

Extension and Engagement Briefing

BACKGROUND

Extension and engagement are core to Oregon State University's mission. OSU employees and volunteers engage with people, communities, businesses, organizations and governments statewide, nationally and overseas. This work improves the health and well-being of Oregonians and Oregon communities, encourages economic development and industry innovation, co-creates and shares knowledge, and helps facilitate access to education for learners of all ages.

Building reciprocal, mutually beneficial relationships underpins OSU's engagement philosophy. The Division of Extension and Engagement, all colleges, administrative divisions and OSU's Statewide Public Service Programs (the "OSU Statewides") — OSU Extension Service, Agricultural Experiment Station and Forest Research Laboratory — undertake outreach and engagement activities to varying degrees. OSU holds the [Carnegie Community Engagement Classification](#), a designation that recognizes this university-wide commitment.

DIVISION OF EXTENSION AND ENGAGEMENT (DEE)

Overall leadership of OSU's engagement efforts is the responsibility of the vice provost for extension and engagement. The vice provost also serves as director of OSU Extension and oversees DEE units and initiatives. Broadly, this work serves to advance university priorities in three complementary areas: community engagement, partnerships and extension.

Community Engagement

DEE provides collaborative leadership for university-wide, community engaged scholarship and community engagement best practices. This includes seeking opportunities for greater collaboration and integration across OSU colleges and divisions, while engaging community partners in developing mutually beneficial solutions to real-world issues.

DEE oversees the professional and continuing education unit, [PACE](#), which provides support for division programs and some OSU colleges to engage noncredit learners and reach new audiences through accessible and scalable online professional development. The team also collaborates with external companies, agencies and nonprofit organizations to design and deploy workforce training. As one of several university units that contribute to OSU's commitment to provide accessible educational offerings and advance its position in workforce and professional education, PACE will collaborate with [the university's newly formed Division of Educational Ventures](#).

Partnerships

In support of OSU's priority on educational access, DEE works with other OSU units to help expand partnerships with community colleges, increase support for transfer students, and develop new programs and initiatives that support college access for underserved students. DEE also provides leadership and oversight of partnership-driven programs including Open Campus, Juntos and an in-development Native American and Tribal communities program.

OSU Extension

While units across the university undertake engagement activities, OSU Extension is integral to these efforts within Oregon. Even when engagement activities are not directly part of its programs, OSU's Extension's infrastructure and community networks often help facilitate the work.

OSU Extension is broadly focused on creating healthy communities and economies; resilient and productive forests and natural ecosystems; sustainable agriculture, food systems and gardening; and thriving youth, individuals and families. Extension operationalizes efforts through six administrative regions and eight program areas: 4-H youth development, agriculture and natural resources, family and community health, forestry and natural resources, Open Campus/Juntos, OSU KidSpirit, Outdoor School and OSU Sea Grant.

Extension and Engagement Funding

OSU Extension is the largest part of DEE’s budget and is primarily funded by public tax dollars through federal, state and county appropriations as well as grants. OSU Extension was a \$98.9M enterprise in FY2023. As shown in Figure 1, roughly half of its financial support comes from the state of Oregon, including the lottery-funded Outdoor School.

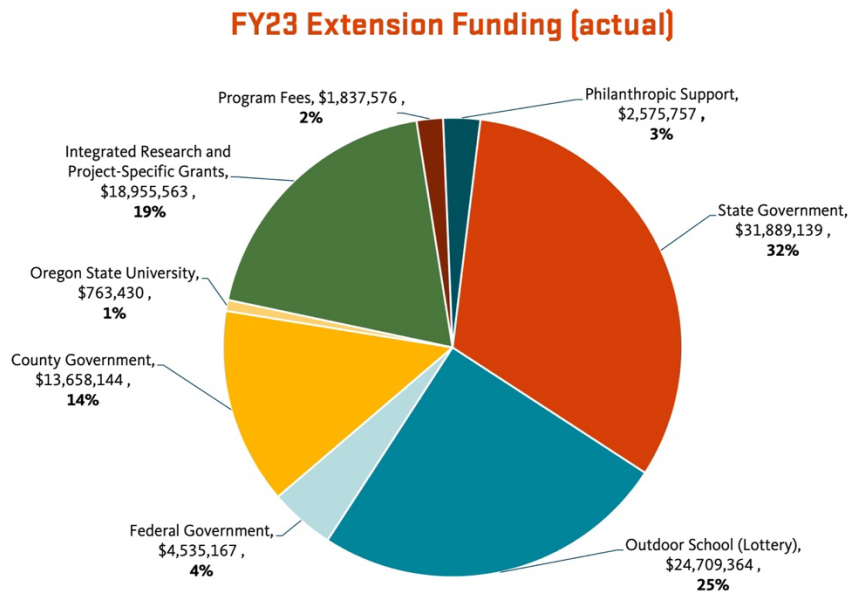


Figure 1. FY2023 Extension Funding. Integrated research and project-specific grants based on amounts awarded in FY2023. Philanthropic support based on ending FY23 balance at OSU Foundation for Extension, including 4-H Foundation. All amounts based on actual expenditure and revenue.

In Oregon’s 2023 legislative session, OSU Extension received \$69.8M (a \$10.5M increase) for the 2023-25 biennium. This represents full continued service level funding including restoration of a deficit from the 2021-23 allocation and additional funding that provides for the university to sustain and grow vital programs and fill positions in areas of critical need across the state. Based on constituent input and identified needs, this investment will support priorities that include:

- Honoring OSU’s commitment to keeping a 4-H youth development professional in all counties that partner with Extension.
- Staffing to meet needs in critical sectors of Oregon’s diverse agricultural industry, which helps drive rural and urban economic development.
- Keeping Oregon’s small farms and community gardens visible and vibrant and Oregon’s forests and landscapes resilient and productive.
- Adding expertise and capacity for OSU Extension to collaborate statewide in addressing Oregonians’ mental, behavioral and community health needs.

For FY2024, \$784,000 in Education & General (E&G) funds support personnel and programming that focus on engagement efforts above and beyond the mission of the Extension Service.

PACE is a self-supporting unit, primarily funded by grants, contracts, fees and enrollment revenue. To maximize access, the majority of PACE offerings are offered on a low-cost basis. College partners receive the bulk of revenue generated by their respective programs.

DEE works with the OSU Foundation and the Oregon 4-H Foundation on philanthropic efforts related to extension and engagement. Philanthropic gifts are an important and growing component of the division's funding portfolio.

METRICS

OSU and DEE use the following metrics as indicators of the reach and impact of extension and engagement efforts. DEE has filled a long-vacant evaluation and reporting position that will help review and establish outcome and impact measures for extension and engagement that are aligned with the university's new strategic plan and extension and engagement priorities.

Youth Engagement

OSU is a recognized national leader in positive youth development. Touchpoints with young people through DEE programs often represent a first contact with the university and an opportunity to build awareness that can lead to long-term engagement. DEE also collaborates with other OSU units to directly serve youth or support youth programs. Key OSU partners include the Office of Youth Safety and Compliance and Precollege Programs.

In reporting year 2022, more than 87,100 youth participated in DEE programs, including through 4-H clubs and activities (20,172); Outdoor School (35,367); Open Campus/Juntos (1,333); OSU KidSpirit (5,413) and Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program Education (SNAP-Ed) nutrition education (24,825). Overall, these data represent a 34% increase from the previous year and a continued upward trend, as expected. Pre-pandemic, more than 100,000 youth were typically engaged in DEE programs annually.

Degree Completion and College Access

DEE programs including Open Campus and Juntos are working to help increase Oregon students' high school and college graduation rates and support degree- and transfer-seeking students at Oregon community colleges.

Since 2012, the Juntos program has served 6,500 Juntos student and family participants, with 1,912 in the past year. Juntos participants have a more than 90% high-school graduation and college-going rate.

From September 2022-September 2023, Open Campus (non-Juntos) engaged 782 students in programming and served an additional 167 community college students. Since 2020, DEE has tracked matriculation to OSU of students who participated in Open Campus programs. To date, 559 students have matriculated to OSU, with 48 in the last year.

Volunteer Engagement

Volunteer engagement extends OSU Extension's capacity to deliver robust and impactful programming in 4-H; master programming in gardening, food preservation, woodland

management, natural resources and beekeeping; and in Juntos family programming. In 2022, OSU Extension reported 8,085 volunteers statewide, up slightly from 7,894 the year before.

OSU Statewides Funding and OSU Extension Grant Funding

Dollars leveraged per appropriated dollar for Statewides (SWPS) research is a [university-tracked strategic metric](#). For 2021-22, this figure was \$1.74, down from \$1.93 the year before.

For FY2023, OSU Extension's grant-funded activity was nearly \$19M, representing one-fifth of its funding. This percentage has remained consistent for the past four years. This amount includes grants from national and state agencies including USDA National Institute of Food and Agriculture as well as several Oregon-based foundations. It also includes funding awarded to OSU to administer two national nutrition education programs funded by USDA: the SNAP-Ed program, in partnership with Oregon Department of Human Services, and the Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program.

Noteworthy grant-funded work with engagement components and extension involvement include:

- [\\$50 million from the U.S. Department of Agriculture to work with farmers and Native American Tribes on cropping practices](#) that can enhance soil health and reduce the carbon footprint of the Pacific Northwest potato industry.
- [\\$30M to co-lead a USDA regional food business center](#) that will support farmers, ranchers and other food-related businesses to access new markets and navigate federal, state and local resources.
- [\\$10M from USDA-NIFA to coordinate a national network of projects in NIFA's Youth Innovators Empowering Agriculture Across America \(YEA\) program](#) and lead a regional project (inclusive of western United States, Tribal communities and U.S. insular areas) to develop a youth curriculum with emphasis on climate-smart agriculture and forestry.
- \$650,000 from USDA-NIFA to lead a collaborative, multi-state program to support a robust and sustainable workforce training program for the meat processing industry.
- \$445,000 from Oregon Community Foundation to develop career-connected learning in coastal communities to support the blue economy.
- \$300,000 from USDA-NIFA to evaluate effects of smoke exposure on cattle health, characterize livestock producers' perceptions related to wildfire and develop a network to help producers affected by wildfires through peer support and education.

Professional and Continuing Education

Number of noncredit professional and continuing education courses delivered is a [university-tracked strategic metric](#). For 2021-22, this count was 1,252, up from 873 (43%) the year prior.

For FY2023, enrollments in PACE noncredit programs grew to 32,447—a 48% increase in just two years. During this time, more than 2,600 learners earned certificates.

PACE highlights:

- **184 publicly available course offerings.** Notable career accelerator programs include technical writing, data science, horticulture, natural resource management, community health, early childhood education and food manufacturing.
- **9 active or pending projects with external clients and strategic partners,** including a partnership with Oregon Home Care Commission to provide a workforce development platform for the approximately 50,000 statewide care workers overseen by the agency.

- **Over 60 active or pending college-based program partnerships across nine colleges, engaging approximately 125 faculty and staff.** For FY2023, public enrollments in PACE programs generated \$1.2M in revenue for college partners.
- **Expanded collaborations that feature a broader economic and social focus.** For example, PACE is working with The Laboratory for the American Cascades, a faculty-led initiative based at OSU-Cascades to produce multimedia programs that promote new, research-driven approaches to civil discourse to effectively address societal problems.
- **Strategic partnerships within the university to leverage PACE expertise and infrastructure,** including a state-of-the-art redesign of OSU Human Resources' required critical training modules for all employees. PACE also hosts registration, course content and reporting for most other OSU employee training.

Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI)

In support of the university's commitment to inclusive excellence, DEE has increased its focus on tracking metrics associated with diversity, equity and inclusion in various aspects of its work.

As part of its effort to recruit and retain a diverse workforce and maintain a supportive workplace culture, especially for employees of color and those from historically marginalized communities, DEE evaluates annually the self-identified race and ethnicity distribution of its workforce compared with the Oregon population. In 2022, most categories were trending toward parity, including white, non-Latino (74.1% DEE vs. 74.9% in OR), Black/African American (0.8 DEE vs. 1.8% in OR), American Indian or Alaska Native (1.04% DEE vs. 0.9% in OR), Asian (2.9% DEE vs. 4.4% in OR) and Hispanic/Latino (8.7% DEE vs. 13.2% in OR). These data include employees supported by appropriated state, federal and county funds but do not include employees funded by grants or other fund sources. DEE is working to further analyze data to produce a more complete picture of its workforce.

DEE uses the Faculty Success (formerly Digital Measures) platform for reporting and accountability. This provides OSU with a mechanism to better report and elevate the visibility of DEI-related efforts. Users can identify DEI-related activity in most types of records, including research and creative activities, teaching and learning, outreach and service. There are currently 7,759 DEI-related records. The top two categories of activity are non-credit instruction (2,625) and faculty development activities (855). There were 1,757 records entered in 2022, a 5% increase from the year prior, continuing an upward trend.

Carnegie Community Engagement Efforts

The university's Carnegie classification requires periodic renewal and reporting. DEE also uses Faculty Success to document community-engaged activities, which can provide the university with greater visibility of community-engaged efforts. There are currently 1,663 Carnegie-related records, with 476 records entered in 2022 (22% increase), continuing an upward trend.

In 2023, OSU established a university-level engagement council that includes representation from each OSU college, OSU-Cascades, and relevant non-academic units. In the coming year, the council will help review and recommend systems to collect, track and share evidence-based documentation of the university's engagement work (see "Engaged University," page 9).

Digital Access and Engagement

In addition to direct education through programming, OSU's outreach and engagement efforts extend to the digital environment. Efforts in the past year focused on the following three areas:

Growing and engaging audiences on digital channels:

- Launched an OSU Extension Spanish-language Facebook account in October 2022, now up to an audience of 196 (follows/likes) with organic page reach of 4,775.
- Increased followers for OSU Extension’s Instagram account (launched summer 2021) by 88% since last year. It’s now over 1,400 followers with reach of 7,043.
- Maintained a robust, bilingual OSU Extension website that drew more than 2.1M users overall (13,500 for Spanish-language pages) in FY2023. A custom user feedback metric showed an 87% positive rating (34,909 votes; was content helpful: yes/no).
- Answered 7,400 questions from the public through the Ask Extension online service in FY2023, up slightly from 7,322 the year prior.

Maturing digital communication and marketing practices:

- Continued collaborating with PACE on a gardening newsletter that cross-promotes Extension content and continuing education offerings to 84,444 subscribers, with open rate of 28% (average) and click-through rate of 14% (above average).
- Began to scale-up use of more sophisticated contact database and e-marketing tools within DEE for digital communications to constituents. In FY2023, DEE supported 21 distinct digital message initiatives (174 total sends) that reached 41,879 constituents, with average open rate of 59% and engagement rate of 9% (both above average).

Making content more accessible:

- Maintained a catalog of more than 1,100 peer-reviewed educational publications, with 121 newly published or revised in 2022, including 25 custom-translated (Spanish) titles. Many are available in free, accessible online formats.
- Due to the abundance of well-structured web content, OSU Extension was selected to help pilot the Extension Foundation’s Extension Bot. This tool uses artificial intelligence to respond in real-time to website visitors’ questions with suggested educational content from OSU Extension. Extension Bot is in beta and will soon be available to the public.

INITIATIVES AND PROJECTS – UPDATES**Leadership and Strategic Alignment**

DEE filled four positions to enhance leadership and division-wide support in critical areas: associate vice provost for partnerships, director of PACE, director of evaluation and reporting and director of sponsored programs. DEE collaborated with College of Health to fill their associate dean for extension and engagement position and with University Information and Technology to reposition a shared role to provide greater leadership and collaboration in support of digital engagement with noncredit learners and statewide efforts in broadband and digital equity. As the university’s new strategic plan is being finalized, a division committee has begun a formal strategic planning process.

Engaged University

The university is pursuing a strategic approach to defining engaged scholarship and refreshing approaches to coordinate and track engagement activities. In 2023, OSU established a university-level engagement council that works to align community engagement and engaged scholarship priorities with the university’s strategic plan and act on related issues. OSU also hosted an [inaugural OSU Engagement Conference](#) and recognized exemplary engagement work through the OSU Engagement Awards of Excellence. Criteria for the awards were revised to follow the definitions set forth by the Carnegie Foundation and mirror two national community

engagement awards, which may create opportunity to better recognize and highlight the university and its collaborators nationally.

College Access and Student Success

Community engagement is a key element in a host of university programs and initiatives that reach learners of all ages and support multiple pathways for access to higher education. Of note since the last briefing:

Access OSU: In spring 2023, the university [formally launched Access OSU](#), an initiative to create better pathways to higher education for Black, Indigenous and Latino communities in the Portland area by weaving together community-based programs and OSU's many programs serving students and their families.

Juntos: OSU's Juntos program, now the largest in the country, [hosted the inaugural Juntos National Convening](#). The event brought together professionals and students to celebrate the program's first 13 years and plan for the future. In May 2023, the biennial [Juntos Family Day](#) brought 1,125 students and families from 70 middle and high schools across the state to OSU for a snapshot of college life. The event offered sessions and tours in Spanish from 12 OSU colleges, five community colleges, OSU financial aid and scholarships, admissions, athletics, current OSU students/parents, and 20+ OSU student support units/programs. After attending, 83% of parents surveyed agreed that their child could finish college and complete a degree. Among middle and high school students surveyed, 87% agreed that Juntos family day made them feel like they belong at college.

New Beginnings for Tribal Students (NBTS): Supported by USDA-NIFA funding, work continued on a partnership between OSU, Confederated Tribes of Coos, Lower Umpqua and Siuslaw Indians and Southwestern Oregon Community College. This effort supports Native American and Tribal pre-college and college students attending OSU, SWOCC and other institutions through experiential learning, internships and financial support to increase retention, graduation and workforce success rates. To date, 45 Native American and Tribal undergraduates received internship and educational stipends, over 200 OSU employees were trained in culturally responsive mentorship and 37 Native and Tribal youth participated in cultural camps.

OSU Extension funding and advocacy

In support the university's legislative priority to sustain and grow funding for the OSU Statewides, intentional effort was paid to regular engagement with elected officials and constituent groups and to equipping Extension advocates to advocate on the university's behalf. Consistent advocacy, lifted by a groundswell of support from OSU Extension volunteers during the 2023 legislative session, resulted in record investment by the state legislature (see page 2). In the buildup to the 2025 session, OSU will work with legislators, advocates and communities to demonstrate impact, value and utility to build support for maintaining these investments.

Philanthropic development

Inclusive of all SP4.0 goals

Private giving is a critical complement to public funding for extension and engagement work, and outreach and extension is a broad priority category included in OSU's fundraising and engagement campaign. The past year saw success in terms of donor relationship building and giving at many levels. During OSU's annual giving day, DEE had the most individual gifts of any non-athletic unit and was in the top five in dollars raised. The coming year will see continued focus on increasing fund development efforts in support of extension and engagement priorities.

Innovation

Extension and engagement are important elements of university initiatives, including the in-development economic development and industry relations strategy. DEE continues to sponsor and support initiatives under development in the OSU Impact Studio, including [CyberClinic](#).

Inclusive Excellence

In alignment with its mission to serve all Oregonians, DEE continues to prioritize using a DEI lens in all efforts. The division's [DEI unit](#) leads, coordinates and consults on efforts focused on capacity building/professional development, organizational culture and expanding access and manages the federal Civil Rights compliance program for OSU Extension.

Accomplishments since the previous briefing include:

- Maintained an online [introductory DEI training for Extension volunteers](#), with 344 participants to date. Licensed it to Washington State University Extension.
- Responded to recommended actions from 2022 OSU Extension USDA-NIFA Civil Rights Compliance Review and received final letter of compliance. The response included developing a formal statewide language access plan, creating a comprehensive barrier analysis process for programs to assess participant access, and creating systems to help ensure that advisory board membership is reflective of the communities served.
- Continued to offer the Diversity Champions professional development program. Approximately 170 champions have participated since the program began in 2018.
- Partnered with Oregon Department of Education to offer two employee training sessions on supporting gender expansive students in youth programming.
- Launched the Expanding Access Mini-Grant Program to support projects that advance the division's diversity, equity and inclusion goals. Awarded first two grants (\$500 each).
- Prioritized adding more Spanish-language and bilingual materials to OSU Extension's marketing and promotional item inventory.

INITIATIVES AND PROJECTS – 2023-24

OSU is prioritizing the following extension and engagement areas of focus in the coming year.

Partnerships for College Access

SP4.0 Goal 2: Transformative education that is accessible to all learners

The university will continue to lead and facilitate efforts to improve college access through intentional partnerships.

A primary focus is on strengthening and growing partnerships with community colleges. A listening tour with community college leaders is occurring in fall 2023. This builds on over 10 years of success through DEE's Open Campus program which has grown to serve more than 20 counties and partner with seven of Oregon's community colleges.

The university, often through Extension relationships, is engaged in co-creating programming and sharing expertise with Tribal Nations and Indigenous communities in Oregon. The first three years of the NBTS project have underscored a growing need to increase programming with Tribal communities, and DEE has launched a search for an inaugural Director of Native American and Tribal Extension programs.

Engaged University*SP4.0 Goal 1: Research, creative work and engaged scholarship**SP4.0 Goal 3: Significant and visible impact in Oregon and beyond*

In January 2024, the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching will release its framework for OSU to renew its Community Engagement Classification in 2026. The application requires evidence-based documentation of systematic actions and strategies used by the institution to build academic-community partnerships that center mutuality and reciprocity. Members of the OSU Engagement Council will convene a task force to lead this effort through data gathering and mining, community partner surveys, internal listening sessions and more.

Excellence in Youth Development*SP4.0 Goal 3: Significant and visible impact in Oregon and beyond*

Under the 5-year, \$10M USDA-NIFA YEA grant (see page 4), OSU will coordinate a national network and lead development of a regional curriculum project. The grant also designates OSU Extension as a National Center of Excellence for Youth Development. This role includes establishing a national steering committee, developing a web-based clearinghouse of projects and activities, highlighting impact of associated projects and hosting workshops and a national conference. All funded projects and coordination work is to include (among other requirements): engagement of youths in agricultural careers, culturally relevant experiential learning, focused collaboration with Tribal communities and designated U.S. insular areas and access and participation among underrepresented youths and communities.

Urban Agenda*SP4.0 Goal 3: Significant and visible impact in Oregon and beyond*

DEE will continue to partner in developing an urban agenda for OSU that strengthens relationships, increases awareness and establishes a vibrant presence in Portland and surrounding metro areas. A specific priority is to strengthen relationships to build awareness of and re-establish local, sustainable financial support for OSU Extension in Multnomah County.

Workplace Culture and Staff Development

The Gallup Q12 is a proven, data-driven platform designed to help create thriving workplaces through better engagement. In 2023, DEE employees completed the Q12 assessment. Respondents had a mean engagement score of 3.86/5.00, which is in the 48th percentile relative to comparators in Gallup's postsecondary/higher education database. Using these baseline results, DEE is working at team and division levels on action plans to address specific areas.

Inclusive Excellence*SP4.0 Goal 4: A culture of belonging, collaboration and innovation*

Building on current efforts, areas of focus for the coming year include:

- Creating a Spanish version of the introductory volunteer DEI training and updating the Extension Civil Rights employee training.
- Participating in university-level language access planning efforts.
- Exploring options for a Diversity Champions group to include or for community partners.
- Continuing to collaborate with external agencies and organizations to offer relevant training for employees and volunteers.
- Continuing and assessing the Expanding Access Mini-Grant program.
- Analyzing DEI data from Faculty Success to identify progress, gaps and other insights and developing dashboards to help leadership easily access and use this data.

OPPORTUNITIES AND THREATS

The following are some of the most significant opportunities and threats with regard to OSU's engagement with communities.

Threats

Significant increases in appropriated funding are unusual, with the exception of funding earmarked for special purposes. However, sustaining adequate capacity funding for base public service programs is essential to maintain OSU's statewide footprint, sustain public support, leverage other funding, recruit and retain high quality employees and preserve the foundation that provides for responsiveness to emerging issues and opportunities. An ongoing challenge is seeking to balance meeting emerging needs while supporting flagship extension programs. Compounding this is that many ardent supporters are most familiar with such programs and at times perceive work in new areas as the university moving away from its land grant mission.

Strategies in use to address these threats include maintaining strong community relationships, demonstrating accountability for use and impact of public funds, grounding programs and efforts in research-based needs and staying true to mission when engaging in new areas.

Opportunities

Extension and engagement can play a significant role in university efforts to improve health outcomes for Oregonians, drive industry and community economic development and provide accessible, transformative learning experiences. DEE is uniquely positioned to:

- Expand existing, effective community mental health promotion and substance use programming. Examples include Mental Health First Aid, evidence-based Community Conversations About Mental Health and the [recently-launched AgriStress Helpline](#).
- Leverage a network of Extension educators who collaborate with OSU colleagues in multiple colleges to support individual, community and systems-level changes in nutrition, food safety and security, mental health, physical well-being and healthy aging.
- Offer communities in every Oregon county educational programming and resources from all of OSU's colleges and more effectively link communities with the full breadth of resources and expertise available from the university.
- Help OSU establish sustainable funding and a physical presence in Multnomah County to better engage with and serve residents and industry in Oregon's most populous area.
- Ensure prosperity of Oregon's \$5.5B agricultural industry by supporting agricultural producers with research and outreach focused on all aspects of production and marketing for Oregon's diverse crops and commodities.
- Develop professional education and workforce development offerings for in-demand sectors including public health, agriculture and youth development.
- Become a trusted source to help decision-makers access, understand and use data. Examples include climate-smart agriculture and community health assessments.
- Help close the digital divide through continued collaboration with a statewide broadband partnership and community engagement through Extension networks.
- Lead and facilitate OSU efforts to improve college access and student success, especially through transfer student support and culturally responsive programming.
- Help close the opportunity gap for youth by expanding 4-H and other positive youth development programs to more equitably serve all youth and enhance collaboration among OSU youth-serving enterprises.