



# 2021 CYFAR Annual Report

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2021

CYFAR

Publications

# 2021 CYFAR Annual Letter

The Children, Youth, and Families At-Risk (CYFAR) Program is funded by the National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA). CYFAR, a program of the Institute of Youth, Family, and Community in the Division of Youth and 4-H, marshals the resources of the of the land-grant and Cooperative Extension systems so that, in collaboration with other organizations, they can develop and deliver educational programs to youth who are at risk for not meeting basic human needs. Projects are designed such that the at-risk child is at the center of the programming efforts. The CYFAR Program has an impact on the nearly 40% of children in the United States who live in families with incomes at or below 200% of the federal poverty level.

At-risk youth who participate in programs such as CYFAR are likely to improve social skills, increase academic achievement, increase self-esteem, and increase self-efficacy, according to Youth.gov. Many of the participating states with associated outcomes measure these constructs. These outcomes indicate improvement in psychological and behavioral constructs.

The CYFAR Program is aligned with USDA's Goal 4 (facilitate rural prosperity and economic development) and the Research, Education, and Economics (REE) Action Plan Goals 4 and 6 (nutrition and childhood obesity and education and science literacy).

State projects in 2021 pivoted to accommodate the social distancing challenges of COVID-19. The act of pivoting produced favorable outcomes for program participants across the country. Many stories regarding the impact of pivoting are included in this CYFAR Annual Report.

The CYFAR Professional Development and Technical Assistance (PDTA) Center, housed at the University of Minnesota and Pennsylvania State University, produced the CYFAR Return on Investment (ROI) Study (<https://www.nifa.usda.gov/sites/default/files/resources/CYFAR-ROI%20Study-2021.pdf>). The study explores potential positive returns from the CYFAR Initiative's financial investment. A 1-year investment by CYFAR totaling \$348.31 has the potential to produce a net benefit ranging from \$361.69 to \$1,781.69. The cost-benefit analysis conducted for this ROI study suggests there is a potential for a positive return on the CYFAR Initiative's financial investment.

The CYFAR 4-H Military Partnership PDTA Program with North Carolina State University identified topics and technical assistance needed by Extension 4-H military liaisons and local Extension 4-H staff to support training for military child and youth program staff members who work directly with military-connected families.

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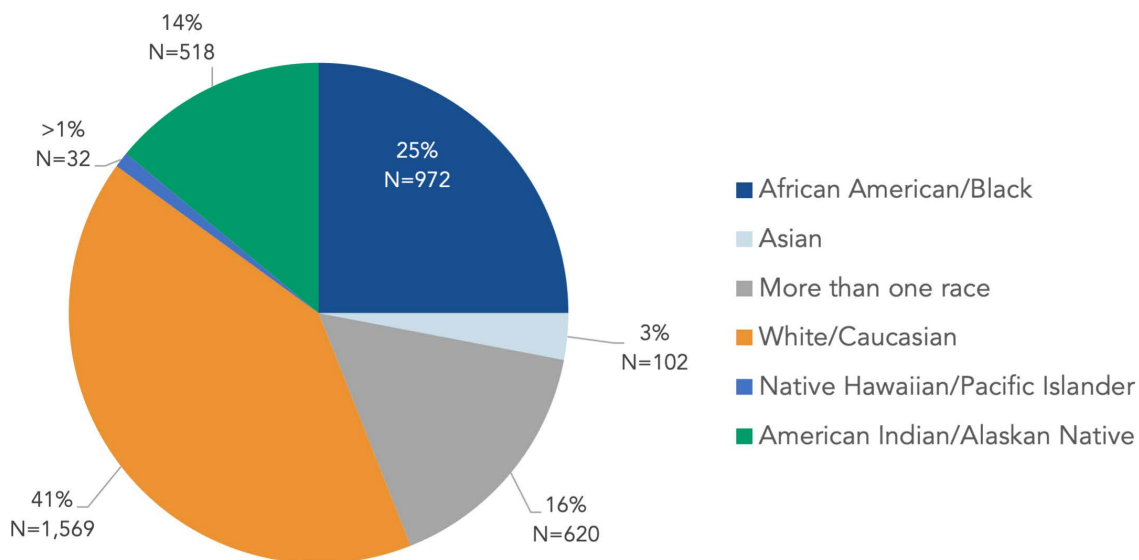
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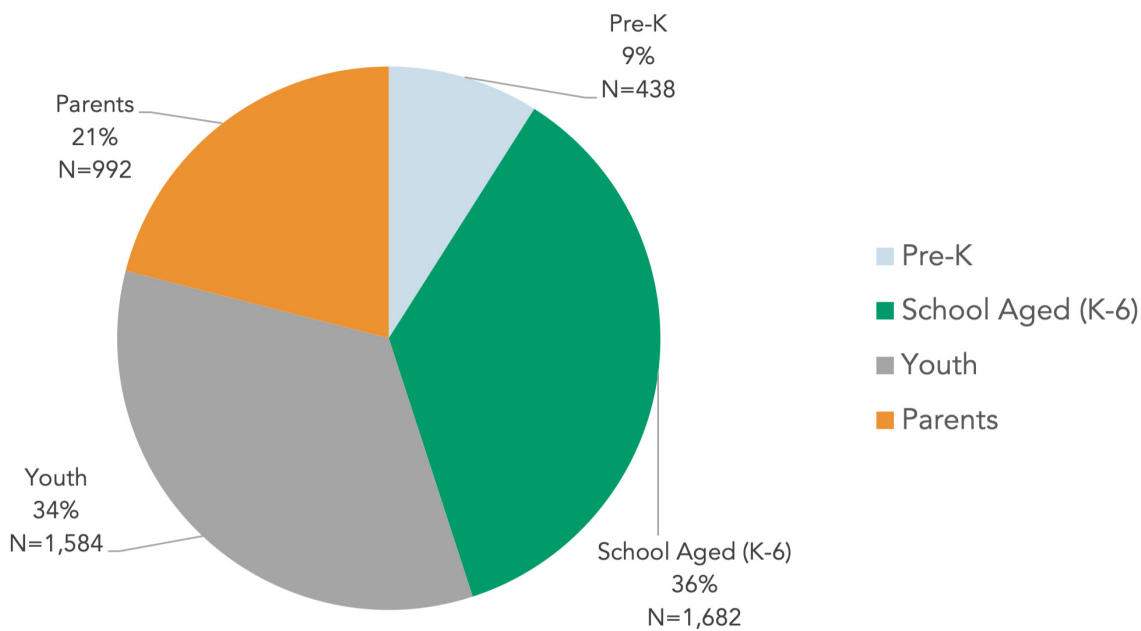
# CYFAR

## Demographics

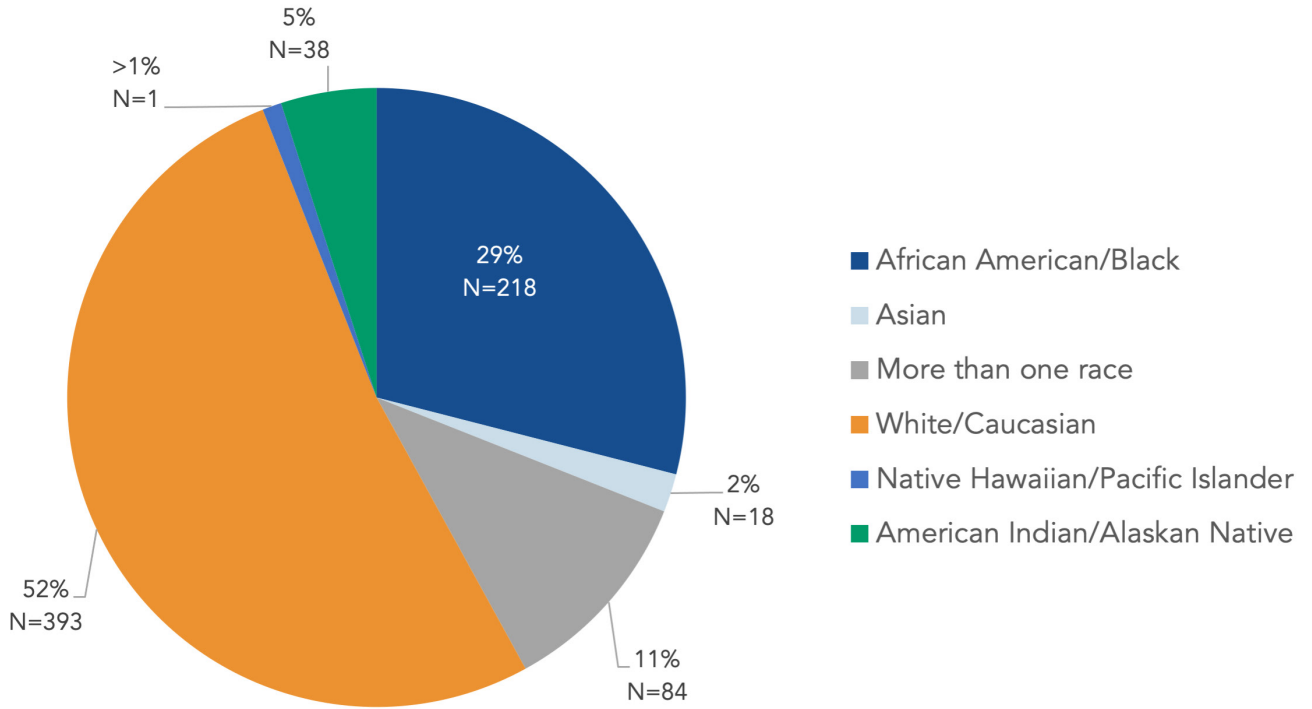
### Participants - Race



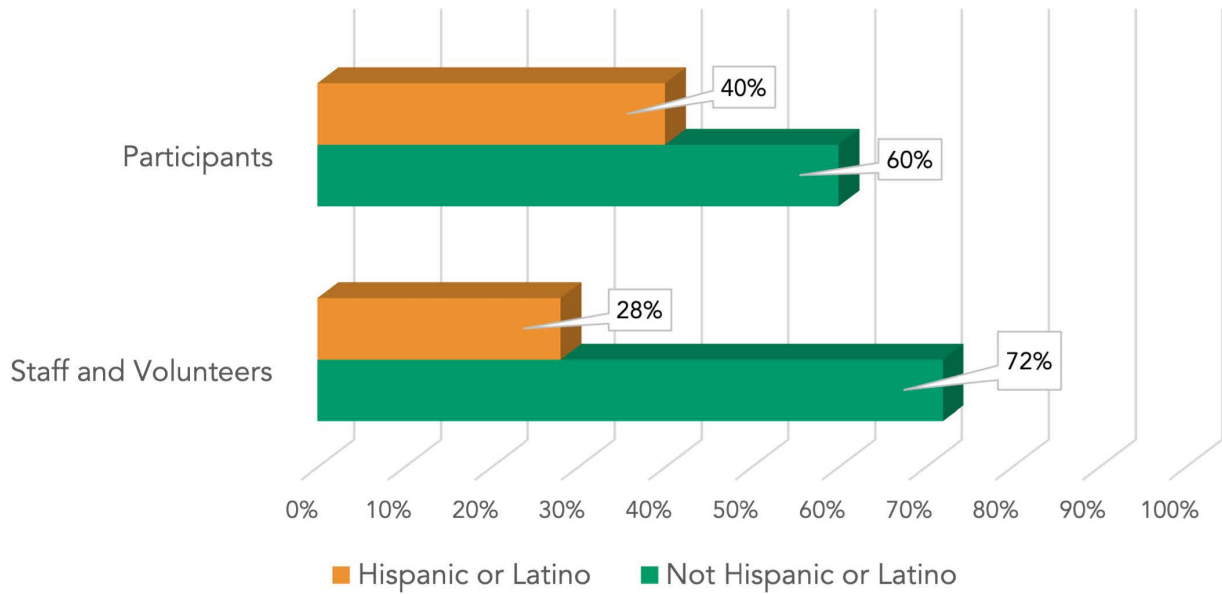
### Participants - Age



### Staff and Volunteers - Race



### Participants, Staff, and Volunteers - Ethnicity



# CYFAR

## Poverty Data

State	Project Name	Percentage of Youth Served in Poverty (>50%)
Alaska	4-H Dream Catchers Sustainable Community Project	99%
California & Nevada	4-H SNAC	97%
Kentucky	Uplift: Empowering Today's Youth for Tomorrow's Future	67%
Maine	Maine 4-H Community Central: Engaging Teens in College Readiness and Workforce Development	74%
Minnesota	Minnesota 4-H Youth Development CYFAR Project: STEAM Connect Club	80%
Montana	Montana Sustainable Communities: Social, Emotional, and Physical Wellness for Rural and Native American Youth (SEP)	62%
Nebraska	Youth Civic Engagement	73%
Nevada	Stepping Into STEM	80%
New York	4-H Unity	92%
North Carolina & Idaho	The Juntos Sustainable Community Project	73%
North Dakota	Building Community Capacity and Resilience through 4-H in ND Tribal Nations	100%
Ohio	Seed to Bloom (StB) 4-H S.T.E.A.M. Sustainable Community Project	100%
Ohio	Southside Simple Suppers Scale-up (S4): Expansion of Validated Family Meals Program for At-Risk Children and Youth	56%

State	Project Name	Percentage of Youth Served in Poverty (>50%)
Oklahoma	Unidos Se Puede	95%
Oklahoma	The United We Can: African American Youth Entrepreneurship Program	95%
Rhode Island	A Multi-Level Youth Out-of-School Intervention Stemming from Foods	78%
South Carolina	Clemson-South Carolina State Sustainable Community Project	100%
Tennessee	Tennessee SCP	100%
Texas	Growing U	93%
Texas	Prairie View A&M University Sustainable Community Project	92%
Vermont	Vermont Youth PROSPER	72%
Wisconsin	Wisconsin Sustainable Communities: The Growing Connections Program	53%
Wisconsin	Nia: Pathways and Purpose for the Future	100%

# CYFAR Budget

The total budget for the CYFAR Program equaled \$8,395,000, representing 37 Sustainable Community Projects (SCPs). These SCPs represented 79% (\$6,556,000) of the budget; this is inclusive of both new and continued awards. Eligible universities included both 1862, 1890, and 1994 Institutions. Funds provided support to county 4-H professionals for military youth programs in all state programs; the amount of funding for 4-H military programs accounted for \$550,000, or 6%, of the budget. The professional development and technical assistance for the CYFAR SCPs represented \$950,685, or 11%, of the budget dedicated to the PDTA Center. Agency overhead made up \$335,800, or 4%, of the budget.



2021 **CYFAR**  
Impact Statements







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Asking for help is a big part of being successful.  
– Youth Participant

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## Minnesota 4-H Youth Development CYFAR Project: STEAM Connect Club

USDA Strategic Goal 4

CYFAR Topic Area: Leadership Development, Parenting, Science, and Workforce Preparation

**Program Report:** Somali American youth and families need programs that celebrate their strengths, cultivate a sense of belonging, build social inclusion, and create opportunities for parents and their teens to develop a closer connection to one another while promoting educational and developmental pathways. Specifically, they need opportunities to address what community members have identified as the cultural gap between American-born teens and their Somali-born parents. In response, the Minnesota 4-H CYFAR team designed a joint youth and family program model that has three key elements: (a) Ka Joog 4-H STEAM Connect Clubs ignite youth interest in science, technology, engineering, arts, and mathematics and help them imagine and plan their education. The extracurricular club setting helps youth foster healthy peer relationships. It targets 60 Somali American teens living in Minneapolis and Moorhead, Minnesota. (b) Youth deepen their learning through a 4-day summer residential campus immersion experience at the University of Minnesota Twin Cities and Crookston campuses. They learn about student life, explore academic interests, identify steps toward college readiness, and meet faculty and students in STEAM fields. (c) Parents and guardians participate in seven 2-hour Partnering for School Success sessions to gain resources to help them connect with their children and support their education.

**Lessons Learned:** Zoom in many ways impeded the natural social interaction that often occurs among youth when in person. Youth workers learned to be prepared with specific icebreakers or games to promote social belonging among the youth. One leader expressed that online learning made it so she had to plan meticulously and switch activities frequently. The rate at which other organizations serving Somali youth have committed to carry out the same program model suggests that our programming meets a specific need for the Somali community at this moment in time. The quality of our programs seems to lie in its academic and higher education focused content, its culturally responsive space for Somali youth, and the presence of Somali youth workers who can understand the needs and assets of both the youth they serve and their parents. Because the campus immersion program is being implemented in so many new contexts (virtual, subject matter, community college), we will undergo a series of quality assessments with our colleagues in an effort to strengthen the model in its implementation in diverse settings.

**Sustainability Statement:** Both the University of Minnesota Extension 4-H and Ka Joog have developed staffing plans that allows for a continued collaboration, with the biggest asset being a Ka Joog staff member specifically assigned to build and manage 4-H programs. New funding sources are being sought. Further new partnerships that can provide safe community spaces are being developed; for example, the Hennepin County Library system is interested in hosting two 4-H clubs and possibly investing some funds to support program staffing. The campus immersion program model is being shared and replicated within the state of Minnesota and supported by local funding sources. For example, there is an animal science campus immersion program, an engineering campus immersion program, and an agronomy-focused campus immersion program done in partnership with community colleges.

## Stepping Into STEM

USDA Strategic Goal 1

CYFAR Topic Area: Parenting, Science, and Technology

**Program Report:** Early exposure to STEM, whether in school or at home, supports children's overall academic growth, develops early critical thinking and reasoning skills, and enhances later interest in STEM study and careers. Latino children are particularly at risk for not developing strong STEM skills. The primary purpose of Stepping Into STEM was to increase young Latino children's knowledge of, interest, and engagement in STEM activities and to encourage and teach Spanish-speaking parents to be positive forces for their children's early STEM learning as they enter and progress through school. The project focused on two target communities (Reno and Las Vegas) defined as zip code neighborhoods that contain several high-risk elementary schools. Target families already or soon will have children attending these schools. The project consisted of an 8-week series of hands-on, interactive parent-child workshops during which children were exposed to and engaged in a variety of foundational STEM activities. The workshops focused on foundational math, science, engineering, and technology skills. We reached over 1,000 families during the 5 years of the project with over 12,660 hours of contact time. The Integrated Program Components were addressed through multigenerational and multisystem designs; technology-integrated curriculum, staff training, and connectivity; and community collaboration and train-the-trainer efforts. Evaluation included assessments of children's interest in and knowledge

of STEM concepts, children's STEM skill improvement, engagement of children in STEM activities, parent practices and confidence, homeschool connections, growth in number of community partnerships and school sites implementing the program, and program sustainability.

**Lessons Learned:** After COVID-19, we started providing our programming both virtually and in person as requested by our collaborating agencies. With virtual classes, we noticed more consistent family attendance ( $M = 6.61$  out of 7 total sessions compared to  $M = 5.00$  in past in-person series), younger and older siblings participating in the virtual classes, and an uptick in father participation likely due to the sessions being held late weekday afternoons and Saturdays. In addition, parents were excited to send photos of the STEM activities they did with their children at home during the week.

**Sustainability Statement:** Since this is our last year with the CYFAR, progress on sustainability will occur primarily through collaborations with our community partners. We have had initial discussions with our Extension director and other administration staff about continued Extension funding in the future.



“ I learned how to teach my daughter the right skills for the STEM program from different activities at home at an early age. ”

# Vermont Youth PROSPER

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*USDA Strategic Goal 1  
CYFAR Topic Area: Parenting*

**Program Report:** PROmoting School-Community-University Partnerships to Enhance Resilience (PROSPER) is an evidence-based delivery system that builds strong families and helps youth avoid risky behaviors. PROSPER's design includes building and supporting a community team, which then supports the delivery of two evidence-based programs. Botvin LifeSkills Training is delivered to all seventh graders during the school day, and Strengthening Families Program Ages 10–14 is delivered to 15–20 fifth and sixth grade families outside of the school day. Our two community sites were hit hard as the pandemic progressed. Already challenged with workforce concerns, the low population density and rural nature taxed an already struggling school system, bus drivers, and communities delivering basic services. As a result, once committed partners questioned their capacity and protected their teachers from extras, including PROSPER. Each of our two community sites ended up taking different paths this past program year. The Orleans South Supervisory Union site persevered, ultimately launching a community team. The team has been meeting most months to brainstorm and lay plans for program launch. Seven Strengthening Families facilitators were trained. The St. Johnsbury site was going strong until halfway through this reporting year though the in-school program, Botvin LifeSkills, continued to be delivered to all seventh graders. Communication with the school has been a challenge. The State PROSPER Project team has met monthly to maintain forward movement of the programs and hosted a Strengthening Families facilitator training in the Fall. We engage with other prevention coalitions and conversations in hopes of finding new partners and contributing to the conversations.

**Lessons Learned:** It is critical for sustainability, and to weather personnel changes, to have a memorandum of agreement or other document that guides program partnerships. This agreement outlines expectations of the various partners, and can support hard conversations when unforeseen circumstances arise that affect programming.

**Sustainability Statement:** Investment continues in training community-based curriculum facilitators. The success of evidence-based programs relies on trained facilitators, and given attrition, it is important to train many. As mentioned above, creating memoranda of agreement also supports transitions and allows for continuation of projects. We also work closely with school personnel to affect budget requests, exploring how PROSPER could be written into school budgets.



## Clemson–South Carolina State Sustainable Community Project

*USDA Strategic Goal 4*

*CYFAR Topic Area: Science and Technology*

**Program Report:** During the school year, children in Grades 3 through 8 participated in STEAM activities twice a week. The programming was directed by leaders at each site. The leaders are community members or school staff depending on the location of the site. One lesson from our curriculum is selected during the first session of the week, and an activity including background information needed to complete the lesson is led. During the second session of the week, the activity is completed through a hands on approach with the guidance of site leaders. Activities include individual activities as well as group activities, particularly for younger youth. In addition, during the summer, students attend summer camp through Clemson’s Youth Learning Institute (YLI), which is a week-long technology camp for youth. Approximately 30 students attended summer camp. The desired long-term results are (a) to involve community partners in improving educational outcomes for students from multiple counties; (b) to integrate STEM into the everyday experiences of children; (c) to integrate CYFAR youth participants into the 4-H Youth Development Program; and (d) to create a self-sustaining program at the conclusion of the project.

**Lessons Learned:** Many lessons were learned from implementing our CYFAR program. Most notably, COVID-19 changed the way that we implemented programming, and we had to learn to be adaptable and integrate technology as programmatic delivery methods shifted. Programming shifted from in person to virtual, followed by a hybrid model, and finally back to in-person programming. We learned that consistent communication with site staff and regular site visits were both major factors in running a successful program. The importance of community stakeholders was especially emphasized with COVID-19 as they helped us learn about the communities and how to make plans for programming that best suit each individual site.

**Sustainability Statement:** The project will be sustained in different ways for different sites. For example, our Honea Path site has applied for and received a 21st-century learning grant which will provide funding for at least 4 years. Our Westside Community Center site is working on developing a sustainability model that will include other funding sources and a sliding scale payment option for parents from low-income families. We will continue to provide technical support to sites around sustainability. We are also exploring a mix of funding opportunities that include 4-H STEM grants and local government grants.

## Maine 4-H Community Central: Engaging Teens in College Readiness and Workforce Development

*USDA Strategic Goal 1*

*CYFAR Topic Area: Science and Workforce Preparation*

**Program Report:** Maine 4-H Community Central works with teens in Lewiston and Portland. Teens engage in high-quality positive youth development experiences which center around four specific pathways: Maine food systems; science, engineering, technology, and math (STEM); education; and social justice. Young people in this program build connections within their peer community, schools, local community, and beyond. Maine 4-H Community Central youth development professionals act as a conduit for connections; build and strengthen college and career readiness skills; and create opportunities for youth through paid internships, community service, and service learning. The two sites are able to customize offerings to best meet the needs of young people using the 4-H SPecial Interest (SPIN) club model: clubs that focus on a specific topic and experience for six weeks.

In Lewiston, we hosted virtual sessions where 18 professionals connected with participants and increased their knowledge of careers within the broad areas of STEM, community and civic engagement, and the Maine food system. Ten teens participated as teen teachers with Summer of Science for the teacher preparation SPIN (40–50 hours of dosage for each teen); six led sessions in person, and four led sessions via Zoom with youth in the classroom. In fall of 2021, in-person sessions began at Lewiston High School with Zoom sessions occurring when necessary due to COVID-19-related closures and transportation issues. This was done in collaboration with 21st Century Learning Centers programming, making it possible for participants to utilize school transportation home after the program.

In Portland, five 4-H clubs (all SPIN clubs) were offered for teens. We planned and implemented three SPIN clubs during the school year (covering careers in civics, health science, and food systems). CYFAR staff also conducted two 4-H clubs for teens in the summer: the Summer of Science teen teaching 4-H club (40–50 hours of dosage for each teen) and a 4-H video making club (50–55 hours of involvement). The teen clubs were in partnership with Portland Public Schools, University of Maine Established Program to Stimulate Competitive Research, and twelve community host partners. Three after-school STEM clubs covering natural science, chemistry, biology, engineering, and other topics were offered for third through fifth graders at housing authority study centers.

**Lessons Learned:** Our program was successful throughout the pandemic; this was because our CYFAR team allowed young people to be at the forefront of the program. Constantly adapting offerings and opportunities based on the bandwidth of youth was a key component in program engagement. Connecting youth to organizations and key stakeholders has proven to be impactful for both youth and program partners. We are continuing to expand the outputs of our SPIN club experiences based on the individual sparks of youth. This has been a great way to meet outcomes and build skills.

**Sustainability Statement:** A critical step we are taking for long-term sustainability is working with our Extension administration to help identify funding priorities to include our audience in those priorities. Future steps include discussions with the University of

Maine Foundation officers. We aim to demonstrate the need of continuing this program model throughout our state, as it is a critical avenue to reach young people in an intentional, culturally appropriate manner. Additional sustainability efforts include integration of our program with other partner programs to create a shared commitment to long-term sustainability. For example, our career development SPIN clubs happen at a local school in partnership with the youth development professional. Our local schools also requested more teen teachers for our summer program, and the local schools are paying for the increased number of 4-H teens. We have secured external funding to support our teens through teaching stipends. This partnership will continue beyond the 5 years of CYFAR funding.

“  
*Through my 4-H and other experiences, I have learned that computer science is the course I want to pursue. I have been able to see how computer science can impact many areas of the community and help those in need. I want to remain involved with 4-H and support young people as they explore future career options.*  
 – Participant ”



# Montana Sustainable Communities: Social, Emotional, and Physical Wellness for Rural and Native American Youth

USDA Strategic Goal 4

CYFAR Topic Area: Leadership Development and Technology

**Program Report:** The Social, Emotional, and Physical Health and Wellness (SEP) program model provides at-risk youth with tools to increase and enhance social-emotional learning through training that helps youth learn coping skills, increase emotional intelligence, address and solve social problems, and build leadership and life skills. The model includes training for high school freshman youth using the Youth Aware of Mental Health curriculum, an evidence-based, pilot-tested curriculum that increases students' knowledge about depression and anxiety and enhances the skills and emotional resilience needed to deal with stress and crisis.

**Lessons Learned:** The project director and coach conducted site visits during August 2021 and were witness to how programming is unique to each SEP site. We witnessed a programming session with youth at Flathead and saw how youth were engaged in the content and leadership development activities. At Rocky Boy, we toured the Stone Child College environment and visited with some youth participants. Due to the cancellation of the powwow, we were unable to directly view community programming with the youth but received a welcome summary of activities to date.

**Sustainability Statement:** Since this is a school-based program, each site facilitator will work with school administrators and personnel to strategize ways to sustain beyond the 5-year period. Facilitators have been successful in developing partnerships with community organizations. Site managers have been effective to date reaching out to community organizations to identify venues for programming and generating awareness of the SEP programming efforts. They will continue these efforts moving forward.





“ My family enjoys coming too. They enjoy participating, cutting up the vegetables, cutting up the fruit, and eating. So, I think it’s a pretty nice program. – Parent Participant ”

## Southside Simple Suppers Scale-Up (S4): Expansion of a Validated Family Meals Program for At-Risk Children and Youth

USDA Strategic Goal 4  
CYFAR Topic Area: Nutrition

**Program Report:** Simple Suppers is a community-based (Head Start) family meals program designed to improve children’s diet and nutritional health. Due to COVID-19, winter and spring 2021 sessions of Simple Suppers were offered online (i.e., Simple Suppers-Go Online). The core components (caregiver education, child education, family meal) of Simple Suppers were adapted to an online format. We decided to (a) utilize e-methods that families were accustomed to using in local Head Start programs and elementary schools (Google Classrooms; Zoom; YouTube videos) for the educational component, (b) enhance the educational components with a supplemental program-specific weekly magazine (Simple Suppers Digest), (c) create a weekly meal kit delivery for the family meal component (Simple Suppers Chef’s Crate), and (d) add an additional week to programming (from 8 to 9 weeks) to orient families to the new online format. Data collection occurred in person with staff and participants both wearing personal protective equipment. With the prospect of schools reopening in fall 2021, we invested the summer in developing a hybrid version of Simple Suppers. This was an evidence-informed process whereby we examined the process and participant outcomes data from past in-person and online sessions of Simple Suppers and chose the most successful or effective parts; this led to a hybrid version whereby participants alternated coming in person and engaging online from week to week. We have termed the new hybrid format teach one, do one. On Week One of the program, families attend in person and are engaged in hands-on and interactive educational activities led by a Simple Suppers teacher (teach one). On Week Two of programming, families receive the tools they need to implement what they learned in programming at home (do one). The process repeats until the end of

programming. On the weeks families learn remotely, Simple Suppers educators call families to touch base and walk through key learning objectives. The first session of hybrid programming was completed in fall 2021. We are in the process of conducting a cost-effectiveness analysis comparing results from the three different modes of delivery to identify the most efficient and effective version of the program to be scaled up. Last year, we also launched the use of a new tool, the Healthy Meal Index, to determine the dietary quality of meals served at home. Sixteen caregivers enrolled in this substudy, 81.3% of whom identify as Black. The mean (SD) caregiver age was 31.6 (8.9) years, 93.8% were female, and 43.8% were low-income. All meals provided at least one vegetable and protein source, and 93.75% of meals contained a convenience food. No meals contained whole grains, and 12.5% of meals provided a whole fruit. Results will inform our efforts in Year 5 of the grant.

**Lessons Learned:** Since the inception of this grant, we have learned many valuable lessons. Regular, weekly team meetings (either in person or remote) have been critical to helping us stay connected, resolve problems, move forward, etc. Moreover, adding several of our key community partners to the institutional review board application has been important in facilitating the evaluation component of the project.

**Sustainability Statement:** We are currently developing plans to submit an NIH grant in October 2023 to scale up Simple Suppers to a greater extent. In addition, we are working with a private company (Fan Huddle) to create on-demand videos of Simple Suppers that can be easily and broadly distributed to the general public.

# Strengthening the Heartland: Promoting Life Readiness in Rural Youth

USDA Strategic Goal 4

CYFAR Topic Area: Leadership Development and Workforce Development

**Program Report:** Given the aging workforce in rural North and South Dakota, mentally healthy youth who possess life skills are critical to filling the expected increase in vacancies in the future workforce. Social-emotional learning (SEL) skills, such as emotion regulation and self-awareness, reduce anxiety and allow youth to combat stress and focus on life readiness skills needed in the workplace. In the current year of programming, community site staff continued implementing the Second Step SEL program for middle school youth. Additional lessons for the second volume of the new life readiness curriculum for high school students, LaunchSkills, were developed and distributed to community sites. Lessons in the second volume focused on financial literacy, career exploration, academic success, and holistic wellness. A total of 61

the opportunity to present on our programming at a conference session.

**Lessons Learned:** Feedback on the first volume of LaunchSkills indicated a desire for more lessons focused on helping youth attain academic success. Thus, the healthy relationships and wellness sections of the originally planned curriculum were combined into a holistic wellness section, and new section devoted to academic success was developed. In the 2nd year of developing the Careers in a Box exploration activities, we were able to work with another group of agriculture education and family and consumer sciences education undergraduate students to begin developing more lessons that highlight careers in FANH. Following last year's initial debut of the kits, we learned to streamline



“ I have the binder [LaunchSkills curriculum] out in the English room right now; she [the teacher] is using the sections on resumes and cover letters. Thank you!  
– School Counselor ”

lessons are available in the new volume. The first round of our newly developed career exploration activities, Careers in a Box and the Virtual Career Camp, were distributed to all community sites. Both the virtual camp and Careers in a Box kits highlighted careers within the food, agriculture, natural resources, and human sciences (FANH) fields. Finally, four webinars in our how-to series were presented to youth professionals. Topics were affirming LGBTQ+ youth, promoting accessibility in youth programming, assessing youth learning outcomes and engagement, and addressing internet gaming and addiction. Interest in the webinar series has continued to increase with a project high of 142 live attendees at the affirming LGBTQ+ youth presentation. Finally, we were fortunate to have our work recognized as a national award winner in the Educational Package - Team category at the National Association of Extension 4-H Youth Development Professionals annual conference as well as to have

our process and develop activities that were less time and supply intensive.

**Sustainability Statement:** To support sustainability, the project team will provide outcome results to community sites, which can be shared with school administrators to advocate for resources to continue funding the Second Step curriculum after the project period. If internal funding cannot be secured, the SCP team will work with the school staff to identify external funding sources. The full LaunchSkills curriculum will be available for use after the funding period. The Virtual Career Camp and Careers in a Box lessons will also remain available to the community sites. Lessons will be added in each of the following years of the project. Finally, all webinars are recorded and posted online on a project Youtube channel, allowing future professionals at the community sites to gain knowledge.

# 4-H Dream Catchers Sustainable Community Project

*USDA Strategic Goal 4  
CYFAR Topic Area: Workforce Preparation*

**Program Report:** The 4-H Dream Catchers project uses a combination of experiential learning activities, natural and programmatic mentoring, and evidence-based curricula delivery to reach at-risk teens in state supervision: detention/probation (Site 1) and foster/independent living (including homeless; Site 2). Building upon work accomplished under a 2014 CYFAR grant, Dream Catchers expands previous collaborations, incorporating new career mentoring approaches and other program enhancements, such as opportunities for paid internships and small business development, in response to persistent deficits experienced by these teen groups when aging out of or leaving state supervision. Anticipated program outcomes are that (a) teens build a diverse and caring network of adult mentors, both professional and personal, which (b) supports them and gives them resources for developing and enhancing skills in social competency, workforce development, and entrepreneurship. Dream Catchers's long-term goals align with the 4-H Thriving Model, which predicts long-term developmental outcomes of academic/vocational success, contribution to others through civic engagement, employability and economic stability, and happiness and wellbeing when using the model in positive youth development programming. Youth will have hope for the future and see themselves as active participants in deciding their future, giving them reasons to trust, turn to, and seek out caring adults to support and mentor them.

**Lessons Learned:** As a result of the pandemic, program delivery presented a greater challenge than anticipated. Although by midsummer it appeared the pandemic might be receding thus enabling the resumption of in-person programming, we were able to do so for just two weeks in the fall before being forced back into distance delivery due to COVID-19 restrictions. While overall distance delivery has been a positive development for Site 2, it has had negative effects on the efficacy and continuity of our programming at Site 1, the Youth Facility. With the foster teens, we are able to reach foster teens throughout Alaska—not just Fairbanks—because they could join our programming via Zoom. However, the incarcerated teens benefit most from visitors and the opportunity to connect face-to-face. Although we greatly appreciated the support of the guards, who allowed us to visit via Zoom, it was extremely difficult to connect with these young men through a small screen and with everyone wearing masks. Despite these difficulties, we were able to maintain programming and the connection with both sites throughout all 2 years of the pandemic restrictions.

**Sustainability Statement:** At the end of this grant we will have delivered consistent programming to our two sites for 10 years. Particularly with the Fairbanks Youth Facility, Alaska 4-H and the programming we do through this grant have become institutionalized. We are an integral component of the group, behavioral, and mental health and wellness treatment that the young men incarcerated on the residential treatment unit receive. We also participate with other partners, notably Blossom House and Breadcrumbs Theatre, in offering trauma-informed yoga and play-back theater to youth both in detention and on probation. Due to state budget cuts, both the Youth Facility and the Independent Living Program for foster teens have come to depend on the healthy living skills education and activities and natural mentoring we provide. We will continue these programs through a combination of university-provided state funds and restricted funds. The principal investigator is initiating substantive grant prospect research in 2022 in preparation for transitioning this project to other funding sources.

# Adapting Strengthening Families (SFP 10-14) for Legalized Marijuana Context

USDA Strategic Goal 4  
CYFAR Topic Area: Parenting

**Program Report:** Adaptation of Strengthening Families (SFP 10-14) for Legalized Marijuana Context aims to design and complete two adaptations to increase the impact of SFP 10-14 on youth marijuana use. The first adaptation will develop and create content for the current SFP 10-14 program (now virtual) specific to communication of the consequences of marijuana use in the context of legalized marijuana. The second adaptation is a collaboration with colleagues at Colorado State University (CSU) to implement an online marijuana personalized normative feedback tool, which aims to correct marijuana use misperceptions and provide youth and caregivers with strategies to prevent marijuana use. The Washington State University (WSU) team completed the final draft of the personalized normative feedback tool for caregivers with CSU. The tool will be randomized to caregivers in spring 2022 implementations of SFP 10-14.

During the reporting period, our team finalized adaptations to SFP 10-14 for virtual delivery formats,

## Pivoting an evidence-based program for virtual delivery: A case study of Washington state's Strengthening Families Program for Parents and Youth 10-14.

Katherine Hampilos, N.D., Elizabeth Weybright, Ph.D., AnaMaria Diaz Martinez, Brittany Cooper, Ph.D., Kelley Pascoe, MPH, Sabrina DiGennaro, Jennifer Leach, Jennifer Fees, Gary Varrella, Ph.D.

### BACKGROUND

- Strengthening Families Program 10-14 (SFP 10-14) is an evidence-based and family-centered prevention program aiming to reduce negative youth outcomes by increasing family protective factors.
- This case study reviews the process used to scale up and deliver a virtually adapted SFP 10-14 program during the COVID-19 pandemic.

### METHODS

- Our interdisciplinary Virtual Adaptation Team developed an online version of the SFP 10-14 curriculum and piloted the virtually adapted program three times in 2021.
- Certified SFP 10-14 facilitators (N=36) were trained in virtually adapted SFP 10-14 and completed a post-training survey. Facilitators were mostly female (97%) and white (69%) or Hispanic/Latina (23%).
- Virtual SFP 10-14 participants consisting of youth, caregivers, and staff (N=28) took part in a virtual SFP 10-14 pilot and completed a satisfaction survey assessing acceptability and preferences. Participants were mostly female (73%) and white (93%) or Native American (7%).

### RESULTS

- SFP 10-14 facilitators were satisfied with online training quality (89%) and plan to use online training to change their current practice (92%; see Figure 1).
- Most SFP 10-14 participants prefer attending virtually adapted SFP 10-14 during the COVID-19 pandemic (67%), and some would prefer attending virtually adapted SFP 10-14 during regular circumstances (47%; see Figure 2).
- Participants found benefits of virtual delivery suggesting this should remain a viable format moving forward; however, challenges such as technology and internet access must be addressed (see Table 1).

### DISCUSSION

- Using online platforms to develop, scale-up, and deliver family programs may improve dissemination and increase

A virtually adapted version of evidence-based program Strengthening Families Program 10-14 was acceptable to facilitators and families.



Figure 1. Virtual SFP 10-14 Facilitator Training Satisfaction

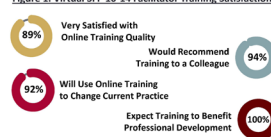


Figure 2. Virtually Adapted SFP 10-14 Participant Satisfaction

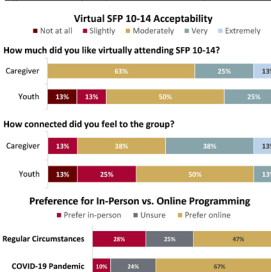


Table 1. Successes and Challenges of Virtually Adapted SFP 10-14

	SUCCESSES	CHALLENGES
YOUTH & CAREGIVER	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Added safety during COVID-19</li> <li>Increased convenience and accessibility</li> <li>Spending quality time with family</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Attending two sessions per week</li> <li>Scheduling difficulties</li> <li>Lack of childcare</li> </ul>
STAFF	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Increased retention and engagement</li> <li>Remote and multiple home families could participate</li> <li>Opportunity to connect across the state</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Technology and internet access</li> <li>Additional time and personnel required</li> <li>Delivery of supplies</li> </ul>



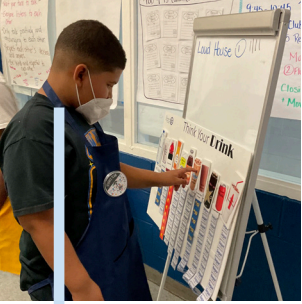
including program content and facilitator and technology guides. Final versions were optimized visually by the WSU Communications and Graphics team. WSU held seven virtual SFP 10–14 delivery trainings for facilitators. Virtual delivery evaluation questions were created and piloted in one county. Preliminary findings were submitted as abstracts at the 2022 Society for Prevention Research (SPR) and Society for Research on Adolescence (SRA) conferences and as a manuscript to the Journal of Extension (JOE). The SRA abstract was accepted as a poster and presented in March 2022. The SPR abstract and JOE manuscript are under review. Submissions will disseminate program and adaptation findings to broader audiences and scholarly research channels.

In addition, we completed analysis of Year 2 focus group data and a literature review exploring substance use/misuse educational content to inform the creation of 210 minutes of novel SFP 10–14 substance use specific curriculum. This adaptation was reviewed by a SFP 10–14 master trainer and trained facilitators across Washington state. Evaluation questions specific to substance use adaptations were created and will be piloted in spring 2022. For the reporting period, we did not deliver programming to participants. Year 3 programming began in January 2022 and will continue through August in two Washington counties.

**Lessons Learned:** The WSU team did not implement the SFP 10–14 program between December 1, 2020, and November 30, 2021. Program implementation was postponed due to the COVID-19 pandemic, resulting executive orders, and overburdened communities and school systems. The WSU team attempted to recruit participants for fall 2021 implementations in Snohomish and Spokane counties; however, recruitment numbers were not high enough to facilitate programming. This experience led to increased and varied recruitment efforts for spring 2022 after discussion with facilitators in Washington counties with successful virtual implementations. With these adjustments, we are on track to implement five times in Year 3.

**Sustainability Statement:** This project has and will contribute to the development of virtual SFP 10–14 delivery materials. This work enables future SFP 10–14 implementations to meet community needs by allowing for flexible program delivery. Between February and June 2021, Co-Investigator Ana Maria Diaz Martinez trained over 35 facilitators from Washington state in the virtual adaptation using Zoom.

We created an SFP Community of Practice (CoP) for professionals and facilitators in Washington state. The CoP listserv and group was created to help professionals and facilitators connect with WSU and current research as well as to provide access to resources. During the reporting period, WSU sent out newsletters sharing upcoming trainings and professional development opportunities and celebrated successful implementations and helped solicit facilitators for implementations across the state. The CoP will be used to share virtual and substance use adaptation materials with facilitators. Lastly, two additional facilitators were trained in SFP 10–14. This will increase the state's capacity to deliver programming and potentially buffer against workforce turnover.



“

*It was helpful that the children were able to create and build rather than just sitting while learning. – Community Partner*

”

## A Multilevel Youth Out-of-School Intervention Stemming From Foods

*USDA Strategic Goal 7*

*CYFAR Topic Area: Nutrition, Science, and Technology*

*Rhode Island – University of Rhode Island*

**Program Report:** Project stRlde: Science and Technology Reinforced by Innovative Dietary Education is a science, technology, engineering, art, math (STEAM), and nutrition program that addresses academic and diet-related disparities of racially and ethnically diverse elementary-aged youth (Grades 4–5). This hands-on and engaging summer camp program reinforces STEAM content learned over the school year while helping youth to improve their dietary behaviors. During 2021, our CYFAR team were closely engaged with our community partners, the Boys & Girls Club (BGC) of Newport County and BGC of Providence, with the first half of the year (December–June) focused on finalizing the curriculum and evaluation tools for the Project stRlde pilot program. During summer 2021, the 6-week Project stRlde program was successfully piloted with 39 youth (41% female; 30.7% Latinx; mean age=10.9 years, SD=0.98) at the BGC of Newport County (n=23) and BGC of Providence Southside Branch (n=16). Overall, there were no significant differences in the CYFAR youth resilience, CYFAR life skills, and STEAM outcomes from baseline to postassessment. For nutrition outcomes, youth significantly ( $p<0.05$ ) improved self-efficacy to ask someone in their family to make their favorite vegetable for dinner. Project stRlde process measures (dose, reach, fidelity, reliability), alongside qualitative feedback from community partners, underscored the success and acceptability of the program and informed curriculum modifications. Project stRlde program modifications began in September 2021 and included (a) condensing the program from 6 weeks to 5 weeks to meet the flexibility needs of the community partner and CYFAR pre/post data collection, (b) shifting content from videos and lesson plans to books-and-bin kits, and (c) minor changes in some of the hands-on activities based on the complexity of the topic and ease of duplication. These changes will facilitate camp staff delivery, allow flexibility for lesson length and group size/composition (i.e., grade level), and help promote program sustainability while keeping it fun and engaging for participating youth.

**Lessons Learned:** Overall, lessons learned from the 2021 Project stRlde pilot informed curriculum modifications and some community partner technical assistance needs. These changes will facilitate camp staff delivery, allow flexibilities for lesson length and group size/composition (i.e., grade level), and help promote program sustainability while keeping it fun and engaging for participating youth. During summer 2022 the revised Project stRlde program will be delivered at two new sites and one sustaining site, which will help us to better understand what other types of staff training, staff coordination, and technical assistance are needed to optimize program sustainability.

**Sustainability Statement:** Sustainability has been a major emphasis of Project stRlde since its inception. We continually engage our community partners, the BGC of Providence and BGC of Newport County, in ways we can ensure that Project stRlde can be feasibly delivered after the grant period. A key feature that was built into the implementation plan of Project stRlde to support sustainability was that our core CYFAR team of nutrition educators and 4-H staff would deliver Project stRlde during the 1st year at the site, which could not occur until summer 2021 due to COVID-19. As a part of our original sustainability plan, and looking ahead to 2022, the core CYFAR team will train, transition, and provide technical support to a camp staff member at the BGC Southside site who we worked with during summer 2021. This training and transition experience with BGC Southside will provide critical information around any additional Project stRlde training and technical assistance needed to promote program sustainability.

# 4-H UNITY

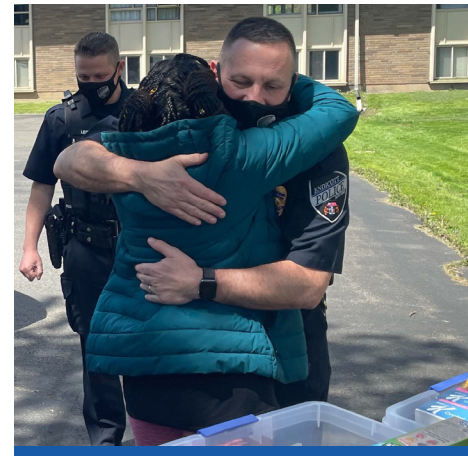
USDA Strategic Goal 1

CYFAR Topic Area: Leadership Development and Workforce Preparation  
New York – Cornell University

**Program Report:** 4-H Urban Neighborhoods Improved Through Youth (UNITY) combines 4-H youth development, civic engagement, nutrition, and parent education to ensure teens ages 14–18 years demonstrate the knowledge, skills, attitudes, and behaviors necessary for fulfilling, contributing lives and promotes healthy lifestyles among teens and their parents or guardians. 4-H UNITY’s program model and 5-year plan are grounded in positive youth development research and the ecological principles of working within the context of family and community. Participants meet weekly after school and complete

New York, applying these strategies and approaches to ensure 4-H UNITY’s ongoing and future success. Recently, we received commitments from community partners in both Rochester and Endicott to sustain 4-H UNITY after CYFAR funding ends because they recognize the value of the program to marginalized young people and the community.

**Sustainability Statement:** Sustainability is an integral focus of UNITY, beginning with the intentional selection of community partners and implementation of focused plans for the partners’ professional development.



summer employment experiences. Each of the two counties serves two cohorts of 12–15 teens for 2 years and then repeat the 2-year model with new youth and community partners. Through their involvement, UNITY teen leaders demonstrate improved leadership and workforce development skills as their community projects and job internships provide opportunities for real-world workforce skill building. The teen leaders gain the skills needed to prepare for college, careers, and being engaged community members. UNITY works to establish a strong foundation for long-term sustainability by partnering with local government leaders, businesses, and community organizations in ongoing community projects to ensure UNITY’s continuation after CYFAR funding ends.

**Lessons Learned:** We continue to apply lessons learned from our successfully sustained CYFAR projects in

UNITY’s 5-year program plan describes the steps that will be taken to achieve sustainability, beginning with the memoranda of understanding and continuing with the involvement of community partners in implementing UNITY’s sustainability plan from the beginning of the project. By focusing on sustainability and developing intentional partnerships with local organizations, government, and business leaders from the outset of programming, we can proudly report that we now have commitments from community partners to sustain 4-H UNITY in both Endicott and Rochester. In addition, we believe that UNITY’s comprehensive, multilevel approach to sustainability will reap value to the Endicott and Rochester communities as the program continues to increase the UNITY teen leaders’ sense of community connectedness and commitment to continue working to improve their communities.

## Creating a Village for Transition Into Adulthood Through Youth-Adult Partnerships, Teen Mentoring, and Community Sustainability

USDA Strategic Goal 4

CYFAR Topic Area: Leadership Development

Hawaii – University of Hawaii at Manoa

**Program Report:** Creating a Village is a multilayered educational intervention for middle school youth that provides opportunities for them to enhance their workforce preparation and life management skills. The program is delivered within a supportive environment that includes their peers, a youth-adult partnership team with teen mentors and an adult partner, and community-based experts. The program is designed to develop education, mentorship, and leadership development opportunities through program interactions.

**Lessons Learned:** Even though the program was delivered in two different formats, the relationship-building between the youth-adult partnership team and the youth participants—the cornerstone of the program—was able to develop and thrive. Consistency in structure and participation allowed for the creation of safe, familiar environments that allowed opportunities for leadership, communication, and social skills to strengthen and grow. To ensure this is protected in program deliveries moving forward, we will increase training for staff and volunteers on its importance.

**Sustainability Statement:** As the program is delivered, we compile documentation, processes, artifacts, and other materials that will allow us to create an operational manual for future delivery of the program. We have accumulated a lot of lessons learned through the adjustments required and will incorporate a best practices section to allow for ease of delivery in the future. The goal is to allow other organizations to replicate this program in their settings.



“ I’m usually kind of quiet because I don’t like really interacting a lot unless it’s with my family because I feel comfortable with them, but it was kind of surprising when I was able to feel comfortable talking.

– Youth Participant ”



# The United We Can: African American Youth Entrepreneurship Program

USDA Strategic Goal 4

CYFAR Topic Area: Workforce Preparation

Oklahoma – Oklahoma State University and Langston University

**Program Report:** This year, 54 African American youth participated in an 8-week program that led youth through workshops on financial planning, cultural awareness, and different STEM-related careers. The 8-week summer program culminated with a trip to Oklahoma State University where youth were able to learn what it is like to be a university student through workshops taught by graduate students and faculty, eating in the cafeteria, sleeping in the dorms, and touring the campus. On campus, we hosted workshops related to personal finance, such as Reality Check!, focusing on budgeting and financial literacy. After the workshop, there was a lively group debriefing session reviewing lessons learned, including the importance of preparing now for the life participants would like to have in the future. This hands-on experience was very impactful for youth. At this age, youth are very interested in what they call adulting—that is, learning how to be an adult. For many youth, this was the first time they had an opportunity to manage money, and it was eye-opening.

**Lessons Learned:** During the pandemic, we were reminded just how much youth are motivated by their friends' approval. Youth are often terrified to turn on their cameras during a Zoom call and refused all of our coaxing in this direction. However, we also noticed that having their families present often offset their fears. Many youth were willing to engage online, including turning on the camera, if one of their parents or an older sibling were present. Talking to youth about our observation, we learned that youth are hypersensitive to being judged as inadequate by friends and that the uncertainty of how to act on a Zoom call was just too threatening for them. However, when a respected family member modeled this behavior for them, they were much more willing to dare to be seen. This reinforced the importance that family holds for these youth.

**Sustainability Statement:** First, we focus on creating strong partnerships. For our efforts, we were recognized as one of only 10 organizations to enter into a memorandum of understanding with the Tulsa Opportunity Project, an extracurricular organization created by Tulsa Public Schools and the Tulsa Community Foundation to manage community partnerships.

Second, we provide a value added to children's school experience that makes our program indispensable. Published findings from our work document effects of United We Can to reduce or delay initiation into alcohol, tobacco, and other drug use in a 4-year longitudinal study. Another study documents that if a preponderance of parents are involved in their child's schooling in a given school, it decreases the substance use of even the youth whose parents are not involved. This is important because interventions are unlikely to reach all parents and because 98% of parents in the United We Can program participated in parent-teacher conferences (one indicator of parental involvement), suggesting that the impacts of this CYFAR program reach beyond the students who are enrolled in the program.



# The Juntos Sustainable Community Project

USDA Strategic Goal 1

CYFAR Topic Area: Leadership Development, Science, Technology, and Workforce Development  
North Carolina and Idaho – North Carolina State University and University of Idaho

**Program Report:** All four components of the Juntos Program were implemented this past calendar year. The core of the Juntos program is family engagement, and programming starts with the 5- or 6-week Family Workshop Series, distributing valuable educational information. By the end of spring 2021, we held 16 family nights. In fall 2021, the Catawba and New Hanover county coordinators were able to implement workshops in person for the first time since the pandemic, which has kept participation numbers down, began. New Hanover engaged 10 families consistently during their workshop sessions, and Catawba had an average of 32 families. Due to high COVID-19 cases, Sampson held many of their club and family events virtually. Idaho was able to hold their family nights in person throughout the year. The Juntos 4-H Clubs have been successful in providing opportunities for youth to learn life skills outside of the classroom such as civic engagement through food drives. Each club has invited various guest speakers that are knowledgeable in their fields. Some of these



include local law enforcement; local 4-H agents and other extension staff; and representatives from different careers, colleges and universities. Furthermore, students have been developing their leadership skills through leadership roles and projects such as coordinating monthly volunteer events at their local Homeless shelter in Catawba, holding a food drive for their peers in Sampson, and attending state 4-H events in Jerome, Idaho. Throughout the school year, academic success coaching sessions were held either virtually or in person. The annual summer academy was held virtually for the second time to offer an educational experience to our Juntos students and exposed each student to three different careers and three different skills.

**Lessons Learned:** Due to the continued pandemic, the Juntos program focused on innovative ways to reach our students and families in a way that met their needs. Our evaluation methods included multiple methods of collection, including phone calls, online links, and paper copies. We hosted a second virtual summer academy experience that provided all the resources needed for the youth to have an interactive experience. Wi-Fi access, technology, and packaged kits made it possible for our youth and parents to feel they had what they needed. Fall 2021 continued with statewide and local virtual club meetings, success coaching, and family nights. Some counties held hybrid programming as case numbers changed. Some themes for these meetings included college readiness, career exploration, financial aid resources, and tutoring. In fall 2021, we conducted a virtual training focused on working with Latinx youth regarding mental health for national and North Carolina staff.

**Sustainability Statement:** The sustainability guide that was started in October 2019 is in the final design stages and will be shared with national and North Carolina staff. This will be a great resource for our coordinators to provide tools to support the CYFAR communities and Juntos sites. Juntos is establishing partners within each CYFAR site. Partner meetings are held three times per year within each community, and updates, success stories, and needs will be presented to discuss future investment at these meetings. In Catawba and Sampson

*“ We missed that sense of community because of the COVID-19 pandemic, but being a part of Juntos helped. The program grew stronger this year than last year even though they were meeting online. The connection was there. Juntos was an important part of my daughter’s routine during remote learning. ”*  
– Juntos Parent



Counties, we are strengthening partnerships with the community college as many of our Juntos alumni begin their higher education there. Coordinators plan to hold family events at community colleges with the hopes of turning them into annual events. We hosted a partners luncheon in collaboration with the North Carolina State University program College Advising Corps in November 2021. This event was an opportunity to bring awareness to the programs and connect partners across the state.

## FDLTCC Bimaaji'idiwin (Saving Each Other's Lives) Harvest Sustainable Community Project

*USDA Strategic Goal 7*

*CYFAR Topic Area: Leadership Development*

*Minnesota – Fond du Lac Tribal and Community College*

**Program Report:** Fond du Lac Tribal and Community College (FDLTCC) learned in September of 2021 that we had been awarded CYFAR project funding. The 1st month was spent working with CYFAR to get all required paperwork to establish FDLTCC's project and meet our CYFAR coach. In October we held an all Bimaaji'idiwin partner meeting to review the activities that the partners want to accomplish with the support of CYFAR funding. After review of the original proposal objectives with the partners, the original objectives were confirmed, and next planning steps were decided upon with the program coordinator.

In order to start work on the project, we were required to secure an evaluation team. The funding was not released until the evaluation team was approved. Since our proposal had originally not been selected by the CYFAR program, we had to restart the search for an evaluation team. The preferred evaluation team had to meet the criteria of experience with youth programming and use of culturally inclusive evaluation methods. From November through December of 2021, we interviewed and met with various evaluation teams and received CYFAR approval of our chosen evaluation team in December of 2021. Our youth coordinator has met with the CYFAR coach and has been learning about the CYFAR program reporting and national objectives. The FDLTCC youth coordinator has also been working with the evaluation team to plan an evaluation that not only provides information to the CYFAR program but also helps design a youth program that creates indigenous leadership by helping facilitate increasing connections between youth, community, and traditional activities.

**Lessons Learned:** As we begin our programming, our anticipated outcomes fit with our project objectives. Our desired results include increased participation in traditional cultivation and harvest methods. Our youth will learn new skills such as cooking and meal preparation using first foods and local fresh produce. Through connections with community members, peers, and elders, we hope to instill a sense of confidence and leadership through increased cultural knowledge, connection, and indigenous leadership building. Traditional games, harvest methods, stories, and conflict and stress management techniques such as circle keeping are all ways that our program partners will incorporate to serve our regional youth.

**Sustainability Statement:** The emphasis on multigenerational programming is culturally grounded and works to build the circle of guidance, peer support, and mentorship of younger students. This structure provides the support that teens need and gives them opportunities to be positive role models. By designing our programming to bring together members of the community with our teens, we are emphasizing their importance to community by grounding them in the culture and values of Anishinaabe. Expectations of behavior will be based on grandfather teachings of wisdom, love, respect, bravery, honesty, humility, and truth. Each of our program sites will use the capacity that is built as part of this programming to include lessons, activities, and relationships to continue youth leadership outreach.

“ I have learned that there is always room for growth, and we’re truly all in this together. In community, we have our best opportunity to create the change we want to see in this world. ”  
– Participant

## Family Engagement: Bringing Families and Decision Makers Together for Collaboration

USDA Strategic Goal 4  
CYFAR Topic Area: Leadership Development and Parenting  
Colorado – Colorado State University

**Program Report:** In 2021, our CYFAR project has been focused on continuing to build capacity to provide local training at our two current sites, Jefferson County and Longmont, Colorado, and hosting our first cohort of the full, 20-week, two-generation class. In previous years, due to COVID-19 limitations, we have offered limited short-term series classes at our two CYFAR sites. Year 3 was the 1st year we were able to host a full class for both communities. One major event in early spring 2021 was that one of our CYFAR sites made the difficult decision to discontinue programming due to ongoing staff shortages. However, the coordinator at this site worked with the larger team to quickly transition their work and potential cohort participants to a new site about a mile away in Jefferson County. The Jefferson County coordinator spent the summer of 2021 recruiting adults and youth for their first two-generation class and was able to start their class in September 2021. In Year 3, our programming has involved 21 individuals, or approximately 19 families, completing the program. Pre- and postprogram evaluations have occurred in coordination with all programming delivered in Year 3 thus far. In addition, process evaluations have occurred in sync with all programming to date, including fidelity to program curriculum with one-on-one team coaching and class site visits.

The team developed additional resources to support online and hybrid programming and sites as they adapted to public health restrictions while implementing the 20-week program. Support included one-on-one site technical assistance and site visits. The youth curriculum was successfully adapted from a 20-week curriculum to a 10-week curriculum in partnership with Rise Above, a state agency focused on youth civic education.

**Lessons Learned:** We have learned that our state CYFAR team needed to be trained and prepared to offer the 20-week training online, in person, and via a hybrid of the two. In spring of 2021 we developed and prepared a training for our sites on how to plan for multiple implementation versions and how to quickly change course depending on COVID-19 and public health mandates. We provided a six-part training series over the summer for our CYFAR site facilitation teams and provided technical assistance and some risk management tools to help make the adaptation process easier as our CYFAR sites welcomed their cohorts in the fall. The lesson learned was to be prepared for all versions so that the 20-week class would not have to shut down due to COVID-19. Both classes successfully completed their 20 weeks, and we believe that a key part of that success was their ability to do this.

**Sustainability Statement:** Sustaining this work will be key to making sure families are able to build their skills and be involved in creating a sense of community where they feel welcome. Our state team continued to work hard on sustainability. We were able to meet with two foundations about the work and their interest in investing in the work in the future. In addition, we provided training for our local sites to work with local partners and foundations to acquire local investments in their classes. Finally, each of our local sites have local civic design teams made up of partners and families who have graduated from their programs. Those teams are also focused on sustainability.

## 4-H SNAC

*USDA Strategic Goal 7*

*CYFAR Topic Area: Nutrition and Physical Activity*

*California and Nevada – University of California and University of Nevada – Reno*

**Program Report:** The University of California Cooperative Extension and University of Nevada Cooperative Extension will integrate the 4-H Student Nutrition Advisory Councils (SNAC) Club program into communities in San Luis Obispo and El Dorado Counties (California) and Clark County (Nevada) with SNAP-Ed eligible youth who qualify for the free or reduced-price meals program. The target audiences for 4-H SNAC Club programming are school-age children (K–8) and families in low-income schools. The program will serve youth who are at increased risk for negative outcomes, such as undernourishment, neglect, poor health, substance abuse, teenage pregnancy, crime, violence, and academic underachievement due to family, community, social, political, and economic conditions. The 4-H SNAC Club program model will be expanded through a partnership between the University of California 4-H, CalFresh (SNAP-Ed), Nevada 4-H, Nevada Expanded Food and Nutrition Extension Programs, Nevada SNAP-Ed, local schools, and community partners. Community health and youth development professionals will implement interventions at the social and environmental level to address social determinants of health impacting youth. Through this partnership, the program will also provide opportunities for youth to learn valuable healthy living, advocacy, and peer mentoring skills. Based on the outcomes achieved by similar projects, it is expected that participants will have (a) improved nutritional and physical health knowledge and practices, (b) improved confidence in leadership and presentation skills, (c)

increased career readiness, and (d) increased self-efficacy for being an advocate of health.

**Lessons Learned:** School closures and virtual learning have been the largest barriers to implementing 4-H SNAC. Teachers and administrators are overwhelmed with constantly changing conditions and guidance. They have expressed support for this program; however, they are focused on responding to emergent situations on their campuses. To address this, we have learned to focus on creative ways we can meet the needs of our communities through program delivery. Cooking Academy has been adapted as an online curriculum, and we have some necessary tools to provide students with online cooking lessons, such as insulated grocery bags.

**Sustainability Statement:** Training opportunities have been provided to staff to further develop knowledge of how to host 4-H SNAC Clubs for students. Training included discussions and presentations from experienced staff, on-site observation of a 4-H SNAC Club meeting in progress, and the opportunity to speak with 4-H SNAC Club members. Training also provided hands-on materials such as handouts, letters to parents, and a breakdown of activities for a 4-H SNAC Club. In addition, staff were trained on community partner engagement, recruitment, and cultural competency. Furthermore, plans to offer virtual programming for both the nutrition portion and the 4-H Club program have been established and executed.

## Tennessee SCP

USDA Strategic Goal 4

CYFAR Topic Area: Leadership Development, Nutrition, Parenting, Physical Activity, Science, Technology, and Workforce Preparation  
Tennessee – University of Tennessee

**Program Report:** The mission of the University of Tennessee’s Sustainable Communities Project is to enhance educational curricula, develop linkages to support families, and provide technical assistance and training for after-school staff. The project focuses on middle-school-age youth and seeks to improve their knowledge, skills, attitudes, and behaviors necessary for fulfilling, contributing lives. The program targets school-age, high-risk youth and their families who are experiencing trauma-inducing environments, academically challenged, potential dropouts, more likely to engage in delinquent behaviors, and lack strong positive role models and prosocial and emotional learning skills. The project sites serve many children who live in poverty. The primary content utilized focuses on three primary areas: (a) social-emotional learning (SEL); (b) students’ academics through STEM-based agriculture, nutrition, robotics, and engineering programming; and (c) intensive family engagement programming. Nonacademic content such as leadership, decision-making, positive relationship, and increased self-work are also stressed. The philosophy of this project believes youth must first address their social-emotional needs before academic gains can occur.

**Lessons Learned:** Lessons learned this reporting period revolve around teaching virtually. The learning curve was great, and we all had to be patient. Two main lessons were learned from teaching virtually. First, it is imperative to spend an ample amount of time teaching students and parents how to navigate the virtual portal (i.e., Zoom, Microsoft Teams, etc.). It is extremely difficult to find a platform that all participants are familiar with. After trial and error, it is best to use the platform the public school is already using; however, there are issues around licensing at times. Secondly, we learned that there are some teachers who are excellent at virtual education and others who are not. It is best to focus on teacher strengths by assigning teachers with high capacity for technology to teach virtually while appointing teachers with other skill sets to conduct background prep and research on the selected lesson.

**Sustainability Statement:** An educational program has great success for sustainability if the program addresses three areas: evaluation, collaborations, and grant writing experience. In order to acquire additional funding for this grant project, we have devised a very reliable and proven evaluation plan. We have tested, revised, and fine-tuned our existing evaluation plan over the past 14 years with our existing sites. One of the most powerful strengths of our family and consumer science/4-H agents is their established relationships with decision makers, other agencies, and general populations in their communities. The University of Tennessee agents in Shelby and Union Counties currently have these relationships and the skills and resources available to enhance their collaboration development when and where appropriate. All agents, including the project director, have experience successfully acquiring funds from local community agencies, government offices, and businesses. The project personnel have extensive grant writing experience, and with our experience, proposed curricula, and evaluation plan, we believe that we will be successful at gaining additional support via funding and community support. The project director has successfully sustained 10 CYFAR sites between 2005 and 2017. All are still making significant impacts on their communities, and we have already taken steps to sustain the current sites and program by acquiring funding from school districts, recruiting volunteers, and continuing to build partnerships.



# Uplift: Empowering Today's Youth for Tomorrow's Future

USDA Strategic Goal 4

CYFAR Topic Area: Leadership Development and Workforce Preparation

Kentucky – University of Kentucky and Kentucky State University

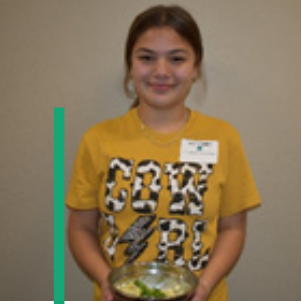
**Program Report:** Uplift: Empowering Today's Youth for Tomorrow's Future aims to provide a comprehensive life skills development program for high-risk youth. The primary goal is to increase awareness and understanding of critical life skills for self-sufficiency in youth. The life skills program promotes health and personal development, uses developmentally appropriate interaction teaching strategies, and encourages the avoidance of involvement in high-risk behaviors. The life skills content also encourages self-management skills as youth learn to navigate the world around them. The program vision employs a multidisciplinary positive youth development and trauma-informed approach that views youth in the context of the family and community and develops programming grounded in research and based on local needs.

**Lessons Learned:** COVID-19 created challenges in cementing relationships with partners, especially with conducting and facilitating programming. Without face-to-face programming, we were unable to conduct programs in Fayette County. As a result, the Uplift team had to pivot in other directions, including adding a new part-time staff member to Fayette County and seeking new partnerships with local middle schools. Adaptability and flexibility were two concepts the team became acquainted with when dealing with COVID-19 and the resurgence that occurred when the 2021–2022 school year began. The Uplift team has also learned that working during and after school hours has helped eliminate barriers that would prevent students from attending programming. Having staff and trusted adults of color at underserved schools with a higher minority population is also important. It allows the students to effectively receive the content delivered and feel connected with trusted adults who look like them.

**Sustainability Statement:** Life skills are essential for students who have and will continue to deal with remnants of a pandemic. These life skills are vital to survival and help them learn to cope with the complexities of life. Students must have the knowledge and resources to help empower them. The University of Kentucky and Kentucky State University personnel are working together with the hopes of increasing life skills programming to other sites and partners. The 4-H Social Justice Leadership Board is on track with sustainment as our initial plan is to have four partners and diverse voices at the table to empower youth. Plans for sustaining will stem through mentorship, leadership training, community service, and critical conversations. Not only is the board embedded in 4-H, but with the collaboration of other Extension partners and the University of Kentucky College of Agriculture, Office of Diversity, we are confident it will garner the support that it needs over time.

“  
*While the lessons facilitated are valuable to youth, the relationships mean even more and add to youth's ability to embrace content. Participants regularly express their excitement for each lesson to our Uplift team.*  
 – Uplift Staff Member  
 ”





“ *The Growing U program has introduced my kiddos to things they might not have ever seen. The hatching in the classroom was one of the most exciting activities at the school, and gardening has been a positive impact on them. – Community Partner* ”

## Growing U

USDA Strategic Goal 4

CYFAR Topic Area: Nutrition, Physical Activity, and Technology

Texas – Texas A&M University and Prairie View A&M University

**Program Report:** Through a collaboration between Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service and Prairie View A&M Cooperative Extension, GrowingU served youth at risk for childhood obesity, in underresourced communities. Youth learned from the evidence-based Learn, Grow, Eat, & Go! (LGEG), Junior Master Gardener, and Walk Across Texas curricula. Each year, 210 children (35 at each of the six sites) were recruited to participate in a 4-H club with volunteers and staff to support them. School educators assumed the club leader’s responsibilities and were assisted by a 4-H agent to charter and enroll all youth and volunteers. Families were invited to virtual meetings to learn gardening and nutrition skills with their youth through the parent component of the LGEG curriculum. This created a community-level factor that helped youth with their long-term health decisions. We had challenges at our sites due to health and safety concerns, so we offered some programming virtually. While participating virtually for the majority of the program year, youth also had hands-on learning opportunities through the LGEG journal and supplies that were distributed at the school or a community location. As part of the students’ learning experience, they established various garden beds, hydroponic systems, and a grow tent. Three Growing U family nights were also conducted to involve parents and families in the Growing U program and give the students an opportunity to demonstrate their learned skills. Family nights were set up with activity stations through which participants and families could rotate. The activities in the stations were the same activities that the students did during their Growing U program. Each station had Growing U students leading and helping families in the activities. In order to make the families feel a part of the program, we also kept events relevant to the cultures of our students and the community.

**Lessons Learned:** Basic needs must be met prior to asking families to prioritize an optional program. In high-risk communities, basic needs are the priority during times of high stress (i.e., a pandemic). Volunteers and agents reported that youth needed time to socialize and see a different face behind the screen. Those trusted and consistent relationships were necessary to foster attendance. If the opportunity is provided, communities will thrive. We learned we need to provide as much support for volunteers as possible. The volunteers we use are also teachers who have a full load of responsibilities. By providing resources and assisting them when needed, they can focus on Growing U instruction and activities.

**Sustainability Statement:** Through our partnerships, we are seeing the positive impacts of Growing U. Due to our established relationships with the schools, we are able to continue working with them towards sustainability. We have seen expanded program options at some of our sites. Another site has begun to assist in the funding of the program and set aside funds to hire the after-school staff specifically for the program as well as the 4-H program.

# Wisconsin Sustainable Communities: The Growing Connections Program

USDA Strategic Goal 4

CYFAR Topic Area: Leadership Development and Workforce Preparation

Wisconsin – University of Wisconsin

**Program Report:** The Growing Connections Program is built on youth participation in three intersecting and multilevel educational approaches: (a) youth-led gardening education and food production, (b) youth leadership development focused on action planning and community leadership, and (c) youth centered community engagement. During the summer months, youth participants engage in an intensive developmental experience at the program’s hub, the Connections Garden at Kohl Farm. They then apply their skills and leverage their new relationships in their communities. Growing Connections partners with two community organizations: Milwaukee Christian Center

**Lessons Learned:** Flexibility, adaptability, active listening and honest communication have been critical as we navigate the challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic and staffing shortages with community partners. While we maintained fidelity to the program’s logic model and desired outcomes, we were careful to adjust, adapt, and even pause programming when needed. Through honest communication we developed a clear understanding of the unique challenges and needs of partner agencies, youth participants, and their families and pivoted programming in a way that worked in the current climate.



and Running Rebels Community Organization, located on the near south and near north sides respectively. Organizational partners bring deep connections with youth and neighborhood assets in two of Milwaukee’s most challenged neighborhoods. Youth bring their perspectives to developing the Connections Garden as a community cultural and food production space and leading neighborhood action projects. Youth will work into seasonal, part-time employment opportunities, working with professional mentors to implement program elements including participatory evaluation and teaching other youth. During educational sessions, Extension educators implement proven educational approaches from gardening education, community place-making, engagement, and design.

**Sustainability Statement:** We continue to pursue opportunities to leverage CYFAR funding to secure additional funds to support the program. The Growing Connections Program was awarded a \$12,000 grant for garden beautification and infrastructure improvements through the University of Wisconsin -Madison, Division of Extension Dean’s Innovation Grant. In addition, as a result of our pivot to community-based gardens, the Growing Connections Program team is cultivating relationships and partnerships with local stakeholders with the goal of increasing opportunities for young people, creating lasting positive impact in the community, and developing sustainable funding sources and support for the program beyond the terms of the grant.

# Youth Civic Engagement

USDA Strategic Goal 4  
CYFAR Topic Area: Leadership Development  
Nebraska – University of Nebraska – Lincoln



**Program Report:** Year 3 of Youth Civic Engagement focused on transitioning to in-person delivery, refining program elements, expanding reach, and fostering community partnerships in our two original community sites, Scotts Bluff and Douglas Counties. In addition, we explored delivery in new areas and new iterations of the program to test feasibility and prepare for our sustainability and scaling phases. Although still limited by the uncertainty brought about by the pandemic (e.g., declining and then resurging rates), we conducted in-person programming at three sites, namely an in-person, 4-day camp in Scotts Bluff County and two schools in Douglas County, in collaboration with the Latino Center of the Midlands. In addition, we piloted Youth Arise in a new site (Lancaster County) among high school youth with the Upward Bound program with two cohorts (18 juniors, 27 seniors) to explore the potential of this program with older participants and the potential for older youth to serve as mentors or teachers for middle school students who are the primary program audience. In total, our program reached 89 youth in Year 3.

We tested the feasibility of our measures and procedures for evaluation and identified some challenges (dissemination of surveys, diversity in how each site contacts parents) and worked with our institutional review board to develop procedures that would be reflective of the diversity of sites in which we work. We also developed our strategic plans to promote effective and consistent communication. For example, we maintained our website and disseminated program information through videos on social media.

**Lessons Learned:** There were two main lessons learned this year. First, our approved evaluation protocols did not reflect the diversity in our implementation settings. We thus engaged our institutional review board in dialogue to communicate this challenge and collaborate on developing protocols that would reflect these settings, respect the typical procedures already used by our partners, and still maintain the rigors of quality research and protection of human subjects. The second lesson was that with increased screen time due to the pandemic, youth actually sought breaks from screens during our program. This was especially true in the after-school setting given that even during school time, youth were engaging heavily with screens. We thus incorporated nonscreen, hands-on activities to complement our online program platforms. Our current model now allows for flexibility in settings and appears to yield better responses from youth.

**Sustainability Statement:** Reaching diverse and underserved audiences is a priority in Nebraska Extension. Youth Arise can be integrated into Nebraska Extension 4-H programming after the grant via multiple learning platforms, such as in-person classes, 4-H clubs, and online education (e.g., eXtension, Google Classroom). With committed statewide and national partners, sustainability and scaling are feasible. Components of the program (e.g., iCivics, YPAR) are available at no cost. After completing orientation and staff training that our team provides, local community partners will be able to implement the program with minimal support. Our program design can be adapted to various delivery formats such as after-school, homeschool, weekday, or weekend programs. Comprehensive evaluation will demonstrate program effectiveness. Evidence will position the team to obtain federal and foundation funds to scale up the program to neighboring locales. The team prioritizes sustainability and focuses on building leadership among community partners and strengthening collaboration to create environments for project sustainability.

“

*Native youth are hands-on learners, and the CYFAR project has allowed us to teach to the students' strengths.*

*– Team Member*

”

## Building Community Capacity and Resilience through 4-H in ND Tribal Nations

*USDA Strategic Goal 4*

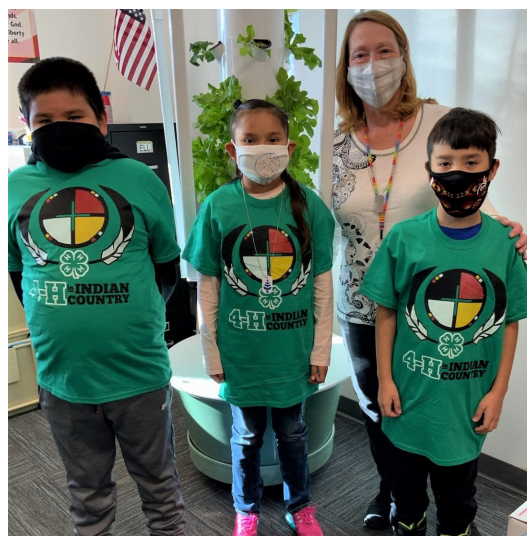
*CYFAR Topic Area: Science, Technology, and Workforce Development*

*North Dakota – North Dakota State University and Cankdeska Cikana Community College*

**Program Report:** American Indian and Alaska Native populations continue to be underrepresented in STEAM related careers. Tribal communities historically have lacked resources to provide youth with high-quality STEAM educational opportunities. This year, youth in Grades 3–5 participated in a variety of experiential learning activities, including coding with Ozobots, Lego robotics, and STEAM residential and day camping experiences, all aimed at sparking their interest in STEAM. Project staff collaborate with schools to deliver programming in class, after school, and throughout the summer. Program staff worked with Two Feathers LLC, a Native American owned consulting company, to design and deliver a series of professional development webinars, *Creating a Bridge From Equity to Belonging*. Their series was attended by extension professionals, educators, and school counselors from North Dakota and 12 other states and included topics like Indigenous 101 & 102, History and Current Impact of Indian Boarding Schools, Cultural Arts, and Why Representation Matters.

**Lessons Learned:** COVID-19 continued to impact program delivery, especially at the beginning of this program year. Face-to-face activities eventually resumed with precautions in place. The relationships with local schools in Standing Rock proved to be a tremendous resource, providing opportunities to deliver STEAM activities in the classrooms and to use school space during out-of-school time, including summer. Challenges with finding and keeping program staff and the continued COVID-19 situation impacted the ability to provide after-school activities in the Spirit Lake communities. We learned that the tribal college on Spirit Lake has very limited capacity to support the programs as they were originally planned. However, the summer camps offered there were well-received and successful. After collaboration with coaches, this site will focus more on camping as a STEAM delivery method while still continuing to work on building relationships with schools.

**Sustainability Statement:** Relationships with educators and administration of local schools are key in building project sustainability. A trusting relationship between local extension, schools, and the larger community will allow the program to continue at some level when the 5-year funding comes to an end.



# Addressing Youth Mental Health of Latinx Families by Strengthening Family-Skills and Engaging in Sports

USDA Strategic Goal 4

CYFAR Topic Area: Parenting and Physical Activity

Maryland – University of Maryland

**Program Report:** The overarching goal of this project is to strengthen Latinx youth and their families' mental health by strengthening healthy parenting practices for parents and caregivers, positive youth development, and engaging youth in organized sports. We will engage underserved Latinx families in three interrelated programs. First, parents and caregivers will participate in Padres Preparados, Jóvenes Saludables (the parent/caregiver version), an evidence-based family-skills program to strengthen healthy parenting practices. Each Padres Preparados educational session is divided

per community (15 boys and 15 girls). Twice a week, 50 young players will practice together. The soccer coaches will be trained in mental health first aid

**Lessons Learned:** During the reporting time frame, we focused on strengthening the university–community collaboration. Our process supporting early partnership development is moving to be formalized. This worked initially because trust was present from a preexisting relationship. As the project expanded in terms of scope and more people were added, we needed to



between self-reflection, didactics, and skill building exercises aimed at developing strong parenting practices and facilitating relationship building between parents and youth. This intervention is based on the social ecology model and has shown positive results, including improved parent involvement, child social competence, and child self-regulation. Second, we will engage youth in programs like 4-H to strengthen positive youth development. This part of the program will include topics of physical and mental wellness and cultural exploration. Lastly, we will engage youth in sports through soccer practices, which will take effect in a year and engage new youth every year of the 5 grant years. Practices will focus on skill and technique development and connectedness between coaches and players. The soccer group will include 30 players

address partnership processes in a more formal way. We are keeping community benefit at the forefront of the work. Some program activities took place on a pilot basis during the reporting period.

**Sustainability Statement:** Regarding program sustainability, we focused on developing quality collaboration during the reporting time frame. We are working with four members of the collaborating agency, including the director, one program coordinator, and two educators. We believe that once the partners are trained and committed, they will be able to continue the program activities when the funding ends.

# SCP to Promote Early Language and Literacy Development in Native Communities

USDA Strategic Goal 4  
CYFAR Topic Area: Parenting  
Arizona – Arizona State University

**Program Report:** Our project is a community-based program to promote young children’s early literacy in two rural American Indian communities in Arizona: four Navajo Nation communities near Sanders, AZ (Nahata’Dziil, Wide Ruins, Pine Springs, and Houck Chapters) and the communities of the San Carlos Apache Tribal lands. We have developed a program that currently has six components: (a) early literacy handouts and quick tip videos, (b) storytime videos, (c) drop-in family literacy events, (d) professional development workshops, (e) a multisession family literacy program, and (f) a multisession care provider literacy program. We are providing multiple complementary program components to allow parents, grandparents, other primary caregivers, and childcare providers of young children a range of opportunities to engage with our program both virtually and (when possible) in person. Each of these components has been developed in collaboration with the communities that we serve. In both communities we have convened and regularly meet with community advisory boards and have solicited feedback from parents and childcare providers in the communities through pilot sessions of the multisession programming. During 2021, we launched program websites, offered programming that

was well-received by the communities, and deepened our partnerships with the communities.

**Lessons Learned:** One of the main ways that we strive to improve our programming is in making it more responsive to community needs. An example of how we have done this can be seen in our professional development workshops for early care and education professionals. We originally planned to address topics we chose (e.g., grant writing, graphic design) with sessions led by experts from campus. We thought this model would allow us to bring the university’s resources to the communities we serve, both of which are several hours from the main campus. As we began to develop these workshops in collaboration with our community advisory boards, we realized the topics we had identified were not of great interest or use to the communities. Instead, we listened to our advisory boards and developed workshops that were responsive to community needs and centered Native experiences, knowledge, and expertise. These workshops have been well-attended and participants have provided overwhelmingly positive feedback.

**Sustainability Statement:** We are using several strategies to sustain this program beyond the 5 years of CYFAR funding. Community advisory boards in both communities meet regularly to enhance preexisting partnerships within the community sites and guide program development. To enhance community capacity for providing high-quality early literacy programming, we are providing professional development workshops to early care and education professionals. We regularly communicate with our program champions to share our successes and accomplishments. For example, we distribute a biannual newsletter to Extension administration and community stakeholders. We plan to make our program materials and suggestions for adapting them for use in other communities freely available online so they can be widely used even after the funding period. Finally, we are working with our community advisory boards to explore opportunities to integrate our materials into existing programs and to secure future funding for our programming.



## Helping Youth PROSPER and Avoid Opioid Misuse in Virginia

USDA Strategic Goal 1  
CYFAR Topic Area: Workforce Preparation  
Virginia – Virginia State University

**Program Report: Uplift:** We held a weekly Balancing Life webinar series to support our families and youth. More than 75 sessions have reached 2,700 distinct individuals. Grant team members also connected youth with other programs, such as 4-H Camp and 4-H Congress. As the pandemic lingered, the team implemented a virtual family-based program, Together Families PROSPER, which consisted of seven virtual sessions and supply packet deliveries. Responses to a parent retrospective survey, which assessed caregivers' perceptions of themselves as a caregiver, their families' strengths, and their children's behaviors both before and after completion of Together Families PROSPER, revealed positive changes in areas known to help youth avoid risky behaviors (e.g., substance misuse), including stress management, communication, building trust, guidelines and routines, and supporting youth. Two cohorts of families participated.



COVID-19-related absences and teacher shortages added another layer of complexity to starting new programming. The three sites still hope to launch prior to the end of the academic year. Teachers from three localities and all grant staff were trained and are equipped to teach the Life Skills Training program in person, virtually, or in a hybrid mode.

**Lessons Learned:** In November 2021, evaluators held a focus group with six PROSPER team members to gather information about the process of implementing the Together Families PROSPER program, a virtual adaptation of SFP 10–14. Running a successful program like this required a lot of input. It is much easier to run a program like this with a team of leaders than to do it alone; they bounce ideas off of each other. Having a team approach has been crucial. Recruitment was mentioned as a big challenge. It is easier to recruit people face-to-face than by email.

**Sustainability Statement:** We continue to tell the story, leverage current partnerships, seek new partnerships, and brainstorm ways to continue the programming at the end of the grant cycle. One local extension office has submitted a funding proposal to their local government to hire the grant-supported team leader for a county-funded position following the grant to continue and expand programming.

“

*This program has been great and has really strengthened my relationship with my son. We can talk about more things now.*

– Parent Participant

”

## BRIDGE2Health: An Intergenerational Mentoring Program

*USDA Strategic Goal 4*

*CYFAR Topic Area: Leadership Development*

*Ohio and Virginia – Ohio State University and Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University*

**Program Report:** Building Relationships Intergenerationally through Guided Mentoring (BRIDGE2Health) is an intergenerational mentoring research project located at communities in Cuyahoga County, Ohio, and Amherst County, Virginia, that utilizes community-based participatory research to improve teens and older adults' health and resilience by strengthening life skill competencies. The focal youth population includes teenagers, approximately half of whom are in foster and kinship (e.g., grandparent) care; older adult participants include community volunteers affiliated with a community partner. By engaging teens and older adults as partners in identifying needs and assets to which they can jointly respond through bidirectional mentoring, we anticipate achievement of short-term goals that include the formation of trusting, supportive relationships, positive social norms, and belonging. Long-term goals include teen skill building and resilience.

**Lessons Learned:** Since August 2021, BRIDGE2Health has begun its planning year by utilizing the community-based participatory research approach with partners in Ohio and Virginia. We are reminded of the importance of time for planning that permits orientation to the project and relationship building. Identifying the people in various roles allows for appropriate frequency and level of communication. Creating infrastructure that supports communication, such as scheduling monthly meetings with fiscal professionals to review budget issues, ensures that partners check in with each other routinely, setting the stage to build trust and maintain constant communication.

**Sustainability Statement:** Lessons learned guide us to maintain clear paths of communication and respect the partnerships that already exist within communities. Applying these lessons to our work in these first months of the project will help us support sustainability beyond the 5 years of CYFAR funding.





“ During the student success plan, one of the questions asked to the students is, ‘Who are your greatest supports at school?’ One of my students named me alongside a teacher and friend as someone she would turn to. – Unidos Success Coach ”

## ¡Unidos Se Puede!

USDA Strategic Goal 1  
CYFAR Topic Area: Workforce Preparation  
Oklahoma – Oklahoma State University

**Program Report:** The Unidos Se Puede program increases academic performance, reduces high-risk behaviors, and increases workforce preparation by coaching Latinx youth in important life skills such as goal setting, problem-solving, and self-control and by equipping them with an entrepreneurial mindset. Success coaches help youth set goals and learn to overcome barriers through regular coaching sessions. Community partnerships expose youth to career opportunities and give youth opportunities to form positive peer relationships. Family workshops coach parents in ways to be more involved and supportive in youth’s academic performance and promote positive family relationships.

An example of program impacts can be seen in our 8-week summer program that led youth through diverse workshops, such as financial planning and cultural awareness, and exposed them to different STEM-related careers. The 8-week summer program culminated with a trip to Oklahoma State University where youth were able to learn what it is like to be a university student through workshops taught by graduate students and faculty, eating in the cafeteria, sleeping in the dorms, and touring the campus. On campus, we hosted workshops related to personal finance, such as Reality Check!, focusing on budgeting and financial literacy. After the workshop, there was a lively group debriefing session reviewing lessons learned including the importance of preparing now for the life they would like to have in the future. This hands-on experience was very impactful for youth. At this age, youth are very interested in what they call adulting—that is, learning how to be an adult. For many youth, this was the first time they had an opportunity to manage money, and it was eye-opening.

**Lessons Learned:** During the pandemic, we were reminded just how much youth are motivated by their friends’ approval. Youth are often terrified to turn on their cameras during a Zoom call and refused all of our coaxing in this direction. However, we also noticed that having their families present often offset their fears. Many youth were willing to engage online, including turning on the camera, if one of their parents or an older sibling were present. Talking to youth about our observation, we learned that youth are hypersensitive to being judged as inadequate by friends and that the uncertainty of how to act on a Zoom call was just too threatening for them. However, when respected family member modeled this behavior for them, they were much more willing to dare to be seen. This reinforced the importance that family holds for these youth.

**Sustainability Statement:** First, we focus on creating strong partnerships. For our efforts, we were recognized as one of only 10 organizations to enter into a memorandum of understanding with the Tulsa Opportunity Project, an extracurricular organization created by Tulsa Public Schools and the Tulsa Community Foundation to manage community partnerships.

Second, we provide a value added to children’s school experience that makes our program indispensable. Published findings from our work document effects of Unidos Se Puede to reduce or delay initiation into alcohol, tobacco, and other drug use in a 4-year longitudinal study. Another study documents that if a preponderance of parents are involved in their child’s schooling in a given school, it decreases the youth substance use of even the youth whose parents are not involved. This is important because interventions are unlikely to reach all parents and because 98% of parents in the Unidos Se Puede program participated in parent-teacher conferences (one indicator of parental involvement), suggesting that the impacts of this CYFAR program reach beyond the students who are enrolled in the program.

# Seed to Bloom (StB) 4-H STEAM Sustainable Community Project

*USDA Strategic Goal 1*

*CYFAR Topic Area: Physical Activity and Science*

*Ohio – Central State University*

**Program Report:** The project goal is to provide 4-H after-school experience in positive youth development to underserved and at-risk youth living in urban and rural communities through experiential learning activities in science, technology, engineering, agriculture, and mathematics (STEAM) education; healthy living; community and civic engagement; and career preparedness for them to be functional, responsible citizens and caring adults. The project objectives include (a) creating and developing a strong community partnership that fosters positive youth development based on the needs and strengths of youth, their families, and communities; (b) encouraging youth to improve their dietary habits, nutrition, health and wellness, and physical activities; and (c) gaining access to healthier foods through hands-on activities in gardening and healthy food preparation.

The expected project outcomes include enhanced community partnership and relationships with Seed to Bloom 4-H after-school programs; increased frequency of healthy eating habits and decreased unhealthy eating habits; and increased community involvement in changing patterns of food consumption. To accomplish these outcomes, the project incorporates innovative technology use, a multilevel approach to community involvement, and a sustainability plan. By bringing together community partners to teach and learn about nutrition, health and wellness, and youth development in a program with families using fun activities, the project addresses society's need for stronger families, healthier communities, and youth prepared for the future.

**Lessons Learned:** We have learned that working with limited resource families in an inner-city setting can be a challenge. We need dedicated staff who understand and are willing to work after normal working hours to accommodate the needs of these families. In addition, if we want to partner with existing after-school programs, including faith-based organizations and youth agencies, we should have planned activities to complement their scheduled plan of work. For example, we should have our program staff assist with homework or tutoring and then transition into scheduled program after students have completed their homework. This will demonstrate to student participants that 4-H staff care about their welfare and success.

**Sustainability Statement:** Central State University Land-Grant Extension support is strong at the faith-based community sites and public and private schools in the inner-city that currently work with 4-H youth on agricultural and natural resource and family and consumer sciences program related issues for limited resource families. The after-school programs at these faith-based communities are reaching out to partner with our programs to establish 4-H clubs within their existing after-school and in-school programs. Some of our focus group interviews and several of the evaluation components reflect the 4-H model. We currently have students registered to participate in local and state fairs where students will show what they have learned in a public setting. Our residential summer camps provide Seed to Bloom participants the opportunity for learning lifelong skills that will not only improve their health and wellness but benefit their families and community as well. The project is gradually developing a youth and adult volunteer base through our online enrollment system for community members to become engaged in the project. The project will serve as a pipeline to enroll youth into Central State University Extension summer camps as well as Central State University college programs.

“ This planning year has been great. We have been able to meet our recruitment goals for students and volunteers. Now we are looking forward to hosting our first Juntos academy. ”  
–Program Leader

## Prairie View A&M University Sustainable Community Project

USDA Strategic Goal 4  
CYFAR Topic Area: Leadership Development and Workforce Preparation  
Texas – Prairie View A&M University

**Program Report:** Prairie View A&M University is partnering with the Juntos Program out of North Carolina State University to empower Latino youth and their families to prepare for success in high school, achieve high school graduation, and gain the resources needed to access and succeed in higher education. The Juntos Program is a family engagement and 4-H youth development program that engages cohorts of Latino youth in an intensive curriculum from eighth through 12th grade. The four components of Juntos are (a) Juntos family workshops and bimonthly check-in family nights; (b) bimonthly after-school 4-H club meetings; (c) monthly one-on-one success coaching and mentoring by college-age mentors; and (d) summer programming at 4-H camps, college campus visits, and other educational conferences.

This 1st year of the program was a planning year during which we focused on hiring site coordinators, building collaborations, meeting with local leaders, running after-school 4-H clubs, holding introductory family nights, finding volunteers to work to help run the Juntos program going forward, and planning a Juntos summer academy to be held in Cameron and Bexar counties. We were able to recruit six volunteers and 60 youth. Planning meetings have been conducted in each school, and schools have involvement and support from principals, academic deans, and teachers.

**Lessons Learned:** In this 1st year, we learned how to work together as a team and established trust that we can get things done together. For example, we are working with North Carolina State University to streamline and reduce the costs of the evaluation of our project as we find efficiencies in numbers. We learned that working with volunteers is invigorating and at the same time a challenge due to their many other commitments. We are proud of our ability to engage six volunteers to help with Juntos. We also learned of the excitement of the youth who are joining the program and who will be making the Juntos Program what they want it to be in their community. Now serving 60 youth, we have established projects and developed a strong Juntos summer academy that will take place in August.

**Sustainability Statement:** The Prairie View A&M Sustainable Community Project team will work with the local community advisory groups to develop strategic sustainability plans. We have long-term relationships with the school districts and various community partners. We are bringing together these partners in each county to form a local advisory group to find additional funding and resources for the project. These groups meet quarterly during Years 2–5 to plan and effectively carry out their sustainability plans in each community. Evaluation results from each community will be shared via an annual report in school and community meetings and national conferences. We will continue to seek internal funding from our respective universities and local school systems and apply for grants from the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, the San Antonio Area Foundation, the AT&T Aspire Foundation, and the Communities Foundation of Texas.

# Acceptance Commitment Therapy Program for Custodial Grandchildren and Custodial Grandparents

USDA Strategic Goal 4

CYFAR Topic Area: Parenting and Workforce Preparation

Iowa – Iowa State University

**Program Report:** In the past couple of months, we have been conducting another session of the CYFAR interACT intervention program. InterACT utilizes acceptance commitment therapy (ACT) to make a meaningful impact on program participants' lives and teach them tools to improve their mental well-being and relationships. The goals of the program are to increase psychological flexibility, emotional resilience, and trust and family connection as well as improve self-efficacy, problem-solving, decision-making skills, and positive social relationships for all of our participants. Participants were recruited with the help of Iowa State Outreach and Extension. After sign-up, our researchers were in touch with the participants and supplied them with the information needed to be successful in the program. Individual, weekly sessions were set up with children and adults separately over the course of 4 weeks.

**Lessons Learned:** We recognized that many parents were juggling multiple responsibilities and did not have enough time to complete the assignments. On the other hand, children were more interested in and provided feedback for the program (directly to the facilitators). Feedback from participants helped us to

revise the current curriculum to reflect their general interests and activities they would like to see more in the program. Facilitators also reported on the general implementation of the program. They recognized that the dual mode of delivery (i.e., virtual and self-paced sessions) were effective in generating action plans and behavior changes (i.e., prosocial behaviors) among children.

**Sustainability Statement:** Currently, our project is planning to meet with a local advisory committee for sustainability planning and grant writing. To initiate the sustainability process, we have completed the following: (a) online self-paced module, (b) curriculum for newly trained facilitators, (c) educational materials (supplementary diary and behavior checklist) ready to be printed and distributed, (d) marketing flyer (editable version for date/location change). Finally, our project director will train one of the facilitators as a trainer so that she can train other trainers in the future. The recorded lecture and training materials will be made available for future usage.

“

*This program helped us to understand each other better. My son started sharing more, and I was able to see the issue from his eye as well.*

*– Parent Participant*

”

# Expanding 4-H to Urban Latino/a Audiences

*USDA Strategic Goal 4*

*CYFAR Topic Area: Nutrition and Physical Activity*

*Missouri – University of Missouri*

**Program Report:** communities and the partners within this project while prioritizing the goals of Expanding 4-H to Urban Latino/a Audiences's scope of work. At the beginning of 2021, program efforts were driven by planning, the community, and organizational goals. This included program implementation, professional development of the CYFAR team, and formation of the partnership advisory group. We were working on the transition from development and planning to in-person 4-H club offerings.

**Lessons Learned:** Reflection on the program year exposed the importance of rebuilding engagement and trust in the Latino community and public and charter schools during the postpandemic era. Similar to the height of the pandemic, this year continued to present limitations related to full access to charter and public schools. This involved updating and building upon our program designed to focus on a communication plan that maintained existing relationships established in 2019. Like many other organizations, we suffered the great resignation of Extension professionals in the area. During this year, we started the process of hiring our fourth 4-H specialist in 4 years and reclassifying the personnel dedicated to this initiative. During this time we also continued, through adjustments, the delivery of hybrid programming, continuing efforts to send printed packets with learning resources to the participating residence.

**Sustainability Statement:** Progress in the area of sustaining a program has been demonstrated through increasing and reclassifying the staffing structure, building community partnerships, informal community assessments, and program instruction education.

## DIVE4Tech Joint Sustainable Community Project: A University of Idaho and Washington State University Collaboration

*USDA Strategic Goal 4*

*CYFAR Topic Area: Leadership Development, Technology, and Workforce Development  
Idaho and Washington – University of Idaho and Washington State University*

**Program Report:** Juntos Sustainable Community Project: University of Idaho and Washington State University Joint Project focuses on the CYFAR Teen Outcome, involves middle and high school Latinx students and parents in a robust club program, improves academic outcomes and college and career awareness, and provides enriching activities to support skill building. The University of Idaho Sustainable Community Project is using the Juntos Program model and curriculum developed by North Carolina State University Extension. Two sites in Idaho, Canyon County and Coeur d'Alene Reservation, and two sites in Washington, Chelan and Whatcom Counties, are served. Diversity in 4-H in Technology (DIVE4Tech) focuses on increasing high school graduation rates and college aspirations for at-risk and vulnerable Latinx and Native American teens while increasing their workforce readiness, technology skills, resilience, and social protective factors.

**Lessons Learned:** The Idaho and Washington sites emphasized physical and psychological safety in program planning, which included screening and training staff and volunteers to model healthy behavior during activities. Local school and Extension partnerships established a standard of respect, trust, and multicultural awareness. These supportive relationships include cultural aspects in planning creative experiential learning for participants. Teens are provided opportunities to belong and empowerment to pursue academic success. Planning recruitment of youth and families modeled respect for individual and cultural differences; bilingual resources; and hands-on, culturally appropriate, and intergenerational experiences. Adaptation of experiential learning activities is necessary based on the interests and needs of Latinx and Native American teens and families at each site.

**Sustainability Statement:** The DIVE4Tech project directors, evaluators, extension professionals, and volunteers are experienced in leading culturally relevant youth development and family engagement programs to effectively engage Latinx and Native American communities. Parent and teen workshops and community events will be conducted in Spanish as well as adapted to Native American, Schitsu'umsh, Interior Salishan language cultural considerations. Our long-term relationships with the school districts and tribal partners provide the opportunity to collaborate in local advisory groups and find additional stakeholders, funding, and resources for program sustainability. The advisory groups in each county will assess needs and assesses to improve site quality and sustainability annually. Evaluation results from annual reports are shared locally, statewide, and nationally. These results reflect overall program goals: leading youth to academic success and college and career readiness in Idaho and Washington.

# Juntos IN for Success

USDA Strategic Goal 1

CYFAR Topic Area: Leadership Development, Parenting, Science, and Workforce Preparation

Indiana – Purdue University

**Program Report:** The Juntos 4-H Program is an initiative that focuses on improving the school experience for students and their families by providing resources and a built-in support system within the community. The goal is to raise graduation rates and provide more opportunities for postsecondary education within the Latino community. COVID-19 made it difficult for all Indiana sites to fully implement Juntos 4-H during 2021. All project sites in Indiana needed to be creative and resourceful in how they went about implementing the program. With two urban communities and one rural community working on the program, various challenges were present because of the ongoing nature of the global pandemic. In Jackson County, youth were able to meet in person for family engagement workshops, after-school 4-H Club meetings, and a summer academy experience. While visitors were not allowed on Purdue University's campus in summer of 2021, the Purdue Agriculture Department made a special trip to Jackson County for a summer program for all Juntos 4-H youth. Jackson County was able to recruit their second cohort of families in fall of 2021. They hosted in-person family workshops during the fall and the after-school 4-H Club, The Achievers, met twice per month. In Marion County, two 4-H SPARK Clubs were implemented in spring of 2021 when most outside organizations were not allowed in the school system. The 4-H Program in Indiana is a highly trusted organization, so the school system allowed these learning opportunities to take place. The school administration saw the importance of opening the doors for youth in Wayne Township to learn more about 4-H and hopefully join Juntos in the future. In Lake County, plans were underway with one school, but with administration changes, another option had

to be explored. Toward the end of 2021, plans were shifted, and Lake County began working with a new school to implement Juntos 4-H in early 2022.

**Key Lessons Learned:** We have learned a great deal throughout the entire process of implementing Juntos 4-H in the state of Indiana. We learned to pivot our goals and timeline of implementation due to COVID-19. While not all sites were up and formally running in 2021, progress was made for sustainable, long-term growth of the program in all three counties. We learned that important meetings and conversations could take place virtually in order to implement as soon as school systems were ready to fully implement the Juntos 4-H Program. We learned that there are barriers to providing culturally relevant programs and worked to eliminate various barriers for families to fully participate in the program in the future. We learned that school systems want to support their youth and will work hard to make sure there are programs in place beyond the school day to make this a reality. Community partners in each county have come together for the benefit of our Indiana Latino families.

**Sustainability:** Sustainability has been a topic of discussion for Juntos 4-H from the beginning. All sites have identified community partners, local businesses, and school corporations to support the program in the future. We will continue working with community partners, the Indiana 4-H Foundation, school corporations, local business, and corporate sponsors to sustain and expand Juntos 4-H and make it as accessible as possible to communities in the state of Indiana.



2021

**CYFAR**

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Minnesota – University of Minnesota

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## Stepping Into STEM

Nevada – University of Nevada

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Maine – University of Maine

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Ohio – Ohio State University

- Pannell, C., O’Piela, D., Sharn, A. R., Schier, H., Knopp, M., & Gunther, C. (2021). Simple Suppers - Gone Online (SS-Go): Feasibility of a family meals program transitioned from in-person to online in the COVID-19 pandemic. *Current Developments in Nutrition*, 5(Issue Supplement 2), 255. [https://doi.org/10.1093/cdn/nzab029\\_056](https://doi.org/10.1093/cdn/nzab029_056)

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