

The Division for Land-Grant Engagement, which includes WVU Extension, WVU Davis College of Agriculture and Natural Resources and the WVU Center for Community Engagement, brings together units which have historically defined WVU's land-grant partnership with the federal government, including USDA-NIFA and other agencies. This Division celebrates WVU's history as marked by the Morrill, Hatch, Smith-Lever, and McIntire-Stennis Cooperative Forestry Research acts. In addition to USDA NIFA, we compete for funds from various federal agencies to fulfill our mission across the state. Federal investments are leveraged by state and local matches.

EXTENSION

Federally supported through USDA with funding from Smith-Lever Act | EFNEP & SNAP-Ed Grants

WVU Extension carries out the **land-grant mission** in all 55 West Virginia counties. With a focus on youth development, agriculture education and training, health and nutrition, and workforce development and occupational and fire safety, our faculty and staff are creating **positive change for our citizens**.

Delivering Practical Education Across the State

✓ In 2025, Extension reported measurable outcomes for **1,567 program activities**, reaching more than **200,000 West Virginians** across all 55 counties.

✓ Extension 4-H Youth Development programs accounted for **66,125 contacts** with documented outcomes—building skills, leadership, and readiness for school, work, and life. One example, the Financial Literacy – Get A Life curriculum **reached 445 youth in Mercer County schools, and 100% of participants reported** they would use what they learned to make future financial decisions.

Providing Technical Assistance to Support Producers and Professionals

✓ More than **1,200 invasive species pocket guides** have been distributed statewide, reaching farmers, educators, and right-of-way managers. Educational programming associated with the guide delivered over **500 WVDA**

Pesticide Recertification Credits and directly trained 266 pesticide applicators. These efforts improved the effectiveness and timing of pesticide use, reduced unnecessary applications, lowered management costs, and supported more sustainable invasive species control practices across West Virginia.

✓ WVU Extension Agritourism Farm Crawls generated immediate and localized economic impacts. In 2025, **80 farms** that participated reported hosting an average of **100 visitors per farm**. Participating farms, on average, reported up to **500% increases in revenue**, along with increased repeat purchases and new customer acquisition. Beyond financial gains, farms reported increased visibility, stronger regional partnerships, and enhanced opportunities to educate the public about agriculture and local food systems.



Building a More Prepared Workforce

✓ WVU Extension Safety and Health leads the University in microcredentials issued through Mountaineer Micro Academy, offering targeted learning experiences to professionals in the fields of construction, safety, healthcare, general industry, and more. In 2025, Safety and Health had more than **1,100 enrollments, awarded more than 1,000 digital badges, and launched 6 new Learning Paths.**



Federal Impact on Nutrition Education in West Virginia

Historically, WVU Extension's Family Nutrition Program has been funded by USDA through the

Expanded Food and Nutrition Education (EFNEP) and **Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program-Education (SNAP-Ed)** grants. The program provides direct education and public health programs across the state to improve the health of West Virginia residents.

With the elimination of federal funding for SNAP-Ed, this is the final reporting year for our SNAP-Ed programming. The Family Nutrition Program will continue at a reduced capacity through the EFNEP grant.

Annual Reach and Impact through 2025

- Between **10,000 to 12,000 youth and 900 to 1,200 adults** through direct education
- More than **118,000 participants** through public health programs
- Almost **90% of youth** and more than **90% of adult participants** report improvements in diet quality
- More than **90% of adults** also improve their food resource management behaviors

Stand-out programs with proven results, like Grow This and Kids Market @ the Store, could not be carried out in 2025 due to the loss of SNAP-Ed funding. Moving forward, the Family Nutrition Program will not be able to replicate the outcomes and impact of these programs.



Prior to the elimination of SNAP-Ed, the Grow This program used both social media and in-person community events to educate and engage individuals in gardening. Of those who participated in the Grow This events (**11,934**), **35% reported issues with food access**. Because of the Grow This Challenge program, **84% of online participants** increased their knowledge on gardening topics, **12 new edible landscapes** were developed in public spaces, **13 new edible landscapes** on private properties, **54 seed libraries** established in **15 counties**, and over **5,000 pounds of food** was harvested. Participants reported that the challenge helped them increase food supply and self-sufficiency, decrease food costs, share with food-insecure family members, and engage children in the garden.

The Kids Market @ the Store program empowered children and families to add more produce to their plate. KM@TS provided families with up to **\$60 in tokens to buy mostly local produce** from locally owned stores in rural communities, along with education and support. The program reached more than **18,000 children and nearly 8,000 families**.



WVU Davis College of Agriculture and Natural Resources research is supported through federal funding and matched by state dollars for key research initiatives in **community revitalization, natural resources management, and sustainable agriculture**. Funds allow faculty and staff to strengthen rural economies, promote sustainability and enhance resiliency by integrating scientific research, conservation strategies and practical applications in community planning, water resource management and livestock production.

Strengthening Resilience of Working Lands and Watershed

Scientific advances by Davis College researchers have strengthened the understanding of how land-use change, energy development, and extreme precipitation affect watershed function across Appalachia. By integrating long-term field monitoring with multiscale modeling, this work delivers actionable predictions of flood risk, water-quality impairment, and infrastructure vulnerability. These advances directly address societal needs for reliable water resources, public safety, and resilient rural infrastructure, informing restoration investments, regulatory decisions, and stewardship of working lands critical to regional and national well-being.

Accelerating Economic Transition in Energy-Impacted Rural Communities

Davis College research has produced deployable, science-based planning tools that address the economic challenges facing energy-impacted rural communities. By integrating geospatial science, infrastructure analysis, and workforce data, these advances enable communities to identify viable pathways for renewable energy, manufacturing, and emerging industries. The work reflects urgent societal needs for job creation and economic diversification, translating research into investment-ready strategies that support long-term regional resilience and responsible redevelopment of legacy landscapes.

Enhancing Food System Resilience, Efficiency, and Safety

Advances in agricultural and food systems science from Davis College address growing societal demands for affordable, reliable, and safe food. Research on alternative feed ingredients, waste-to-value protein

systems, and precision pest management reduces production risk while improving efficiency and animal health. These innovations strengthen supply chains and environmental performance, directly responding to pressures from climate variability, rising input costs, and food security concerns facing producers and consumers nationwide.

Improving Access to Preventive Health and Nutrition in Rural America

Davis College research advances address persistent rural health inequities by developing evidence-based frameworks that guide improvements in food security, mental health access, and supportive environments. By combining big-data analytics with community-engaged science, this work shifts interventions from awareness to structural change. These outcomes reflect societal needs for more equitable, efficient public health strategies, informing policies and programs that improve population health while maximizing the return on public investment.

Advancing Evidence-Based Nutrition Strategies to Reduce Chronic Disease

Scientific contributions from Davis College researchers strengthen national efforts to reduce obesity and diet-related chronic disease by linking nutrition science, behavioral research, and policy-relevant data. Improved measurement tools and alignment with federal nutrition programs expand the reach and effectiveness of interventions. By emphasizing durable environmental and behavioral change, this work responds to societal needs for a healthier workforce, lower healthcare costs, and sustainable community health outcomes.

The WVU Center for Community Engagement helps connect The WVU Center for Community Engagement helps connect our community and university partnerships to establish **meaningful collaborations**, connecting WVU with communities to create **lasting impact**.

Preparing West Virginia's Workforce through Purpose2Action

✓ Purpose2Action (P2A) advances WVU's land-grant mission by placing students in paid, career-aligned roles with nonprofits, schools, and community agencies, so they build real workforce skills while meeting locally identified needs. Funded through Federal Work-Study and other sources, P2A helps students earn wages, stay on track academically, and remain connected to opportunities in West Virginia, while also strengthening partner capacity and linking employers to emerging talent.

By the numbers:

87 students, **44** community partners,

10,347+ service hours

76% report increased engagement with their communities, strengthening ties to West Virginia

Over **10%** of participants were later hired into permanent roles directly related to their P2A experience



Engaging AmeriCorps Members to Strengthen Service

✓ In alignment with West Virginia University's land-grant mission, WVU's AmeriCorps investments support communities through two complementary programs that we truly value because they are designed to work alongside local partners.

✓ WVU VISTA builds long-term capacity through **17 full-time member positions** across WVU campuses and host sites, placing one-year members to help partners put sustainable systems in place so initiatives can continue beyond the VISTA term. The VISTA cohort represents roughly **\$424,000 annually** in direct support invested in West Virginia communities.

✓ Complementing this capacity model, Energy Express delivers direct summer service across **22 counties** and **29 sites**, serving **1,011 children** in 2025 with literacy-rich learning, **10,992 take-home books**, and **39,668 nutritious meals**, while engaging **713 volunteers** and generating **55,248 AmeriCorps service hours** valued at **\$1,922,078**.

Together, these programs reflect strong federal investment that improves outcomes for children and families while strengthening community-based learning and engagement opportunities tied to student success.

LAND-GRANT ENGAGEMENT