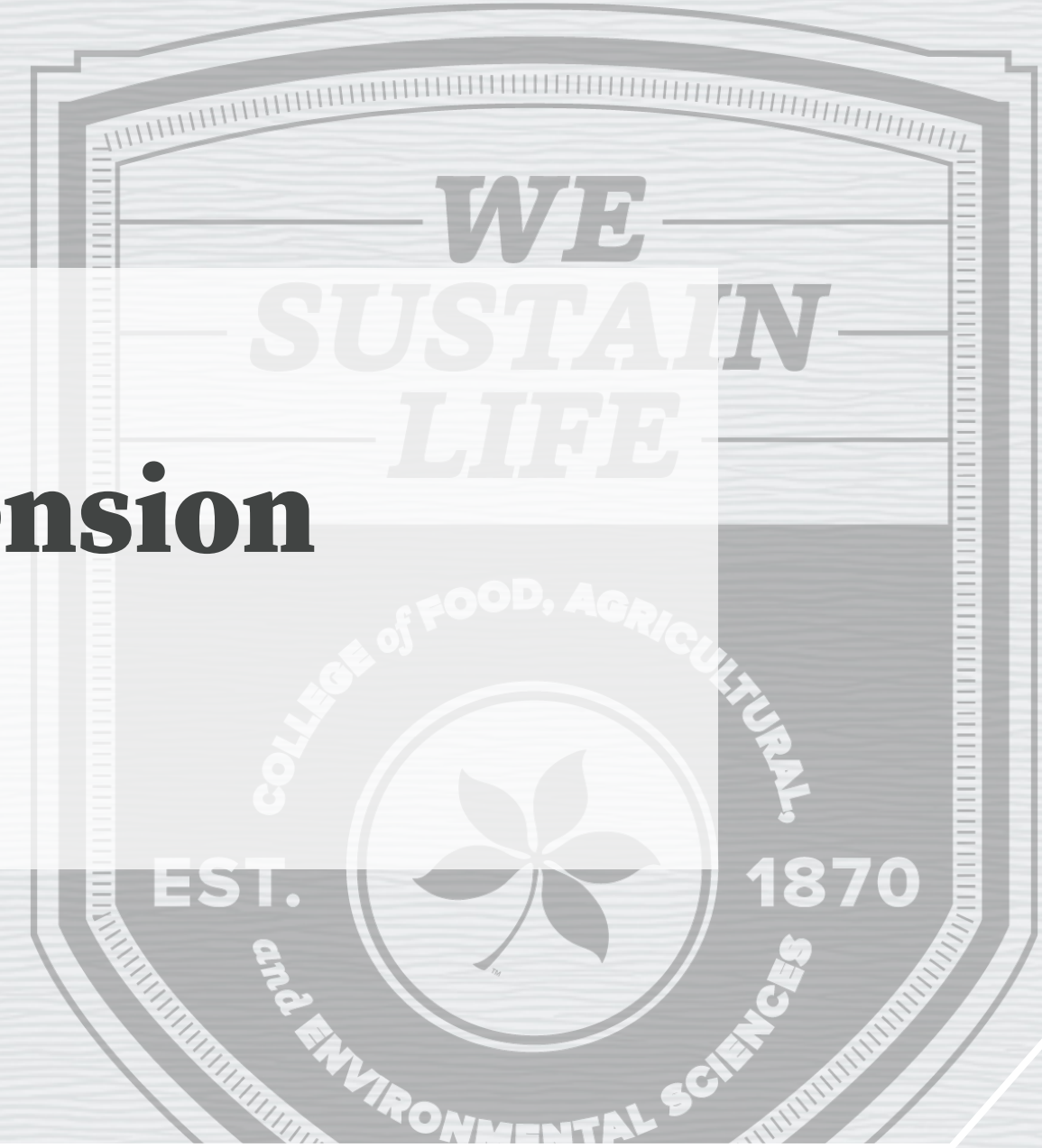
CFAES

Lucas County Extension

2026

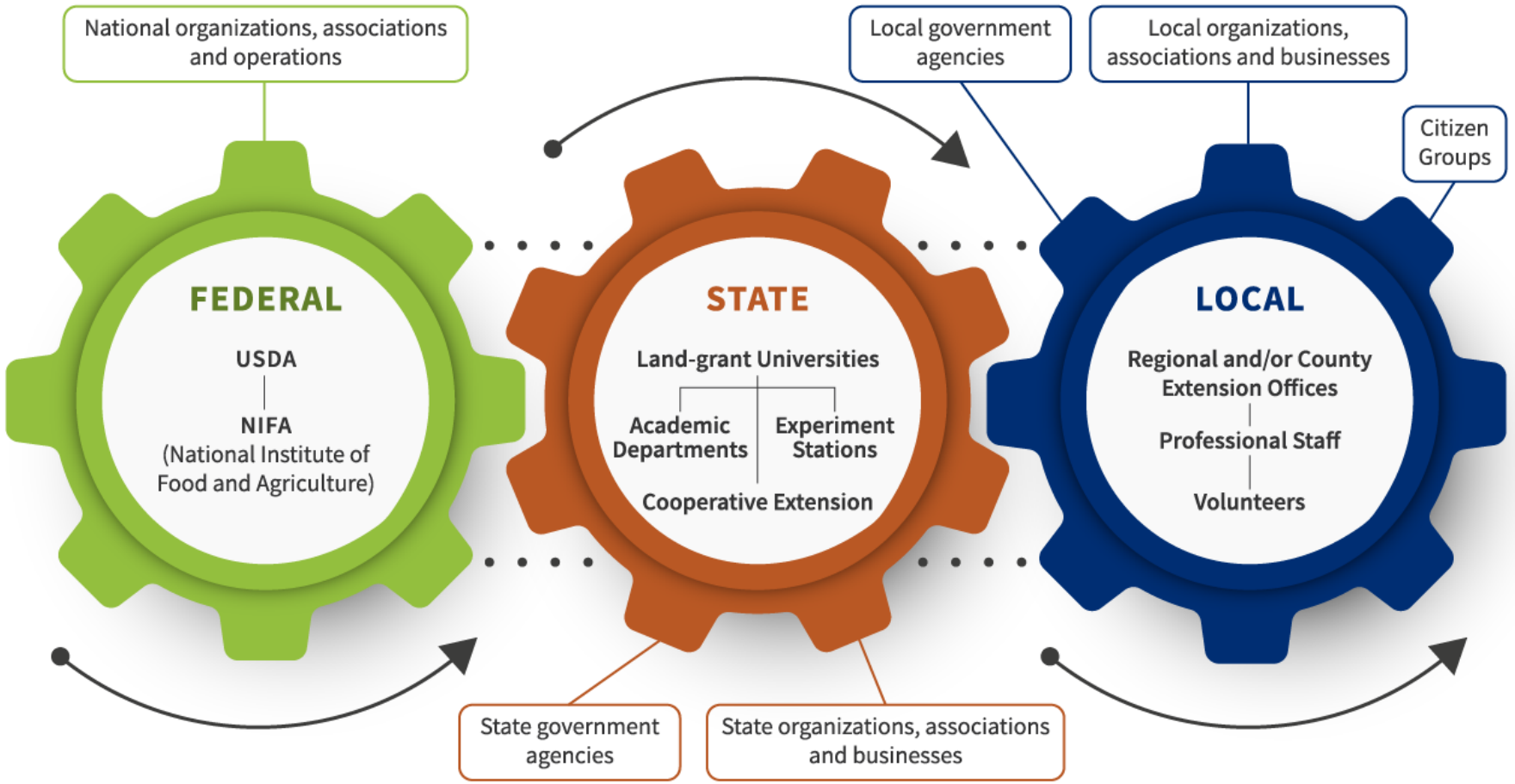


THE OHIO STATE UNIVERSITY
EXTENSION

Basic Premises

- County Extension staff and volunteers show up, care, and continue to learn
- Our work in the community is stronger and better with representation with as many Extension program areas as possible (ANR, 4H, FCS, CD)
- All four Extension program areas hold equal value – we can absolutely have a passion, specialization and favorite topic and they are equal for community outreach as they address different community needs
- If we do not promote the local County Extension office, the four program areas are insignificant

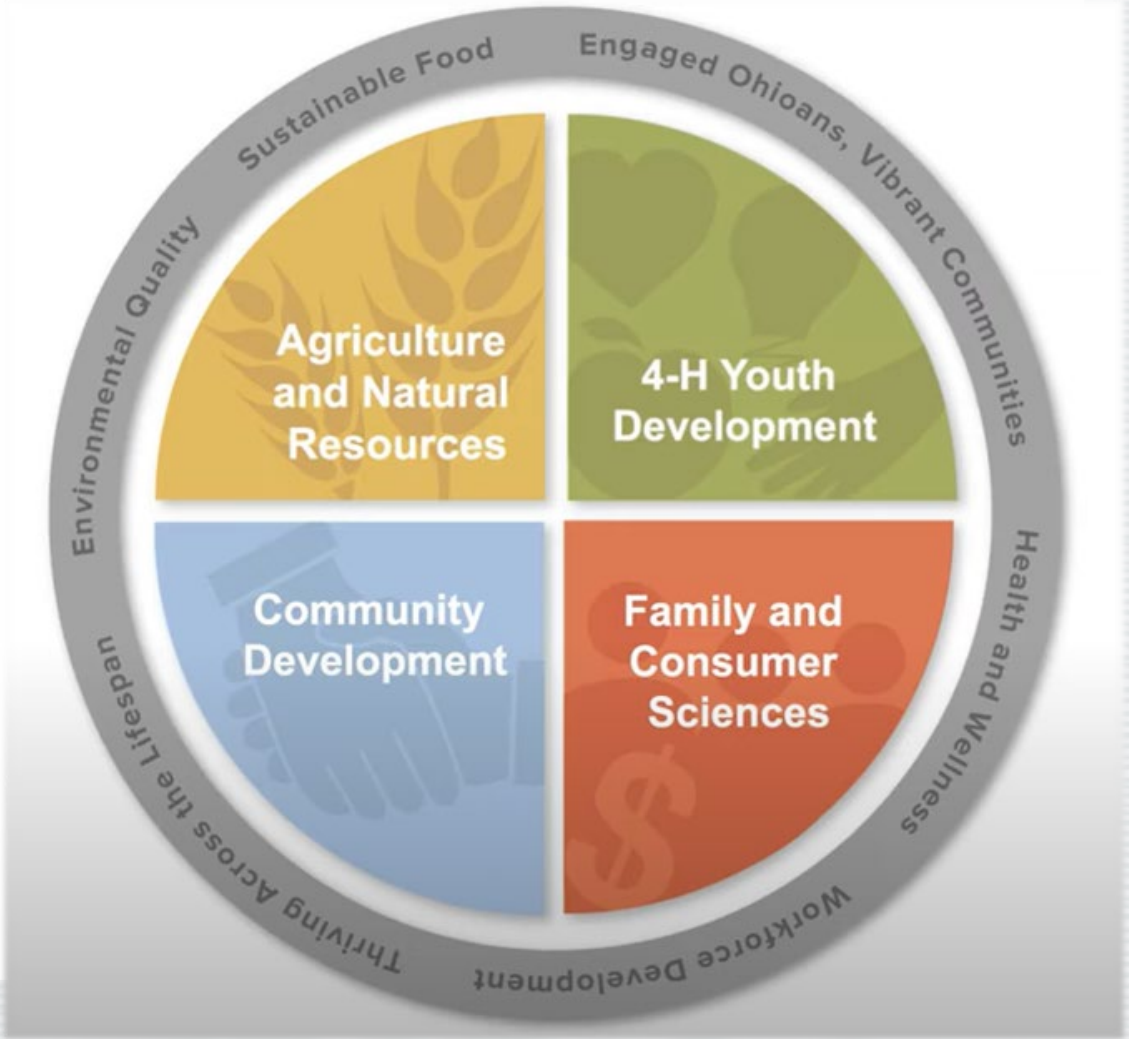
National Cooperative Extension System



Ohio State University Extension

Four Program Areas

- Agriculture and Natural Resources (ANR)
- 4H Youth Development (4H)
- Family and Consumer Sciences (FCS)
- Community Development (CD)



Appropriation for Cooperative Extension

Smith-Lever Act, 1914

"**shared partnership** among the federal, state and county levels of government. Funding was shared to ensure that there was support from each of the levels of government to help the fledgling system achieve stability and leverage resources. The funding flows from Congress to the U.S. Department of Agriculture and then out to the land-grant universities throughout the United States **to be matched with monies from the states and counties receiving programs**"

In 1917 Lucas County hired the first Agricultural Agent, Ray Donnan, $1,500.00.

About his interview, "My lack of farm background, those present seemed to feel, was no drawback to an urban county" (p 267)

Shared partnership begins at county level

- **Every county office in the state looks different** with decisions about priorities, funding, staffing, etc.
- From the **County Commissioners Association of Ohio (CCAO) handbook:**

"The ***common items*** in the county [Extension] budget include: partial salary of educators, salary and benefits of office associates, program coordinators and assistants, and other county funded-employees, as well as travel, office rent, office supplies, office equipment, and other items necessary to operate a county office" (chapter 136, last updated December 2023)

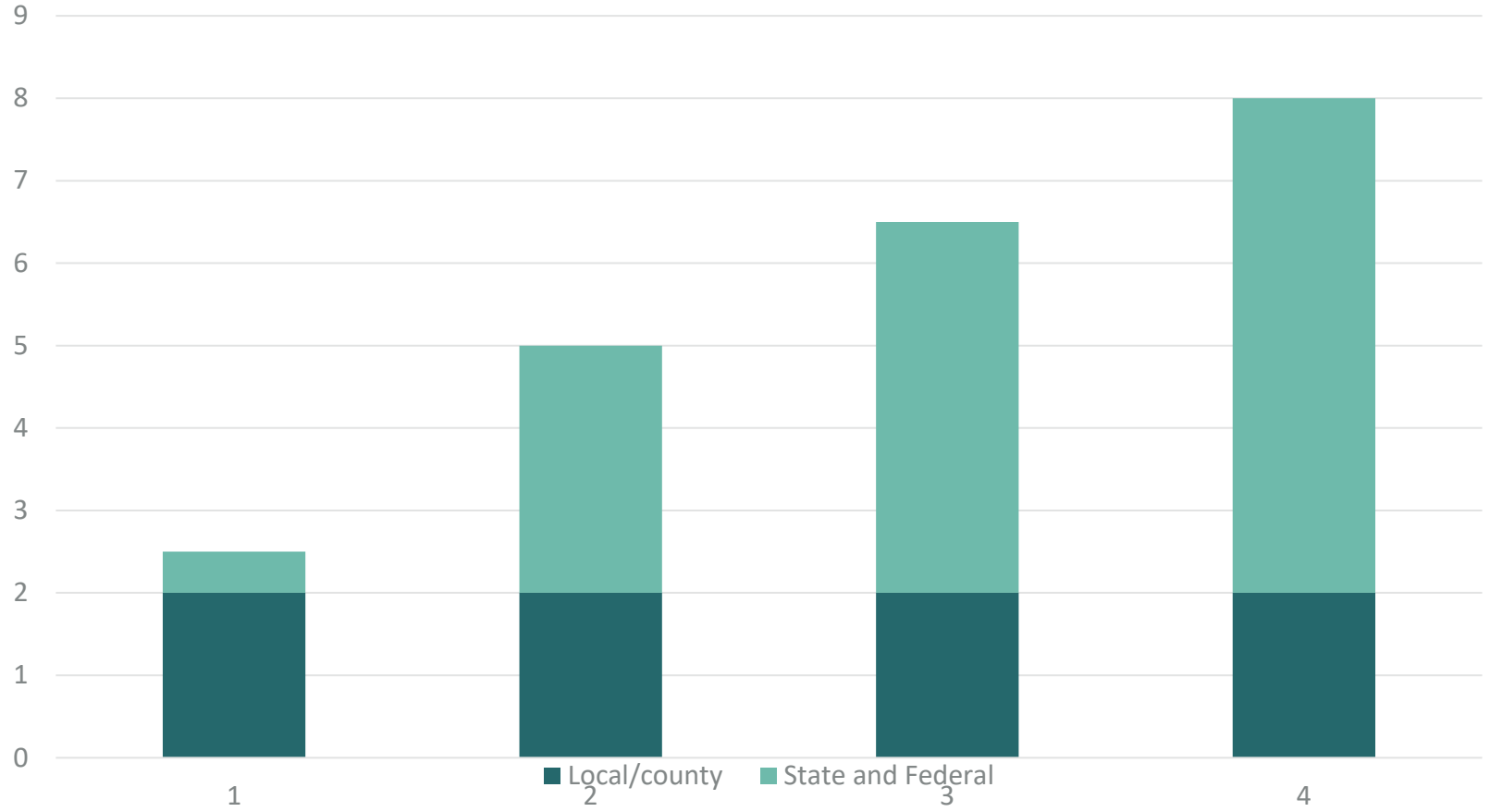
Also from CCAO: County general fund support for Extension is entirely discretionary. The only requirement for the county is to provide Extension office space. (Lucas County has contributed $100,000 a year)

“Partial Salary of Educators”

Local funding from county leverages a match of state and federal dollars to provide Extension Educator positions

- The Extension Educator position is funded by local (county), state, and federal dollars
- An Extension Educator position is specific to one of the four program areas (most often)
- To fully fund an Extension Educator the county cost share is $42,750 a year. Everything above that amount (salary and benefits) is met by the state and federal share.

Local Contribution and state and federal “match” Extension Educator

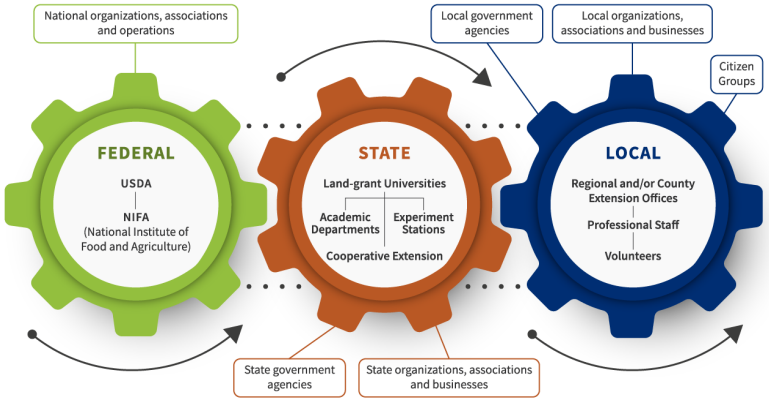


Technically, it’s not a “match”. It’s really the difference between $42,750, the rest of the salary and the benefits.

This also applies to Extension Faculty members (but not right now for any Lucas County Educators)

Annual Budget Request to County Commissioners

- At the county level, Ohio State Extension gives an annual budget proposal
- The agreed formula is $42,750 local dollars for an Extension educator
- Additional funding to cover office supplies, educator travel (in county programs and meetings, regional and state meetings, etc.)
- Additional local funding can also be used for salary and benefits of office associates, program coordinators and assistants to support the office



A few points about our county budget

- Because Amy Stone had worked very hard, for many years within her expertise and program area, she had built up enough (release time) funds to hire a Program Assistant within ANR, specifically to work with the MGV program for a specific period of time.
- We have not requested additional dollars from the County Commissioners for any additional staff (office coordinators or program assistants) as we were told not to increase our ask.
- Jess and Patrice have had to divide up the work responsibilities of an office coordinator (front office work, marketing, supplies and financial etc.)

Review county contributions

- Step #1 every year is the next year's budget request
- This is based off state agreement (OSU and CCAO)
- A $42,750 local commitment, covers one Extension Educator
- Each Extension Educator represents a specific program area
- Local (county) contribution CAN cover other county expenses, but this is ***the*** way we fund Extension Educator positions
- Any other ways of covering the cost of an Extension Educators is going to be much more costly.
- Step #1 (county funding) unlocks the next level for other opportunities
- Extension Educators all work on additional funding for specific projects

After Extension Educator positions are funded, the next level of funding is for program areas

Examples:

- Cost recovery (fees for programming)
- Release time (internal, larger grants within the University system, “buys” a percentage of work time)
- Other grants (some are very specific)
- Other contributions
- Donations (Lucas general, 4H, MGV online donations)

NOTE: these don’t necessarily cover staffing

A few points about our county funding

- As an Extension Educator, we all work on “buckets” of funding for programming
- Most often it is aligned with the program area, sometimes it is cross-program and sometimes is for the county office
- Jess has been awarded specific grant funding through 4H, she has been invited to do work that resulted in release time. Amy and Patrice have received release time over the years for very different specializations, different amounts and different length of times.
- As complex as our annual budget request is**, grant funding has another level of complexity including a percentage for grant management through the Office of Sponsored Programs (OSP)**

Other Questions:

- Do you get funds from the OSU football team?

  Nope

- What has changed with Lucas County Extension staffing since April 2025?

  Last year we had 12 individuals listed on our brochure and a horticulture hotline – including 2 PT AmeriCorps, SNAP-Ed, EFNEP, and county employees in 3 program areas. Due to federal cuts (AmeriCorps Public Health and SNAP-Ed) 2 retirements, and an end to position we currently have five individuals listed.

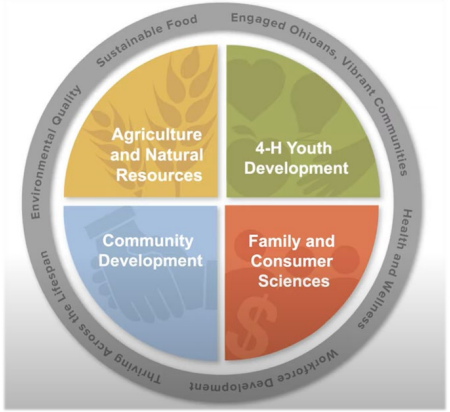
- Who are the other people listed as staff on your county extension webpage and phone tree?

In addition to Patrice and Jess. Three EFNEP employees (Expanded Food and Nutrition Education), Suzanne supervises in Lucas and Hamilton Counties, Kelsey and Monica teach nutrition specifically to Lucas County families that meet income requirements. We will have a new supervisor starting this month, under a new district map of seven counties. NOTE: none of these are paid by county funds.

- Where do we go from here? About Lucas County Extension office and then more specifically, Lucas County Master Gardener Program

Lucas County

Arbor Day 2023 and 2026



Horticulture office message:

The Lucas County Extension office is located in the second building at the Toledo Botanical Garden. We have 4H Youth Development, Family and Consumer Sciences (FCS) and EFNEP nutrition.

Unfortunately, with insufficient local funding we cannot rehire an Agriculture and Natural Resources Educator. Therefore, we do not have staffing for a Horticulture Hotline like the past.

If you would like to email a horticulture question you can visit **mastergardener.osu.edu/ask**

If you would like to share your experience or concerns about reduced local services, you may contact the Lucas County Commissioners. You can contact them here **go.osu.edu/LucasCommissioners**

2026 OSU Extension, Lucas County staff

Back to Basics

- Jess 4H and Patrice FCS, no one in ANR position, no one in office support
- We strive to not only meet, but excel in our job descriptions which are based on our specific program areas
- Divided and co-cover the tasks of an office associate (barely)
- We are also trying to stay respectful of family life balance and our job descriptions
- We are not interested in perfectionism; we are interested in quality educational programming. We have nicknamed 2026 our “back to basics” year.
- For an idea of our programs, please see the Lucas County Extension Educators handout

Lucas County Master Gardener Volunteer Program, 2026

Back to Basics – You have:

- Access to reporting system, Hands on Connect (we cannot offer local support on how to use it – nor do we sign into it), encouraged to continue established volunteering
- Access to state programs
- Welcome to partner with Lucas County Extension office on garden programs that complement 4H and FCS in Lucas County

Request of MGVs by county staff (Patrice and Jess)

- If tabling at community events, and/or volunteer sites promote both MGV program as well as the County Extension office
- Help promote county programming on social media and flyers
- Keep us in the loop if there's public information

Summer 2026

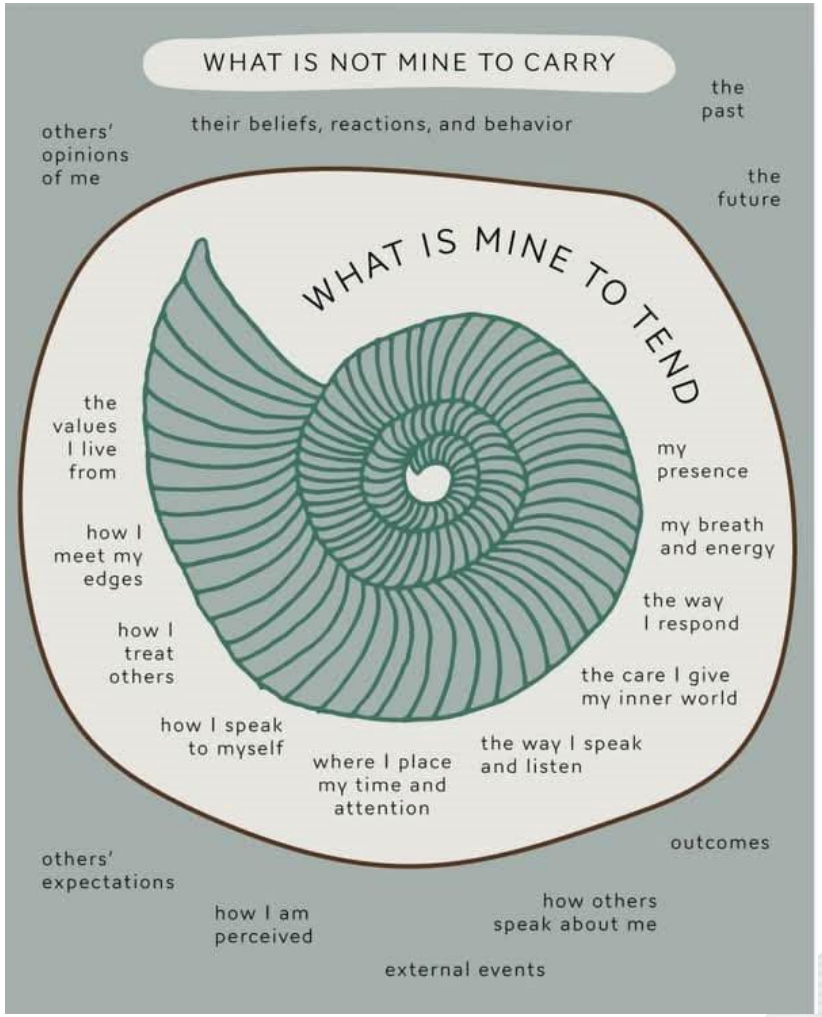
OSU Extension, Lucas County staff

- "regular" educational programming in FCS and 4H
- Jess has the closest turn-around time for Lucas County fair and 4H overnight camp at Camp Palmer (she's busy and physically out of the office June – July)
- All – consider how you can "show up" at the **Lucas County fair**, enter a project, encourage youth, wave to Patrice at the parade or donate to Amy at the Celebrity Livestock Show or high-five Jess for her work all week long!
- **Four raised beds**, Sensory Garden at TBG, Artist Village, "field trips" to site, needs tended and watered
- August, **Sneak a Zucchini** (we will collect produce Tuesday, August 11th)
- New District 2 Director (new district, new hire, new supervisor)

Summer 2026 - continued

OSU Extension, Lucas County staff

- Schedule fall and winter programming 2026 and 2027 with partners
- Schedule a Tuesday meeting with Lucas County Commissioners, introduce our new District Director and review our partnership including funding
- Submit annual county Extension budget for 2027 for additional funding ($42,750 per Educator, more than $100,000 from general fund) with the hopes we can reinstate the ANR Educator position



What are you available and interested in doing as an MGV?

- Continued volunteering at established sites and projects
- Answer local questions (without the hotline but questions from walk-ins, emails, and voice mail to the county office)
- Assist others with Hands On Connect
- Attend monthly state MGV meetings with Jen Andon and keeping Patrice and Jess in the loop
- Create social media content that can also be shared on OSU Extension, Lucas County Facebook page (it can be garden specific)
- Assist with a 2026 county project: 4 raised beds, outreach at Lucas County Fair, Sneak a Zucchini (Aug 11 this year), share all content about county Extension office on social media
- Other:
- Other:
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References

go.osu.edu/LCfunding

- https://ccao.org/aws/CCAO/asset_manager/get_file/713194?ver=4