vouchers they are receiving and to understand how to use them at the farmers market.



### YOUTH DEVELOPMENT



*Positive Youth Development* prepares the youth of today to become the effective, empathetic adults of tomorrow. Our research-based youth enrichment programs like teens in governance build youth and adult capacity and partnerships that help both sides grow. 4-H clubs, camps and after-school programs give young people the hands-on experiences they need to develop an understanding of themselves and the world.

#### **4-H**

*Tracy Keifenheim, 4-H Program Educator*

Based on the 2023, 4-H Thrive data for Fond du Lac County Sparks is one of the lowest scores. To increase the Sparks score, summer day camp programming is focused on specialized interest areas to promote project learning. Volunteers, youth leaders, and the 4-H program educator facilitated the 4-H LEGO Club. Keifenheim and youth leaders are working to continue LEGO Club with a transition in the youth leadership of the club. The LEGO club meets monthly with members to build skills and develop relationships around their LEGO spark! Youth leaders teach brick-building skills to members of the club. September is the first meeting of the new 4-H year so data will be collected throughout the year.

## HUMAN DEVELOPMENT AND RELATIONSHIPS



*The Extension Institute of **Human Development & Relationships** provides the tools Wisconsinites need to thrive as well-rounded, capable individuals and families. We support families in caring for each other in ways that promote growth and understanding. Our programs promote aging-friendly communities, coach effective parents and help families put technology, mindfulness and financial awareness to use.*

**Carol Bralich, Human Development and Relationships Educator**

Young people were reporting the need to learn life skills of useful information that they were missing in other aspects of their education to be prepared and ready for transition from high school or the foster care program into a college or career. The Fond du Lac Department of Human Services confirmed this need through the Independent Living Coordinator who works one on one with older foster care youth. With the collaboration of community partners and the evaluation results from focus groups conducted with participants from Fond du Lac and several other counties, we identified topics that rose to the top of need and interest to the young adults. Based on these topics, we planned a series of 6 workshops to address the top skills identified. Since Carol's start in Fond du Lac County in April 2024, the previous pilot program was revised using evaluation feedback of the 2023 participants, observations of the DHS independent living coordinator, and incorporated feedback from older youth who participated in focus groups this past summer with UW-Extension. The 2025 series was held February 19th – April 30th for 6 Wednesday sessions at 4:30 – 6:00 pm with nine participants. We have continued to grow and hope to continue to make these educational opportunities available to those that most need it. Our 2025 focus was to make the workshops interactive, engaging and welcoming to build a sense of community within these young people so they are aware of resources and networks of support. Program topics included money management, career exploration and post secondary education funding options, wellness, renting, transportation basics and employment readiness.



## AGRICULTURE



*If it happens on a farm or in a field, the Extension Institute of Agriculture works with you to achieve better results. Our innovative dairy management programs range from genetics to farm and business management. Extension researchers work hand-in-hand with row crop, forage and fresh produce growers to provide best practices for every aspect of the growing phase. We also advise communities on using sustainable practices to create inviting spaces free from invasive species.*

### Crops

*Liz Gartman, Regional Crops Educator*

Planning for a hybrid foundational crop scout training program for entry-level crop scouts. The goal is to provide the key skills necessary to scout row crop and forage fields for common pests, identify crop nutrient deficiencies, perform basic specimen sampling and communicate results to managers and farmers so that we can better identify and address economically important crop challenges in season.

- Crop scouts are an important piece of the crop management puzzle, and many of the crop scouts employed by farms, ag cooperatives and consultants need foundational skills to improve their work in the field. Typically they require training at a time their employers and mentors are busy with in season crop production work. After completing an internal training program for Extension Crops educators, we determine we could offer the program to an external audience.
- We are currently planning and will be executing a series of “Lunch & Learn” webinars that will be offered live and recorded. Each webinar will address a different basic skill related to crop scouting. After the webinar series is complete, a series of in person, in field training sessions will be hosted at the Arlington, Lancaster and Marshfield Research stations. The goal is to offer hands-on application of the skills taught.

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### Dairy

*Manuel Peña, Regional Dairy Educator*

Bovi-noticias is a collaboration between Educators on the Dairy team and Farm Management team. This bilingual (English & Spanish) newsletter was designed to support dairy farms and their employees. This publication delivers accessible, research-based information in both English and Spanish, aiming to; provide relevant, practical insights for workers, managers, and owners; Increase awareness of the “why” behind practices to encourage employee understanding and enhance engagement of dairy teams; Serving as a resource for team meetings, facilitating discussions between management and workers, and fostering problem-solving.

## AGRICULTURE CONTINUED

To address the identified need for accessible, research-based information for the diverse dairy workforce in Wisconsin, the Bovi-noticias e-newsletter has been developed. This bilingual (English and Spanish) publication directly responds to the challenge of ensuring all individuals involved in daily dairy operations have access to relevant and practical insights. By providing content in both languages, Bovi-noticias aims to overcome language barriers and promote a shared understanding of best practices across farm teams. Furthermore, the newsletter goes beyond simply providing information by explaining the “why” behind recommended practices. This approach fosters deeper comprehension and encourages greater engagement among employees, empowering them to contribute more effectively to farm goals. By serving as a resource for team discussions and problem-solving, Bovi-noticias facilitates better communication and collaboration between management and workers. Ultimately, this initiative directly responds to the need for a more informed, skilled, and engaged dairy workforce, which is crucial for improving animal health, optimizing resource utilization, enhancing farm efficiency, and increasing profitability within the Wisconsin dairy industry.

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