



Extension

UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN-MADISON
OCONTO COUNTY



ANNUAL REPORT 2022



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University of Wisconsin-Madison Extension Oconto County

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UW-MADISON EXTENSION

CONNECTING COMMUNITIES *with* THE UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN

As a statewide engagement arm of UW–Madison, the Division of Extension embodies the Wisconsin Idea to extend university knowledge to every corner of the state. That mission started in 1912 with Extension’s first agent making farm visits and continues today along with community and business development, youth engagement, and well-being programming. Our statewide network of educators and specialists with the UW–Madison College of Agricultural & Life Sciences and on UW campuses across Wisconsin is responding every day to emerging and longstanding hurdles residents are overcoming to compete and prosper. We’ve identified key opportunities to leverage local resources and leading research to affect change and improve lives through:

Supporting Wisconsin’s Agriculture Industry »

We use applied research from UW-Madison’s College of Agricultural and Life Sciences in addition to other Campuses along with educational outreach to support an economically viable agricultural industry that produces safe food in an environmentally responsible manner.

Fostering Leadership and Civic Engagement»

We work with communities across the state to support individuals, groups, and organizations to enhance quality of life and improve overall well-being, leading to stronger communities today and for generations to come.

Creating Positive, Healthy Change »

We catalyze positive change in Wisconsin families through evidence-based programs focused on nutrition, food security, food safety, chronic disease prevention, mental health, and substance misuse.

Empowering Families and Communities »

We support families in caring for each other in ways that promote growth and understanding, enhance aging-friendly communities, coach effective parents, and help families put technology, mindfulness, and financial awareness to use.

Enhancing Resilient Natural Resource Systems»

We help individuals and communities make informed decisions that support the state’s rich land, water, and mineral resources. We’re working to ensure that our resources remain at the heart of our communities, economies, and state identity.

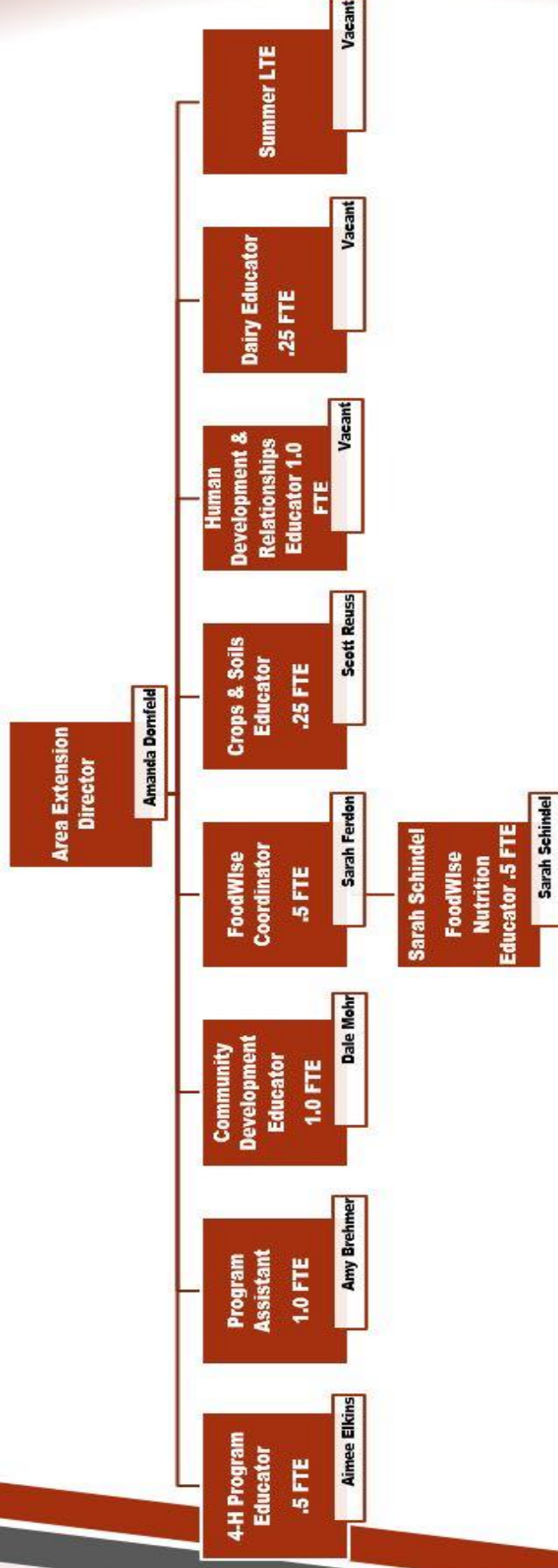
Furthering Positive Youth Development»

We prepare the youth of today to become effective, empathetic leaders of tomorrow. From teens advising local government to Wisconsin 4-H clubs, we offer diverse educational opportunities that put youth on the path to success in Wisconsin and beyond..

Home Committee»

Extension reports to the Land & Water Resources committee. They meet the first Tuesday after the first Monday of each month. The members of the committee are; Chris Augustine, Tim Cole, Wayne Kaczrowski, Pat Scanlan, and Keith Schneider.

Extension Organization Chart





Agriculture

Agriculture Programming: The regional model

2022 Agricultural Extension programming was delivered primarily through the new regional educator model. Scott Reuss served Crops/Soils programming needs (Langlade, Lincoln, Marinette, Oconto & Shawano) and Kimberly Schmidt served Dairy programming needs (Marinette, Oconto, Shawano) until her departure in August. A new dairy educator position is being hired in 2023 to serve Oconto County, along with Shawano, Outagamie, and Winnebago. Horticulture programming is not generally delivered through this model.

One manner through which farms and agricultural service providers can easily access Extension programming is through the array of webinars offered each year in the areas of Livestock, Dairy, Farm Management, Forage Management, and Crops Management. The webinars are one way which Extension programming is able to reach producers across the entire state with top-notch presentations and the newest research results. Reuss co-coordinates the Focus on Forage and Badger Crop Connect webinar series, offered 2x/month from February through October.

A driver of high quality programming and increased efficiency is working with others to reach larger audiences and offer pertinent events. Cooperators include the Green Bay West Shores Demonstration Farm Network, Land & Water Conservation, Farm Service Agency & NRCS, and many producer groups.



Producers, fire fighters, and agronomic professionals at the Manure Spill Response Demonstration Day conducted August 30th, 2022. 80 attendees trained to better respond to manure spills. Example of added services able to provided through Extension partnership with counties. Event held between Coleman and Lena

Ag Research

Research data drives Extension educational information. Reuss adds to local and state-wide programming by conducting many different on-farm research projects.

2022 projects included:

- Winter wheat nitrogen and sulfur rate effects on yield;
- Five sites of biological product effects on corn yield and nitrogen needs;
- Nitrogen rates/sources effect on winter triticale yield; Site also in place for 2023 data collection.
- Local sites or data collection for WI Alfalfa Yield and Persistence project, regional copper levels study, national boron soil and forage study.



Agriculture

Crops/Soils Programs delivered in 2022

Locally conducted field days and events still drive Extension programming at the county level. Two examples of high-impact programs brought into the region via Extension in 2022 were the Manure Spill Response Demonstration Day and the Soil Health Field Day held at the Harmony Arboretum. Nearly all local events feature out-of-county Extension/UW System personnel or resources.

Alfalfa and corn silage harvest management projects are a key component of forage educational programming. These projects help forage producers achieve optimal forage quality and production on their alfalfa and corn silage acres

Many programming topics were delivered through events held in or very near Oconto County. Focal topics included Pesticide Applicator Training, Youth Machinery and Tractor Safety Certification, Employee Safety Training, Cropping Systems Economics, Land Rent Contracting, Winter Wheat Management, Fertilizer Management, Winter annual forage management, Corn Silage Management, Nitrogen management, and others. Additionally, many producers contact Reuss directly to get topic-specific information or to request in-field consultations regarding problem situations. In total, Reuss directly contacted approximately 500 Oconto County residents via agricultural programming efforts, approximately 125 individuals through early-year horticultural programming, and indirectly through the following methods:

- Monthly radio show (1st Friday, 8-9 a.m. on WOCO) to discuss agricultural situation, programming, and Q & A.
- Information via displays at the Breakfast on the Farm and County Fair.
- Mass media articles on pertinent agricultural topics.

Contact:

Scott Reuss

Crops and Soils Extension Educator

Langlade, Marinette, Oconto, and Shawano Counties

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What challenges does 2023 hold for producers? Pest outbreaks (tar spot from 2022 pictured above), drought, excess moisture? Extension is ready to help producers meet those challenges.

Program Area Goals for 2023

The overall goal of 2023 programming is to maximize on-farm profitability and year to year sustainability. Specific goals include:

- Maximizing crop income return to fertilizer investment,
- Maximize farm return to forage production through optimized harvest timing and storage.
- Minimizing opportunity for nitrates to enter ground water from crop fertilization practices.
- Improving agronomic practices (planting date, rate, selection) in all crops
- Document realities of cropping practice changes, such as use of cover crops and alternative forage species.
- Utilize on-farm sites to gather production and economic data for specialty crop production.





Community Development



Extension

UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN-MADISON

BRINGING COLLABORATION & COST EFFECTIVE SOLUTIONS TO OCONTO COUNTY THROUGH...

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT,

ORGANIZATIONAL & LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT,

& LOCAL GOVERNMENT CAPACITY BUILDING

My Mission: To work alongside you to identify critical local needs, strategize doable solutions, organize responses, create actionable steps, and roll up my sleeves to make positive things happen and to positively transform your local organization, business or community."

My Purpose:

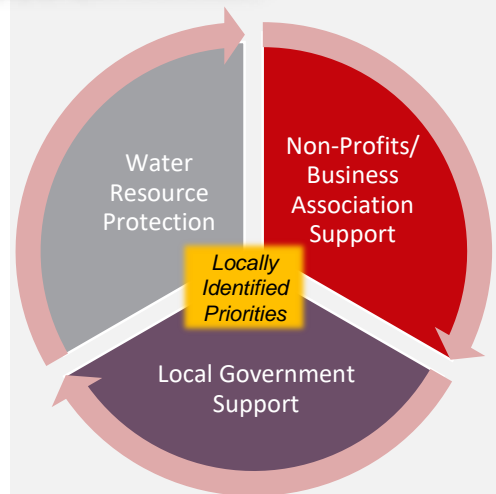
- ☐ Cutting local costs to mandated services;
- ☐ Training Local Officials to maximize their community resources;
- ☐ Collaborating with County Depts. to lower their project costs;
- ☐ Supporting non-profits to lower costs and save resources.

KEY LOCAL PROJECTS IN 2022:

1. **Town of Morgan**, Educational programs on responding to Large Solar Field; Taught/Drafted Resolution of community concerns.
2. **Working with Local Municipal Courts** to offer a Restorative Justice Program reaching from City of Oconto to Suring;
3. **Collaboration with Land & Water Conservation Dept.** in studying local lakes and cost sharing resources teaming up to bring in \$100,000 for the study;
4. **Local Government Education** – 'One-on-One' Plan Commission Trainings/workshops for Local Government Officials dealing with controversial land use issues;
5. **Working with local officials & the Mountain Historical Society** to preserve and rehab the historic 'Green Lake National Forest Park' site and Fireman's Park.
6. **Team Effort working on strategies** to attract the National Estuarine Research Reserve, OCLAWA; OCEDC; C. Oconto; Oconto Historical Society.



Dale Mohr,
Your County Agent.



PEOPLE SERVED:

370 Riparian Owners
and 30 Lake organizations;
25 Local Government Officials;
15 Non-Profit Members;
7 Youth Jurors, 11 Youth Court Cases;
11 Local entrepreneurs;

PARTNERED WITH:

- Local Municipal Judges & Law Enforcement;
- County Staff/Department Heads;
- Wis. Department of Natural Resources;
- UW-Stevens Point;
- OCEDC/Tourism;
- Oconto County Lakes & Waterways Assoc.

GRANTS PARTNERED ON:

WDNR Grant \$100,000;
Oconto County Healthy Waters Grants.



Community Development

PRESERVING SURFACE WATERS THROUGH THE COLLABORATION OF MULTIPLE AGENCIES ...

- FUNDED IN LARGE PART BY WDNR GRANTS \$700,000

Going on the 8th year since our concerned group of residents identified the need ***“to have the healthiest waters in Wisconsin”*** our team of UW-Extension, Land & Water Conservation Departments, non-profits, lake Associations & Districts, UW – Stevens Point, WI Department of Natural Resources, and Oconto County Lakes and Waterways Assoc., have pooled our limited resources and at no actual costs to the county and have studied more than 48 lakes regarding their respective ecosystems while gathering information about the hopes and concerns of property owners and lake users.

This year our efforts included six Planning meetings and five interactive Meet the Scientist events with land owners. Additionally, we review annually work projects/concerns with each lake group to provide assistance and gauge progress. More than 800 mailings to residents informed them of the study and how to gain access to data and maps. The WI DNR has funded our efforts for years because we are successful in reaching out, in collaborating in our efforts, able to minimize costs and provide a valuable service to the county's residents & State's resources.



Dale Mohr UW-Extension & Ken Dolata L&WCD taking Dissolved Oxygen readings on frozen lakes as part of the research data gathering

TEEN COURT COMPLETES ANOTHER YEAR!



Teen Court is established within the Wisc. State Statutes, affording local Judiciaries the option to defer a judgment in lieu of sanctions completed. In short, this is a second chance for youth ages 10 to 17 yrs. ***Dale Mohr*** provides this County service (each month during the evening at the Courthouse) which promotes volunteerism, leadership opportunities, team building, and community healing with the Teen Jury.

This year we were successful in meeting the needs of the local municipalities in offering alternatives to municipal citations. Eleven teens went through the program completing individualized sanctions designed to help them give back to the community, make amends with any victims and to improve their own self growth.

One of our biggest advocates passed away this year, Honorable Judge Michael Bake. His support and encouragement will be missed.

“I rely on this program to encourage kids to become future law abiding citizens. Over the years, of all the juveniles I have referred to Teen Court, very few are repeat offenders.”

- Michael Bake, Judge, Oconto Municipal Court

Our goal remains the same... to be able to take ***Teen Court*** beyond the County Courthouse and into the local communities, promoting safer neighborhoods while growing future leaders.



Positive Youth Development

When you join 4-H, you're a part of something big! 4-H is the **nations largest youth development organization**, with more than six million members and over 90,000 clubs across the nation. We provide a place for all kids to reach their full potential. They're able to see the world beyond themselves through hands-on, research-based experiences in every corner of Wisconsin.

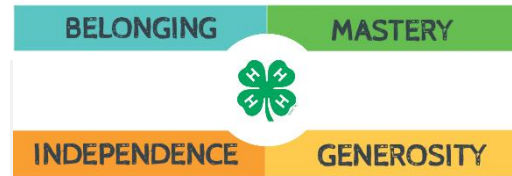
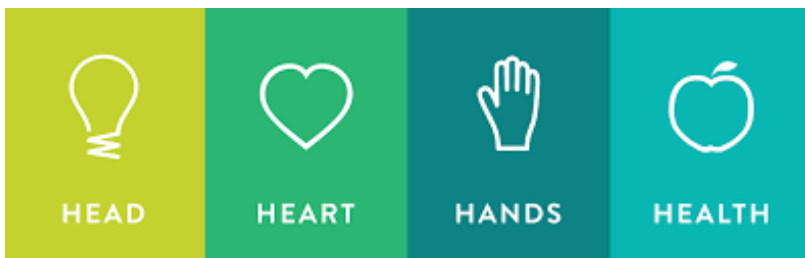
Most 4-H youth and the adults who care about them get their start with a 4-H club in their community. Based on their interests and guided by adult mentors, youth develop their own pathway.

In Wisconsin alone, there are more than 500 distinct project-based activities to spark lifelong learning, including: Science, technology, engineering and math, civic engagement, health programs, agriculture, and more!

Clubs can meet in a variety of settings so we can support youth where they are in the community, in schools, after school, and in military settings. In the past year the Oconto County 4-H program has seen significant growth in current clubs as well as the addition of some in-school pilot program clubs. The in-school clubs include, a Kinder-clover exploration club, as 2nd grade scientist club, and a 5th grade crochet special interest club.

You can see our current enrolled membership to the right, which shows a significant increase in our enrolled youth since last year. This year a marketing flyer was developed and distributed to all county schools to promote the program in a 4-H enrollment is open year round, so we expect the number of enrolled youth to continue to rise.

In addition to the club experience 4-H youth can take part in camps, educational travel experiences, workshops, virtual programs, take and learn kits, and much more, as they explore their sparks.



290

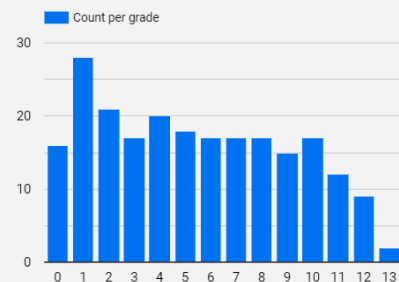
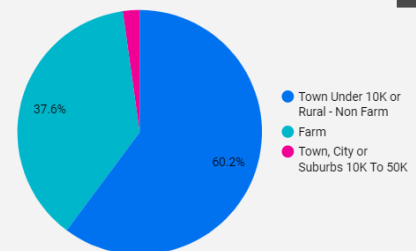
Youth Club Members

32

Dedicated Adult Volunteers

14

Active Clubs





Positive Youth Development

The Oconto County 4-H Program offers a variety of educational opportunities throughout the year. A list of program highlights can be found below:

- In Person Summer School (OES)
- Community Career Fair
- Pollinator and Sunflower Plots (Meadowbrook Farm)
- State-wide Virtual Learning Community
- Oconto County Youth Fair
- School Marketing Campaign
- Creative Arts Festival
- * Winter Teen Leadership Camp
- * County Wide State Fair Trip
- * Take and Learn Kits
- * Family Fun Nights (Gamblers Game etc.)
- * Project Learning Days
- * Camp Counselor Training
- * Monthly Community Family Night



Left to right: -Oconto Co. Representatives at Teen Leadership Camp - Hibernations lesson for Kinder-Clovers in-school club - Science Experiment at Monthly family night, -Annual Acrylic Painting Project Night

In addition to providing support and programming to my local 4-H programs I have been able to participate on several teams and workgroups to support 4-H at the state and National levels, which have led to several professional opportunities including:

- Chair of the WI 4-H Program Quality Youth Thriving Sub-committee
- Member of WI 4-H Youth Thriving Model Evaluation Team
- Lead Presenter for WI 4-H Youth Thriving Model and National Extension Conference on Volunteerism- Lexington , KY in May
- Representative on WI 4-H Staffing Plan Team
- Recipient of the following WI Professional Awards all moved on for regional and national consideration: Communicator Award-Promotional Piece (Oconto School District Flyer), Excellence in Peer Professional Development Team Award (WI Thriving Academy- moved on for), Susan Barkmann Research Award, (WI Thriving Model Eval. Team)



Contact:

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Healthy Choices, **Healthy Lives**

FoodWise is federally funded by the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program-Education (SNAP-Ed) and the Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program (EFNEP). We advance healthy eating habits, active lifestyles and healthy community environments for Wisconsin residents with limited incomes through nutrition education at the individual, community and systems levels.

The **Landscape**

81.1%

of population lives in census tracts that are low income & have low access to healthy foods



35%

of adults have obesity



9%

of individuals are food insecure



8.11%

of households receive SNAP benefits



Achieving More **Together**



UW-Madison Division of Extension works alongside the people of Wisconsin to deliver practical educational programs where people live and work – on the farm, in schools and throughout urban and rural communities. In Oconto County, FoodWise partners with schools, after-school programs, Head Start programs, senior meal programs, and food pantries to help make the healthy choice the easy choice in our communities.

Community Impacts **In 2022**



Delivered nutrition education to 373 learners in a variety of settings (early care and education centers, K-12 school settings, food pantries, etc).

Implemented the Harvest of the Month campaign in the Gillett School District reaching students, parents & caregivers with messages in English & Spanish to promote eating Wisconsin-grown fruits & vegetables.

Partnered with 4-H to provide healthy nutrition lessons to summer school students in the Oconto School District.

Strong Bodies!

A series of Strong Bodies classes were held at the Bond Community Center in Oconto in an effort to reach our aging population and provide beneficial strength training classes.

- These classes are designed for older adults and focus on weight training, balance, and flexibility. This program can be modified for any ability level and welcomes all fitness levels.
- A special thank you to the Bond Community Center for supporting this program and providing the space and equipment.



Support and interest in this program continue to grow and participants note that "I had no idea how out of shape I was," and "I'm so glad I found this class, it works so well for me."

Connect With Us

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Sarah Ferdon
Nutrition Coordinator



Sarah Schindel
Nutrition Educator

Farmer's Market

FoodWise connected with many community partners to offer a second year of the Farmer's Market in Oconto Falls.

- A donation system was established where market clients and vendors could donate produce to the Kingdom Come Food Pantry right at the market.
- The donated produce was then distributed to food pantries in the northern half of Oconto, where there is no market and produce donations are very limited.
- This effort was instrumental in increasing donations and consumption of fruits and veggies to all pantry clients throughout the County.
- A new community garden is in the works to further this effort and increase the available produce at the pantries even more.





Extension

UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN-MADISON
OCONTO COUNTY



Mandi Dornfeld
Area Extension Director –
Marinette, Menominee,
Oconto and Shawano
Counties

Through UW-Madison Division of Extension, the people of the state and beyond can access university resources and engage in learning, wherever they live and work. As you can see by this annual report our educational team continues to adapt and meet the needs of those who live and work within Oconto County. We continue to utilize digital educational opportunities for connection and education as well as relying upon the solid foundation of relationships to support our partners and participants.

Our future looks strong and resilient for this next year as we look to hire a regional Dairy Educator and a Human Development and Relationships educator to expand the reach and services of our office.

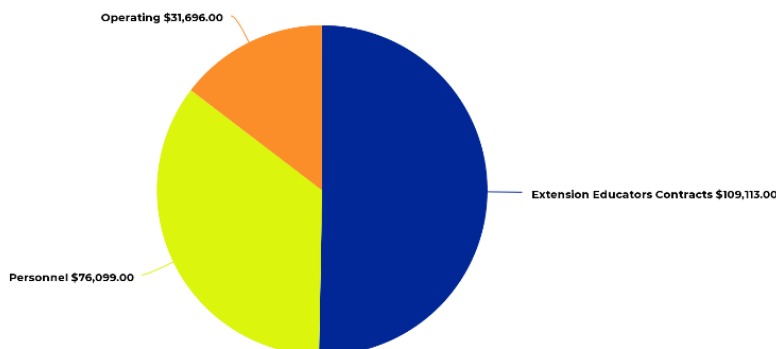
Extension's funding includes a combination of county, state, federal, as well as research/programming funds. During 2022, Oconto County continued the contract with Extension agreeing to co-fund faculty and staff through a flat fee for services. This flat fee covers a portion of each educator's salary and benefits. In addition, Extension also provides resources such as the area director, state specialists, professional development, human resources, onboarding support, as well as technical and programming support to assist our educators in meeting the educational needs of this county.

As a new Area Director in Oconto county, I am proud to share this work with you. We are grateful for the support and collaboration.

With gratitude,

Mandi Dornfeld

UW-Extension Expenditures 2022 - \$216,908



Educational Program Areas

Agriculture

Community Development

Human Development &

Relationships-Returning SOON

4-H Youth Development

FoodWise

Budgeted - \$243,248

Expenditures - \$216,908

Budget Unspent - \$26,340*

*Salary savings from open positions and programming



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