

Carol Smathers

Biographical Narrative

1. Since April 2013, I have held a 12-month faculty appointment as Field Specialist in Youth Nutrition and Wellness. This position, in the Department of Extension within the College of Food, Agriculture and Environmental Sciences, provides overall leadership for developing and implementing a balanced teaching and applied research agenda related to youth nutrition and wellness. I was granted tenure in 2019.

POSITION DESCRIPTION

Working collaboratively with a multi-disciplinary team of professionals within OSU Extension and across-campus with other departments and colleges, I function as an educator with clientele to address statewide food, nutrition, and wellness issues for youth and related issues as expertise is needed; provide unbiased research-based alternatives; evaluate and respond to large scale statewide needs and individual requests; and secure resources (grants and contracts) to focus on these issues. My responsibilities involve planning, teaching, and evaluating programs, including conducting applied research; translating and integrating research findings into curriculum and educational programs; meeting faculty expectations for creative and scholarly contributions; and providing service to the profession and university in the areas of food, nutrition and wellness, with a specific focus on issues impacting youth. Meeting these responsibilities involves employing innovative educational methods and technologies to expand delivery of programs and resources to advance Farm to School and other nutrition initiatives. I work collaboratively with academic departmental faculty in all Extension program areas on research and engagement agendas. I serve as an educational advisor and liaison for Ohio State University Extension and the University to federal, state and local agencies and educational institutions.

PROGRAMMATIC THEMES

COMMUNITY-BASED NUTRITION AND WELLNESS - Focus on community-based participatory research, coalition development, implementation of community health strategies, community partnerships, public health, socio-ecological models, policy and environment change strategies, and healthy food access. (40%)

I serve as Principal Investigator for the five-year \$2.5 million High Obesity Program (HOP) grant funded by the Centers for Disease Control and Promotion. The HOP project aims to improve nutrition and physical activity environments by increasing access to produce purchase incentives, supporting communities to develop active transportation policies and plans, and engaging Early Care and Education (ECE) sites in Farm to ECE activities. I develop resources and provide training to support coalition development and community-level interventions. I have over 10 years of experience as co-chair and steering committee member for an obesity prevention coalition comprised of nearly 40 organizations. I work with this coalition, as well as numerous state- and community-level agencies to foster and to evaluate interdisciplinary problem-solving and organizational policy and environment change strategies that provide healthier nutrition and physical activity options for children, adolescents, and young adults. Having unique expertise on food affordability, I have been invited to speak to a range of university and community audiences, including the U.S. Navy, on the topics of food access and affordability.

FOODS IN SCHOOLS - Focus on Farm to School, local foods, procurement, school food service, school meal guidelines, classroom food and nutrition education, and school gardens. (35%)

As director of Ohio Farm to School, I oversee the provision of networking opportunities, information and resources that promote procuring, serving, and teaching about local foods at schools and ECE sites. I collaborate with and serve as a resource to the National Farm to School Network and the USDA Farm to School Program. I facilitate a statewide network of state agency representatives, schoolteachers, food service directors, and administrators, industry groups, and other Farm to School stakeholders. I disseminate information on state- and national-levels through conferences, workshops, online trainings, websites, newsletters, and social media. I oversee program staff and respond to frequent Farm to School inquiries. From 2019-2024, I served as Principal Investigator and lead author on "Growing Teachers Throughout the Seasons" (GTS). The GTS project resulted in a guidebook (>1700 copies sold; over 2000 individuals trained), a set of 20 online modules, and an online introductory training for implementing school gardens and harvesting foods September through May at schools in any climate.

ADOLESCENT HEALTH ISSUES- Focus on nutrition trends, adolescent development, youth advocacy, youth leadership, and community partnerships addressing adolescent health. (25%)

I work with youth health stakeholders to enhance healthy living programs and resources. In addition to promoting healthier nutrition environments for youth through the other thematic areas, I provide training and technical assistance for adults and youth related to efforts to reduce sweetened beverage consumption among youth. Since 2023, I have led a multi-program area collaboration with Sokoine University of Agriculture and Tanzania 4-H aimed at increasing agriculture education and engagement opportunities for youth in Tanzania.

Current Appointment

Position Title: Associate Professor

Academic Appointments

Effective Date of Rank	End Date of Rank	Faculty Rank	Faculty Category	Department, Unit, Center, or Program	Institution
May 2019		Associate Professor			
April 2013	2019-05-30	Assistant Professor			

Administrative and Other Appointments

Degrees

Fellowships, Internships, Residency

Certifications

Licensures

Additional Work Experience

Areas of Expertise and Interests

Workload Allocation

Start Term	End Term	Administration/ Leadership	Clinical Service	Extension	Non-Clinical Service and Engagement	Research	Teaching	Total
Spring 2026	Ongoing	0	0	75	0	15	10	100
Spring 2013	Autumn 2025	0	0	100	0	0	0	100

Approach to and Goals in Teaching—Narrative [750 words]

Evaluation of Teaching—Narrative [750 words]

1. Since beginning this position in April 2013, I have used Evaluation of Effective Extension Teaching (EEET) instruments and have received peer evaluations of my teaching. The EEET forms consist of nine variables, scored 1-5, that participants use to rate the instructor. A summary of the EEET forms and the letters of peer evaluation since the date of hire have been submitted separately for review. In the past three years, I have collected EEET forms from participants at 10 events totaling 91 individuals. Although the nature of each topic, group, setting, and teaching approach varies greatly for each of

the events that was evaluated by participants, I review EETs score and other evaluation instruments from my presentations and adjust teaching approaches to improve the learners' experiences. For example, I added more visual examples to a presentation, and my average score increased to 4.91 from 4.67 for a similar presentation given the previous month. In response to comments, I have added more interactive components and reflection questions to my sessions. My unweighted overall mean score increased to 4.72 in 2017 and 4.81 in 2016, up from 4.61 in 2015, 4.59 in 2014, and 4.49 in 2013. My overall mean scores in 2016, 2017, and 2024 were higher than the mean scores for all Extension Educators and for all FCS Educators the same years. For events since 2013, the highest score for a single variable in a single event was 5.00 and the lowest was 3.81. At one event in 2016 and two events in 2017, all participants rated the instructor a perfect 5.0 for all nine variables. Events in 2025 averaged 4.83. In response to participant feedback, I continue to add interactive components to presentations that will stimulate greater interest in presentation topics and relate the content in relevant ways to the learners' own knowledge. I have received 16 Peer Evaluation of Teaching letters since 2013, all with very positive comments.

, Autumn 2025

Undergraduate, Graduate, and Professional Courses Captured Through the University Registrar

Credit-bearing Instruction Not Captured Through the University Registrar

Non-credit Bearing Instruction

Non-credit Bearing Instruction—EXTENSION ONLY

Start Term: Autumn 2025
 Start Date: December 2025
 End Date: December 2025
 Title: Farm to School in Ohio for the CFAES Government Affairs staff (Foods in Schools)
 Sponsoring Organization: Ohio State University Extension
 Number of Participants: 2
 Average Percentage Taught: 100
 Teaching Role: Instructor
 Times Offered: 1

Start Term: Autumn 2025
 Start Date: December 2025
 End Date: December 2025
 Title: Farm to School Institute Adaptation Program (Foods in Schools)
 Sponsoring Organization: Ohio State University Extension
 Number of Participants: 3
 Average Percentage Taught: 100
 Teaching Role: Instructor
 Times Offered: 1

Start Term: Autumn 2025
 Start Date: October 2025
 End Date: October 2025
 Title: Food Access and Food Inequality: Are healthy foods too expensive? (Community-Based Nutrition and Wellness)
 Sponsoring Organization: Ohio State University Extension - Franklin County
 Number of Participants: 15
 Average Percentage Taught: 100
 Teaching Role: Instructor
 Times Offered: 1

Start Term: Autumn 2025
 Start Date: December 2025
 End Date: December 2025
 Title: Individual Instruction (Community-Based Nutrition and Wellness)
 Sponsoring Organization: Ohio State University Extension
 Number of Participants: 1
 Average Percentage Taught: 100
 Teaching Role: Instructor
 Formal Evaluation: No
 Times Offered: 1

Start Term: Autumn 2025
 Start Date: October 2025
 End Date: October 2025
 Title: Levels of Community Change - Healthy Kids Coalition of Central Ohio (Community-Based Nutrition and Wellness)
 Sponsoring Organization: Ohio State University Extension
 Number of Participants: 20
 Average Percentage Taught: 100
 Teaching Role: Instructor
 Formal Evaluation: No
 Times Offered: 1

Formal and Informal Advising and Mentoring [Summary]

Start Term: Autumn 2025
 End Term: Spring 2026
 Master's students (examination committee member): 1
 Total: 1
 Institution : Ohio State University

Formal and Informal Advising and Mentoring [Detailed Record]

Mentor

Clara DeHart

1. Master's, Public Health, MPH Integrative Learning Experience, December 2025, No,

Clara DeHart participated in a Focus Group Facilitation training that I offered. She then observed a focus group that I conducted. Clara served as the facilitator and note taker for five focus groups that were part of a school garden curriculum evaluation. She transcribed the focus groups and was instrumental in coding and sorting by theme, and summarizing the focus group data into a cohesive report. She delivered a successful presentation and ILE defense in November 2025.

, ILE Defense Committee, Summer 2025 - Autumn 2025

Curriculum Development

Title	Course or Program Name	Description	Start Term	End Term
Growing Teachers Throughout the Seasons - Online and Interactive versions	Ohio Child Care Resource and Referral Association - Ohio Professional Registry	Year Developed: 2025 Overview/Need: Farm to early care and education (Farm to ECE) initiatives encourage and support increased access to local food sourcing, school gardens and food and agriculture education to enhance the quality of the educational experience in all types of ECE settings (e.g., preschools, child care centers, family child care homes, Head Start/Early Head Start, programs in K – 12 school districts). Farm to ECE offers benefits that parallel the goals and priorities of the early care and education community including emphasis on experiential learning opportunities, parent and community engagement and life-long health and wellness for children, families and caregivers. Research suggests that garden-based education in particular improves children's health behaviors including choosing healthier options. Farm to ECE activities are associated with increased consumption of fruits and vegetables through meals at schools and at home, decreased in preference for and consumption of less healthy foods and sodas, increased physical activity, and enhanced social and emotional wellness. Training opportunities are needed for those who work in early care and education settings to increase their knowledge of garden methods suitable to ECE settings and to reduce barriers to garden-based education (space, time, materials, etc.). Overall Objectives: These trainings cover the information ECE providers need to start or enhance Farm to ECE initiatives at their site. Participants will be	Spring 2025	Ongoing

		able to define farm to early care, identify benefits, connect farm to early care activities to the early learning and development standards (ELDS) and identify steps to implement procurement, gardening and food-based education in your classroom. Target Audiences: Early care and education teachers, food service staff, administrators, advocates, families/guardians, and other Farm to ECE stakeholders may all benefit from this training. It is aimed specifically at Farm to ECE providers who need professional development credit to maintain certification. Curriculum Description: These trainings familiarize educators with three growing methods and strategies for planting, tending, harvesting and taste testing nine different foods September through May. The interactive session includes hands-on activities to reinforce what teachers know and love about garden-based learning, challenge their beliefs about garden seasons, and provide practice with gardening methods for their classrooms. Hands-on activities include seed starting, thinning seedlings, using pollinating tools, and trying a unique method for spacing tiny seeds with little hands! Role: In partnership with the Ohio Department of Health, I created content for numerous sections of this training. I worked with OSU staff member Ali Segna and with Heidi Scarpitti at the Ohio Department of Health to create and record the online training and the in-person version that received "Ohio Approved" status for ECE professional development credit in 2025. Use by Others: The online "Early Childhood Health: Growing Teachers Throughout the Seasons for ECE" (ST1128627) is available for 1.5 Ohio Approved credit hours and "Growing Teachers Throughout the Seasons – Interactive" is available for 2.5 Ohio Approved credit hours through the Ohio Child Care Resource and Referral Association (OCCRRA) at https://www.train.org/odh/course/1128627 . These trainings have been promoted and disseminated widely by the Ohio Farm to ECE Coalition, the Ohio Department of Health, OCCRRA, the Ohio Head Start Association, and the Ohio Farm to School Network. Impact: The online training has been completed for professional development credit by over 600 participants. Train-the-trainer sessions have been scheduled for the interactive version. This has spurred at least three FCS Educators to seek credentials as "Ohio Approved" instructors, which will increase their capacity to meet the professional development requirements of ECE providers in their counties.		
Bringing the Farm to School	Ohio State University - Ohio Farm to School Program	Year Developed: 2022-2024 Overview/Need: The goal of the Bringing the Farm to School program is to provide training and tools to build their capacity to launch or grow efforts to market to schools while increasing farm to school activity in schools and communities across Ohio. Overall Objectives: This training course is designed to: increase participants' knowledge and understanding of farm to school programs, outline requirements for selling agricultural products to schools; provide tools and resources to help participants successfully plan a business model for selling to schools; and help participants understand what market channels are available to sell their agricultural products to schools. Target Audiences: This online course is specifically designed for local agricultural producers in Ohio. Curriculum Description: This course is available online with no scheduled class sessions or fixed due dates. Participants can start the course at any time and work through it independently at their own pace. This self-paced course is comprised of the following 4 modules: • MODULE 1: Getting to Know School Markets • MODULE 2: Selling to School Markets • MODULE 3: Choosing the Right Product to Sell to Schools • MODULE 4: Growing for Schools Course modules include graded knowledge checks and optional activities which will help you to achieve the learning objectives outlined in the modules. Successful completion of this course requires passing scores on the graded knowledge checks and completion of a course evaluation survey. A course certificate will be issued to participants upon completion of these requirements. Role: As Ohio Farm to School Director, I would closely work with partners at the Ohio Department of Agriculture (Ashley McDonald) and the Ohio Department of Education and Workforce (Rebecca Naab and Hannah Hart) to develop the concept, content, and format for this course. I served as PI for the funded portion of this work (a subcontract on a USDA Farm to School grant). I set up the original course framework in Scarlet Canvas and brought in Extension professionals in Learning and Organizational Development (Summer McClain and Jared Miller) to create interactive components of the training. The core team (Naab, Hart, Smathers, McClain, and Miller) met regularly throughout 2024 to ensure logical flow, learner engagement, and content accuracy throughout the modules. Use by Others: The training was released in late 2024. It has been disseminated and promoted widely by the Ohio Farm to School Network, Ohio Department of Education and Workforce, Ohio Department of Agriculture, Ohio Department of Health, and other organizations. Impact: As of early January 2025, ___ participants have accessed this training. https://cfaesosu.catalog.instructure.com/courses/bringing-the-farm-to-school-local-producer-training	Spring 2024	Ongoing
Early Childhood Health: Farm to Early Care	Ohio Child Care Resource and Referral Association - Ohio Professional Registry	Year Developed: 2023-2024 Overview/Need: Farm to early care and education (farm to ECE) encourages and supports increased access to local food sourcing, school gardens and food and agriculture education to enhance the quality of the educational experience in all types of ECE settings (e.g., preschools, child care centers, family child care homes, Head Start/Early Head Start, programs in K – 12 school districts). Farm to ECE offers benefits that parallel the goals and priorities of the early care and education community including emphasis on experiential learning opportunities, parent and community engagement and life-long health and wellness for children, families and caregivers. Research suggests that Farm to ECE activities improve children's health behaviors including choosing healthier options at school meals. Farm to ECE activities are associated with increased consumption of fruits and vegetables through meals at schools and at home, decreased in preference for and consumption of less healthy foods and sodas, and increased physical activity. Training opportunities are needed for those who work in early care and education settings to increase their knowledge of, positive attitudes towards, and ability to implement Farm to ECE activities. Overall Objectives: This training covers the information ECE providers need to start or enhance Farm to ECE initiatives at their site. Participants will be able to define farm to early care, identify benefits, connect farm to early care activities to the early learning and development standards (ELDS) and identify steps to implement procurement, gardening and food-based education in your classroom. Target Audiences: Early care and education teachers, food service staff, administrators, advocates, families/guardians, and other Farm to ECE stakeholders may all benefit from this training. It is aimed specifically at Farm to ECE providers who need professional development credit to maintain certification. Curriculum Description: This online course provides an overview of the need for and benefits of Farm to Early Care and Education activities using data, definitions, and examples. It includes videos, such as "Cooking in the Classroom" and describes how activities like cooking support early learning development standards. It outlines which skills children are able to practice at each age based on their fine/gross motor, social, and emotional development. Considerations such as food safety guidelines are described. The next section of the training provides basic guidance for starting and maintaining a garden in early care settings. It covers benefits, types of gardens recommended for ECE classrooms, planning considerations, safety steps, and ways to address common barriers to school gardens. The next section provides an overview of how to purchase and serve local foods. The training then leads learners through five action steps: assessment, forming a team, developing goals, attaining necessary information and resources, and promoting activities and successes. Finally, the training describes the Farm to School movement and gives examples of Farm to ECE successes in Ohio. Role: In partnership with the Ohio Department of Health, I created content for numerous sections of this training. Heidi Scarpitti and others at the Ohio Department of Health recorded Ali Segna and I presenting this training to create the online version that is approved for professional development credit. Use by Others: "Early Childhood Health: Farm to Early Care " (ST10139893) is available for 2.0 Ohio Approved credit hours through the Ohio Child Care Resource and Referral Association (OCCRRA) at https://registry.occrra.org/cart/view_training/10139893 . It has been promoted and disseminated widely by the Ohio Farm to ECE Coalition, the Ohio Department of Health, OCCRRA, the Ohio Head Start Association, and the Ohio Farm to School Network. Impact: This training has been completed for credit by over 1600 participants.	Spring 2024	Ongoing
Growing Teachers Throughout the Seasons	Ohio State University - Ohio Farm to School Program	Year Developed: 2020-2024 Overview/Need: U.S. graduates with expertise in food, agriculture, natural resources and the environment are anticipated to fill only 61% of the expected 57,900 average annual agriculture-related employment openings. Research suggests that school gardening increases interest in and awareness of food systems and agriculture and related jobs and careers. School garden activities promote healthy behaviors and improve students' academic achievement in science, math, language arts, and writing. The USDA Farm to School Census results show increasing interest in Farm to School activities nationwide, including school gardens. However, educators face many common school garden barriers. A statewide study found the greatest barriers to school gardens were lack of time among teachers to manage gardens (93%), lack of continuity of maintenance (85%), lack of continuity in leadership (78%), issues implementing an innovative program into traditional classroom instruction (76%), and the complexity of school systems (69%). Promising indoor growing approaches are available, but most school garden resources focus mainly on outdoor growing techniques not suitable for school-year planting. Overall Objectives: The GTS resources were developed to address time, knowledge, affordability and sustainability barriers by applying evidenced-based principles and practices. We revised the guide using feedback from 46 teachers in a large, urban school district who piloted GTS in their classrooms to ensure usability and effectiveness. Target Audiences: GTS was developed for preschool through grade 12 teachers who want to engage students in garden-based learning. The materials were pilot tested across these grades by teachers who focus on a variety of subjects (science, math, social studies, art, etc.) as well as non-classroom educators, such as librarians. Curriculum Description: Growing Teachers Throughout the Seasons (GTS) was developed in partnership with the state's largest school district to engage students in growing foods at school during the school year. Students can plant, maintain, harvest and taste nine varieties from September to May using three growing methods: seed starting under LED lights, raised beds with season extension, and indoor hydroponic units. Supported by a USDA National Institute for Food and Agriculture grant, GTS is data-driven and teacher-informed. GTS resources include a step-by-step guide, 20 free online modules, and virtual trainings that support teachers to achieve science, technology, math, and language arts outcomes while fostering agriculture awareness and healthy eating. The guidebook and modules are available at go.osu.edu/GTS . Role: I served as Principal Investigator for the project. I took the lead in writing the proposal, managing the budget and reporting progress and results. I coordinated weekly project meetings, hired and supervised staff, led the research activities, and authored numerous sections of the guide, including ways to gain support, safely harvest, and celebrate the harvest.	Spring 2020	Ongoing

Coaching and Mentoring Faculty

Description of Mentoring	End Term	Mentee Category	Mentee Name	Mentee Rank	Start Term
I met with Gwynn Stewart, who is in her second year as a faculty member, 6 times in 2025 The coaching sessions focused on the role of an OSU Extension faculty member, appropriate content and formatting for her dossier, and goal setting in order to achieve tenure. I reviewed committee feedback following the spring and fall review discussions.	Autumn 2025	Tenure Track	Gwynn Stewart	Assistant Professor	Spring 2025
I met with Jason Hartschuh, who is in his 4th year as a faculty member, 5 times in 2025 The coaching sessions focused on the role of an OSU Extension faculty member, appropriate content and formatting for his dossier, and goal setting in order to achieve tenure. I reviewed committee feedback with him following the spring and fall review discussions.	Autumn 2025	Tenure Track	Jason Hartschuh	Assistant Professor	Spring 2025

Description of Research—Narrative [750 words]

- My research interests focus on public health approaches to health promotion, and more specifically, to obesity prevention. I use community-based participatory approaches to assess community needs and test ways to improve nutrition among children and teens. Recognizing that interventions are needed across multiple individual, interpersonal, organizational, policy and system levels to reduce

childhood obesity, and using the Social Ecological Model and Diffusion of Innovations Theory as organizing frameworks, I conduct applied research relating to the following:

- Community coalitions (Community-Based Youth Nutrition and Wellness)
- Policy, system, and environment change strategies (Community-Based Youth Nutrition and Wellness)
- Farm to School approaches and participation (Foods in Schools)

Since 2013, I have provided leadership to the Ohio Farm to School Network and the Ohio Farm to Early Care and Education (ECE) Coalition as the Ohio Farm to School Director. These collaborative initiatives support schools to purchase, serve and teach about local foods. Research in this area has led to the publication of two ECE-related local food procurement guides, As PI for the Growing Teachers throughout the Seasons project I led research to inform development and evaluation of a school year garden guide (which has sold over 1700 copies since April 2024) and online modules. Evaluation data collected in Autumn 2025 is expected to be published in 2026.

I currently lead Ohio's 5-year \$2.5 million "High Obesity Program" project funded by U.S. Centers for Disease Control. Additionally, I present at the local, state, and national levels about food affordability and food inequality.

I have collaborated with the College of Public Health and community organizations to conduct large-scale survey research looking at environmental barriers and supports to raising healthy preschool-age children. As part of this research team, I disseminated the findings through multiple venues, including national peer-reviewed conference sessions and poster presentations, community advisory meetings, community coalition presentations, and city leaders' briefings. As co-chair/steering committee member of a local childhood obesity prevention coalition, I encourage the coalition to choose themes and set common objectives for member organizations, including "Water First for Thirst", "An Hour a Day to Play", and for 2026 "Anxious Generation". Results from my research have been used to inform decisions about coalition goals and strategies. Through my research on community coalitions, I have co-developed materials and assessments to strengthen OSU Extension's capacity to work effectively through coalitions, including 15 fact sheets about coalition development and management. I have co-presented 8 national-level academic presentations related to this research.

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Scholarly Contributions and Creative Productions

Presentation

Completed/Published

Heer, C., Smathers, C., Jenkins, M., & Halladay, L. (2025).

Eating Healthy on \$2/Meal/Person (Part 2): Rethinking Food Affordability for our FCS Work

Smathers, C., Heer, C., Jenkins, M., & Halladay, L. (2025).

Eating Healthy on \$2/Meal/Person (Part 1): Case Studies and the Thrifty Food Plan

Poster Presentation

Completed/Published

Smathers, C., & Mcdermott, T. (2025).

Growing Teachers Throughout the Seasons: Techniques for Growing Foods at Schools During the School Year in Almost Any Climate

Smathers, C., & Segna, A. (2025).

Local Food Buying and Selling Guides for Early Care Sites Informed by Multi-Season Purchasing Pilots

Conference Proceedings

Revise & Resubmit

Smathers, C., Msuya, C. P., Kilenga, H., Mabebe, N., Mcdermott, T., Shausi, G., Brady, S., Busindeli, I., Naburi, S., Desideri, J., & Goliama, B. (2024).

Role of Agricultural Extension in Advancing Youth Engagement in Agriculture Across Tanzania

2024 Tanzania Agriculture, Livestock and Fisheries Extension Event .

Other Teaching Materials

Submitted

Bower, J., Ferrari, T., Fraley, R., Kessler, T., & Smathers, C. (2025).

Tracking your health and fitness [4-H Project book].

Research Funding [Grants]

Funded

External

Title: High Obesity Program - Ohio
Sponsor: Centers for Disease Control (CDC)
Grant ID / Contract ID: AWD-115497

Award Date: 2023-09-30

Start Date: 2023-06-30

End Date: 2028-09-30

Period Length: 5

Period Unit: Year

Indirect Funding: 0

Total Funding: 2496650

Currency Type: USD

Description:

My effort

Abstract:

By leveraging partnerships and proven resources among Extension, Public Health, and community-based organizations and coalitions this project will (1) increase access to healthier food by *promoting* Ohio's Good Food Here food service and nutrition guidelines and *coordinating* uptake and expansion of Produce Perks fruit and vegetable voucher incentives, (2) increase access to physical activity by *developing* policies and plans that support safe and accessible opportunities for physical activity, and (3) increase the number of Early Care and Education programs that are impacted by Farm to ECE improvements by *implementing* local level policies and activities to support purchasing, serving, and teaching about local foods in ECE settings. We will work with county Extension professionals, community stakeholders and residents in two of the eligible counties, Lawrence and Fayette Counties, to achieve these outcomes through empowered community engagement.

Number of Periods: 1

Collaborators: Carol Smathers (100%) PI

Status: Funded - In Progress

Contracts and Non-Research Grant Funding

Professional Development Funding

Research Impact—Narrative [750 words]

1. The relevance of my research and program activities is recognized with 65 peer-reviewed conference presentations (2 local-, 18 state-, 41 national- and 4 international-level) and 31 opportunities to present findings at invited presentations. Of those, I presented the following conference presentations in 2025: 1 local (Invited), 2 state-, 5 national- and 2 international-level.

In 2025, I served as co-author of an article published in *Pediatrics*, which has an impact factor of 6.4 (2025 Journal Citation Report) and is the most-cited journal in the area of pediatrics. In 2025, I also had an abstract published in the Symposium Proceedings of the Association for Financial Counseling and Planning Education. Previous to 2025, I published 8 peer-reviewed articles, 4 editor-reviewed articles, and 3 abstracts in journals including: *Journal of Extension* (29.5% acceptance), *Journal of Human Sciences and Extension* (40% acceptance), *FASEB Journal* (Impact Factor=5.498), *The Gerontologist* (Impact factor=3.231), *BioMed Central Public Health* (Impact Factor=3.0), *Translational Behavioral Medicine* (Impact Factor=2.989), Childhood Obesity (Impact Factor=1.868), Maternal

Child Health (Impact Factor=1.788), and the *Journal of Nutrition Education and Behavior* (JNEB) (Impact Factor=0.32). JNEB is widely read by nutrition educators working in Extension and serving disadvantaged audiences.

Curricula, creative works, and teaching materials that I have co-developed have been used by others across the state and nationally. The Growing Teachers Throughout the Seasons research project that I served as PI for has resulted in the following:

- Funding: \$292,000, plus thousands in donated garden supplies and materials
- Publications (published and in development) about focus group & survey data (pre-assessment, pilot, and impact)
- Book Sales >1700 since Apr 2024
- Presentations to >2000 individuals at numerous levels: local=766, state=584, national online ECE trainings= 511
- GTS training gained "Ohio-Approved" status for ECE professional development credit
- Awards: **2024 Best Educational Guide** from OSU Extension - Epsilon Sigma Phi, 2024 Program of Excellence in Engaged Scholarship from the OSU Office of Outreach and Engagement, and **2025 3rd Place Instructional Video** from OSU Extension - Epsilon Sigma Phi

The Levels of Community Change game I co-developed has been featured in national and international presentations (and later requested by attendees of each presentation), and used by 4-H groups, public health coalitions, high school and college instructors, and Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program Education (SNAP-Ed) leaders to engage participants in applying social ecological concepts to real-world problems. Over 50 game kits have been sold through the Ohio 4-H Resources website. A peer-reviewed article about the game has been published. Two invitations to present the game were received in 2025 (from Nationwide Childrens Hospital and Columbus Public Health).

At the individual level, I mentor and instruct students in my areas of expertise. I have served as preceptor for numerous graduate and undergraduate students completing requirements for dietetics, public health, and communications degree programs. I have guided the students in the application of competencies learned in their degree programs to work in the public health field.

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Evaluation of Service—Narrative [750 words]

1. Professional (JCEP, NAEFCS, etc.)

- Ohio Joint Council of Extension Professionals – As a member of the Global Relations team, I encourage faculty and staff involvement in international research and other projects. My goal is to work with this team to provide more meaningful opportunities for increasing cultural awareness and sensitivity relative to their professional roles.

Community (county, state, and related, commodity groups, external stakeholders)

- National Farm to School Network – I serve as the state leader for Ohio Farm to School and the state-level contact to the National Farm to School Network. My ambitious goal for 2026 is to form a strong state-level team that will adapt Vermont FEED's "Farm to School Institute" for Ohio. This will result in a shared Ohio Farm to School program curriculum for school district teams.
- Healthy Kids Coalition of Central Ohio – I served as a co-lead for this coalition for over 10 years and currently serve on the steering committee. My goal for 2026 is to coordinate a series of learning, networking, and implementation opportunities related to the concepts discussed in "The Anxious Generation" by Jonathan Haidt and document outcomes and impacts.
- Ohio Food Policy Network – I serve on the steering Committee, OFPN Food Policy Summit Planning Team, and Communications Committee. My goal is to contribute to creation of new network objectives and activities in 2026.

University (department, college, university)

- Department of Extension - Department of Extension Promotion and Tenure Committee: I review dossiers, provide input, draft feedback letters, coach faculty mentees, and vote on promotion decisions. Voted to serve as Chair Elect/Assistant Chair in 2026. My goal is to shadow the Committee Chair and be prepared for that role in 2027.
- College of Public Health- Center for Health Outcomes, Policy and Evaluation Studies (HOPES) Oversight Committee: I provide input on Center for HOPES priorities, progress, and potential partners and strategies for accomplishing the center's goals and fulfilling its role in the land grant university.

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Service and Engagement—University, College, and Department/School Committee Service

Department

Start Term: Spring 2023

End Term: Ongoing

Committee Name: Department of Extension Promotion and Tenure Committee

Description of role and responsibilities: Review dossiers and vote on promotion decisions. Coach/mentor candidates, as assigned. Voted to serve as Chair Elect/Assistant Chair in 2026.

College

Start Term: Spring 2022

End Term: Ongoing

Committee Name: College of Public Health - Center for Health Outcomes, Policy and Evaluation Studies (HOPES) Oversight Committee

Description of role and responsibilities: I provide input on Center for HOPES priorities, progress, and potential partners and strategies for accomplishing the center's goals and fulfilling its role in the land grant university.

Service and Engagement: Editorships and Editorial Reviewer Service

Service and Engagement: Professional Memberships

Start Term: 2023/02

Organization Name: Global Issues Committee, Ohio Joint Council of Extension Professionals (JCEP).

Month/Year Ended: Ongoing

Month/Year Started: January 2024

Description: Member

Start Term: 2023/02

Organization Name: Association of International Agricultural Extension Educators

Month/Year Ended: Ongoing

Month/Year Started: January 2024

Description: The mission of AIAEE is to connect international extension and educational professionals and encourage collaboration and improve educational and extension delivery systems.

Start Term: 2022/02

Organization Name: International Society for Horticultural Sciences

Month/Year Started: January 2023

Start Term: 2013/01

Organization Name: National Extension Association of Family and Consumer Sciences, NAEFCS

Month/Year Ended: Ongoing

Month/Year Started: January 2013

Description: Member

Start Term: 2014/01

End Term: 2025/01

Organization Name: National Association of Extension 4-H Agents

Month/Year Ended: December 2025

Month/Year Started: January 2014

Description: Member

Service and Engagement: Consultation Activity

Start Term: 2025/01

Client Name: Professional Consultation, Ohio State University Extension

Paid or Unpaid?: Unpaid

Description: Professional consultation in the candidate's areas of expertise regarded as part of normal job duties per department guidelines.

Outside Activity: No

Service and Engagement: Clinical

Service and Engagement: Professional

Start Term: 2024/03
Organization/Committee/Club: Ohio Dept. of Education and Workforce - Produce Safety for School Gardens Training Workgroup
Position/Role: Curriculum Developer
Organization City: Columbus
Organization State: OH
Organization Country: United States
Estimated Hours Involved: 10
Description: Invited to help develop a state-level curriculum related to food safety and safe handling of foods from school gardens.

Start Term: 2022/02
Organization/Committee/Club: Health Promotion Practice
Position/Role: Manuscript Reviewer
Description: Review journal manuscripts and subsequent revisions. Health Promotion Practice (HPP) is a bi-monthly, peer-reviewed journal that publishes authoritative research, commentary, practical tools, and promising practices that strategically advance the art and science of health promotion and disease prevention.

Start Term: 2022/02
Organization/Committee/Club: Healthy Kids Coalition of Central Ohio
Position/Role: Steering Committee Member
Organization City: Columbus
Organization State: OH
Description: I provide guidance on coalition structure, sustainability, goals, activities, and evaluation. As a previous co-chair (2013-2022), I also provide historical perspectives to inform current initiatives.

Start Term: 2018/02
Organization/Committee/Club: Ohio Food Policy Network
Position/Role: Steering Committee, Interim Chair of the Communications Committee, and Summit Planning Leadership Team
Description: Steering Committee, OFPN Food Policy Summit Planning, and Interim Chair of the Communications Committee

Start Term: 2012/02
Organization/Committee/Club: National Farm to School Network
Position/Role: Farm to School State Lead
Description: Serve as the state leader for Ohio and state-level contact to the National Farm to School Network. Complete annual Farm to School state-level surveys.

Service and Engagement: Administrative Service

Service and Engagement: Student Service

Service and Engagement: Other

Professional Development

Service

Start Term: Spring 2025
End Term: Ongoing
Title: Exploring Farm to School Legislative Trends: What Can State Policy Do for You?
Sponsoring Organization: National Farm to School Network and the Center for Agriculture and Food Systems
Description: This webinar reviewed the newly released "State Farm to School Policy Handbook: 2002-2023," which analyzes over 800 farm to school and early care and education (ECE) bills introduced across all 50 states, D.C., and U.S. territories. It covered key trends, including the rapid rise of local food purchasing incentives, universal school meals, and support for the child nutrition workforce.

Start Term: Autumn 2025
End Term: Autumn 2025
Title: Agricultural Outlook and Policy Conference
Sponsoring Organization: Department of Agricultural, Environmental and Development Economics
Description: The Agricultural Outlook and Policy Conference is an annual forum related to Ohio's agricultural and food industry, covering issues important to producers, agribusinesses, and elected officials.

Start Term: Autumn 2025
End Term: Autumn 2025
Title: Buckeye Performance People Leader Training
Sponsoring Organization: OSU Human Resources
Description: Updates on changes with the Staff Performance Management Tool.

Start Term: Autumn 2025
End Term: Autumn 2025
Title: Consumer Food Waste Monthly Webinar Series, Culinary Upcycling
Sponsoring Organization: Rutgers Cooperative Extension
Description: New technologies and approaches for reducing food waste.

Start Term: Autumn 2025
End Term: Autumn 2025
Title: From Pantry to Politics: Understanding SNAP and Upcoming Policy Changes
Sponsoring Organization: Harvard University T.H. Chan School of Public Health
Description: Updates on proposed changes to SNAP.

Start Term: Autumn 2025
End Term: Autumn 2025
Title: OSU Outreach and Engagement Community Partner Event
Sponsoring Organization: OSU Office of Outreach and Engagement
Description: Updates of OSU outreach and engagement initiatives.

Research

Start Term: Autumn 2025
End Term: Autumn 2025
Title: Rural Health Transformation webinar
Sponsoring Organization: Ohio Department of Health
Description: Updates and instructions for submitting concepts for the RHT funding opportunities.

Awards and Formal Recognition

Brief Description	Conferring Organization	End Term	Honors/Award Title	Start Term	Year Conferred
Awarded to C. Smathers, T. McDermott., J. Miller, and S. McLain for the 'Growing Teachers Throughout the Seasons' training video released in August 2025.	Ohio Joint Council of Extension Professionals	Autumn 2025	Category 3-B Instructional Video, 3rd Place	Spring 2025	2025