



2024

Extension

UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN-MADISON
ONEIDA COUNTY

Extension

ONEIDA COUNTY

Annual Report

University of Wisconsin-Madison | Division of Extension Oneida County

An EEO/AA employer, University of Wisconsin Madison Division of Extension provides equal opportunities in employment and programming, including Title VI, Title IX, the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act requirements.



8,535

Total
Educational
Contacts

1,520

Health & Well
Being Contacts

3,919

FoodWise
Nutrition
Contacts

1,819

Oneida County
4-H Contacts

165

Office Contacts

1,112

Positive Youth
Development
Contacts



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UW-Madison Division of Extension connects the people of the state with the resources and research of the University. Extension educators teach, learn, lead, and serve; transforming lives and communities by applying research, knowledge, and resources that address and meet local and statewide needs.

Oneida County Extension educators provide leadership for the following programs:

- Oneida County 4-H
- Oneida County Teen Court
- Rhinelander & Lakeland Union High School Raise Your Voice Clubs
- Health and Well Being
- FoodWise Nutrition Education
- Positive Youth Development
- StrongBodies










HEALTH & WELL BEING

Laurel Parins
.4 FTE





✓ SUPPORTING HEALTH & WELL BEING

The Extension Institute of Health & Well-Being drives positive change in Wisconsin families through evidence-based programs in nutrition, food security, chronic disease prevention, mental health, and substance abuse prevention. By engaging both urban and rural communities, we address the state's critical well-being needs, ensuring all Wisconsinites lead healthier lives.

2024 Partnerships

-  *YMCA of the Northwoods*
-  *Dept. of Health Services*
-  *Wisconsin Institute for Healthy Aging (WIHA)*
-  *Aging & Disability Resource Center (ADRC) - Rhinelander*
-  *Minocqua-Hazelhurst-Lake Tomahawk Elementary School*

How We Support Oneida County

-  *Food & Nutrition Security*
-  *Chronic Disease Prevention*
-  *Mental Health Promotion*
-  *Substance Use Prevention*

✓ PROMOTING PREVENTION

Parins actively participates in the Mental Health and Suicide Prevention Subgroup Coalition, empowering individuals through education and resources, and strengthening community partnerships to support social and emotional well-being.

Key discussions with state and local partners were facilitated to enhance healthy aging programs in Oneida County, as well as resource sharing and innovative strategies to increase physical activity across various age groups.

✓ IN OUR COMMUNITIES

Educational Outreach

- Collaboration with the ADRC in Rhinelander launched educational outreach programs, providing meal site attendees with vital information on heart-healthy nutrients and movement habits to reduce heart disease risk among the aging population.

Strength & Balance

- The StrongBodies program coordinated strength training sessions for older adults, improving their strength, balance, and flexibility. Participants also received nutrition and health education, fostering social connections and supporting overall well-being.

Workshops & Exercise

- The Mind Over Matter: Health Bowels, Healthy Bladder program equipped senior women with tools to manage their symptoms through workshops and home exercises.

Physical & Mental

- The Sit & Be Fit wellness program, developed with a local community church, promotes physical and mental well-being. It offers low-impact exercise classes for older adults, including strength exercises, yoga poses, and mobility exercises to improve strength, flexibility, and reduce injury risk.



✓ IN OUR SCHOOLS

- Workshops at the Positive Alternative Conference educated 6th-grade students on positive activities, mental health, addiction, healthy relationships, and building friendships.
- A new partnership with MHLT led to the creation of a School Wellness Committee, engaging staff, students, and the community to enhance physical, mental, and nutritional well-being in a safe and healthy school environment.

Sit & Be Fit Reported Outcomes

1. Increased Strength
2. Increased Flexibility
3. Increased Range of Motion
4. Increased Self-Awareness

✓ ACCESS FOR ALL



Participation in the "Be Well" series for News Channel 12 and contributing articles for the ADRC Monthly Newsletter significantly extended outreach efforts. These platforms provided practical health and wellness advice to the community, covering topics such as nutrition, exercise, and mental health. These comprehensive initiatives aimed to foster a healthier, more connected community through education, partnerships, and innovative wellness programs.

BENEFITS OF MEDIA COVERAGE

Programming that receives coverage in the news and other external media sources tend to have higher:

- ↑ VISIBILITY
- ↑ CREDIBILITY
- ↑ TRUST
- ↑ ENGAGEMENT
- ↑ AWARENESS



1,520

**Health & Well Being
Connections**

Highlighting a Unique Partnership:

UW-Madison Division of Extension and Oneida County ADRC

The UW-Madison Division of Extension is proud to highlight its unique and valuable partnership with the Oneida County Aging and Disability Resource Center (ADRC). This collaboration has enabled the funding of a dedicated Health and Well-Being Educator who delivers evidence-based programming tailored to the ADRC's specific audience and grant requirements, without duplicating services. By leveraging resources through this partnership, Oneida County is able to extend our reach to residents of all ages, ensuring that impactful, evidence-based programming benefits the broader community. This synergy exemplifies our commitment to enhancing community health and well-being through strategic partnerships.



FOODWISE



Allison Wilson (.65 FTE)

Mary Stys (.50 FTE)

Terri Kolb



✓ **WHAT WE DO: OUR MISSION**

FoodWise promotes healthy eating, active lifestyles, and community environments for low-income families through nutrition education at various levels. Federally funded by SNAP-Ed and EFNEP, Oneida County FoodWise Educators collaborate with schools and community organizations, like the Rhinelander Ara Food Pantry, to enhance diet quality, physical activity, food management, safety, and nutrition security.

✓ **FOCUS ON YOUTH**

At all Rhinelander School District Elementary Schools, a comprehensive nutrition education program was delivered. Students were introduced to a variety of new foods and developed a keen interest in healthy eating habits, as noted by their teachers.

**411
STUDENTS
REACHED**

**262
LESSONS
TAUGHT**

**67+
CLASSROOM
HOURS**



✓ COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

The summer Hodag Food Wagon Program was designed to increase the distribution of healthy food and fresh produce to families, while also fostering a sense of community and learning, empowering families to make healthier choices in their daily lives. This initiative placed a strong emphasis on engaging children and families through a variety of nutritious recipes and educational activities. Each week participants received new recipes and food samples, aimed at encouraging and instilling healthy eating habits.

Hodag Food Wagon Program Distributed:

1,767 Food Bags
10,578 lbs of Food

In partnership with the Rhinelander Area Food Pantry, the YMCA of the Northwoods, and the Rhinelander District Library.

A series of StrongBodies classes were provided to the residents at Rhine Haus throughout the summer of 2024, benefiting 14 adults with strength training and weekly nutrition lessons. Participants reported improvements in strength, balance, and overall well-being, highlighting the program's positive impact on both physical and mental health.

Collaborative efforts with the newly formed Oneida County Nutrition Coalition, and renewed partnerships with Oneida County WIC, facilitated the delivery of nutrition education and resources to families in need. The coalition's goal is to address hunger and nutrition needs through actionable initiatives supported by grant funds.

Partnering with the YMCA of the Northwoods, FoodWise provided cooking and nutrition lessons to teens in the YMCA's newly created Teen Lounge. The classes focused on mindful eating and basic cooking skills. Reaching older youth in the community is an area we are looking to continue to grow.

Community engagement was further demonstrated through participation in events such as Healthy Kids Day at the YMCA, the annual Harvest Hoedown Fundraiser, and the Rhine Haus Mobile Food Pantry. These events provided opportunities to educate the public on healthy eating, physical activity, and the importance of nutrition.

3,919

**FoodWise Nutrition
Connections**





ONEIDA COUNTY 4-H



Anne Williams
.5 FTE



Oneida County 4-H continued to offer youth ages 5-19 a variety of positive youth development opportunities in 2024 - aimed at empowering youth to reach their full potential working and learning in partnership with caring adults. The four H's in 4-H stand for head, heart, hands, and health; which means 4-H is committed to providing opportunities for youth to learn life skills like decision-making, problem solving, caring for others, generosity, making healthy choices, and more.



✓ 4-H: INVESTING IN OUR FUTURE

Since its start in the early 1900's, 4-H has invested in future youths by creating opportunities that build skills through hands-on-learning experiences. Youth have options to become leaders, make decisions, and make their voices heard.

✓ 4-H CLUB GROWTH

The Northwoods Explorers 4-H Community Club grew, adding an additional 14 youth members that participated in monthly club gatherings. Members lead the gatherings and vote on decisions made by the group; members practice using basic parliamentary procedure; and members review the budget in order to make wise spending decisions, such as helping others, educational opportunities, and of course, having fun as a club together.



2023-2024:
13 active
4-H club members



2024-2025:
27 active
4-H club members



BY THE NUMBERS



**135
Members**

87.6%
increase in
membership
from previous
year.

1,819

**Oneida County
4-H Connections**

**14 Adult
Volunteers**

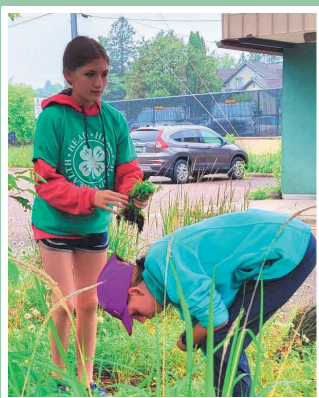
61% increase in
volunteers from
previous year.



COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

**Northwoods Explorers 4-H Club members
engaged in their community in these ways in 2024:**

- Hosted a “county fair” at a local nursing home.
- Led games and donated blankets and game prizes at a local nursing home.
- Worked alongside the Master Gardeners of the North to beautify downtown Rhinelander.
- Helped with weeding at the Rhinelander Area Food Pantry Community Garden.
- Cleaned dishes, floors, and walls at the Oneida County Humane Society.



4-H JUNIOR LEADERS: ENGAGING YOUTH IN GRADES 5-9

Increases in membership for grades 5 and up prompted the need for a new 4-H club to form – the Oneida County 4-H Junior Leaders club, which is led by a caring adult volunteer. The Junior Leaders program aims to develop leadership skills in young people by practicing setting goals, building effective communication and collaboration skills. Members are encouraged to engage in community service projects to help them understand the importance of giving back to their communities, and are given opportunities to explore their interests and strengths, helping them build confidence and self-awareness, and grow into well-rounded, responsible, and capable leaders.





INCREASING ACCESS TO THE ARTS



YOUTH SUMMER THEATER

As a result of participating...



felt more confident they can get along with people who have different interests and opinions than themselves.



want to get more involved in things outside of school.



made a new friend.



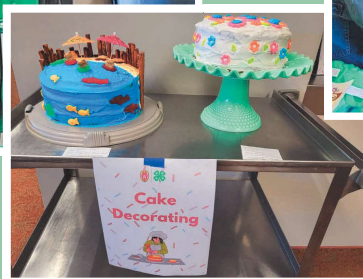
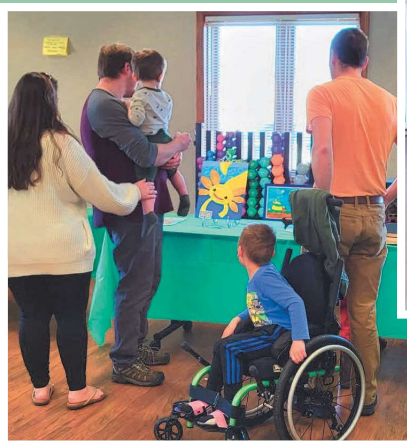
felt more connected to their community.

2024 marked the third consecutive year that Oneida County 4-H offered the Youth Summer Theater Program, a weeklong live performing arts experience for up to 60 youth in grades 1-12 in Oneida County.

"This was a wonderful, affordable, and safe experience for my children to try something new, build self-confidence, and grow in their performance skills. Would highly recommend!" -Parent

YOUTH CREATIVE ARTS & COMMUNICATION EXPO

The annual Oneida County Youth Creative Arts & Communication Expo was held, where youth in grades K-12 had an opportunity to practice their public speaking skills by giving a demonstration, or showcase a project they completed, while also receiving feedback from knowledgeable community members.



✓ EXPANDING YOUTH-ADULT PARTNERSHIPS

Elder Abuse Awareness Event & Pen Pal Program with Grace Lodge

4-H PEN PAL PROGRAM

Outcomes:

83%

of parents noticed improvements in their child's writing skills as a result of participating in the 4-H Pen Pal Program.

50%

of parents noticed improvements in their child's reading skills as a result of participating in the 4-H Pen Pal Program.



"They learned to ask good questions to get to know someone, especially someone of a different generation. They were genuinely excited to get letters!"

-Parent

"I liked sending letters to each other and talking about our lives."

-4-H member

LEFT: Oneida County 4-H partnered with instructors from Nicolet Area Technical College, who helped mentor the 4-H members in completing their innovation project to solve a real-world problem.



✓ EXPANDING WORKFORCE READINESS SKILLS

Oneida County 4-H expanded hands-on opportunities in robotics programming for elementary and middle school-aged youth in Oneida County. 4-H partnered with FIRST Lego League to offer the 4-H Lego Robotics programs for youth in grades 2-8; led by 4-H adult volunteers and 4-H staff. The Robotics program challenged young people to work in teams to collaborate, share ideas, and support each other, fostering strong teamwork and communication skills as they sought solutions to challenges.



ONEIDA COUNTY 4-H LEGO ROBOTICS

After participating in the program...

100%

of 4-H Lego Robotics Challenge team members (grades 5-8) felt more confident they could handle setbacks by asking for help or adapting their strategy.

50%

of 4-H Lego Robotics Challenge team members (grades 5-8) felt more confident they could better manage their time when they have a task or a deadline to meet.

"All the fun we had brightened my day."
- 4-H member

"The thing I liked best about the program was going to regionals and sectionals because it felt really fun to compete."
- 4-H member

"I liked evaluating things we did wrong, finding our problem, and executing our solutions."
- 4-H member

"I really appreciated the structure of introducing how the team needed to approach problem solving and working together. The leadership talks and instruction they received were invaluable."
- 4-H parent

"Life skills - presentation, working in groups, and problem solving!"
- 4-H parent

"I liked that this program encourages teamwork and gives the kids the opportunity to learn coding while having fun "playing with Legos." It has helped my son gain confidence and learn how to problem solve."
- 4-H parent



ABOVE: Rhinelander-based 4-H Lego Robotics team members in grades 5-8 prepare their robot game at the Regional Competition in Appleton.





COMMUNITY YOUTH DEVELOPMENT

Sharon Krause
.5 FTE

✓ YOUTH LEADING THE WAY

Community Youth Development connects young people with community-based organizations, including schools, colleges, universities, local government and nonprofits. Extension's Positive Youth Development Institute prepares the youth of today to become the effective, empathetic adult leaders of tomorrow. Our research-based youth enrichment programs, like Teen Court and Raise Your Voice, build youth and adult partnerships that foster growth.

✓ PREVENTION & RESILIENCY

RAISE YOUR VOICE CLUB

Raise Your Voice Club (RYV) members were gearing up for an exciting field trip opportunity to Madison in March 2025, giving these young advocates the chance to delve into legislative issues surrounding mental health. Members will meet with elected officials and advocate for increased resources to support youth mental health needs. This experience promises to be a profound lesson in democracy, decision-making, and public speaking, offering a firsthand look at state government agencies.



"I'm really glad I went to Madison, and am proud of myself for saying something during the meeting. It wasn't as hard as I thought it would be, it was really more of a conversation. It was hard to share my diagnosis but I'm glad I did because I could tell it got their attention. I hope it makes a difference so other kids don't have to wait as long I did to get help. Nine months was way too long."

-Student, 2024 RYV Club Madison Trip

RYV club members took part in public service announcements, showcasing their efforts to promote Aspirus Health System's suicide prevention programs.

A memorable event for RYV members was attending a presentation by nationally known speaker Kevin Hines at Lakeland Union High School. Kevin shared his story of mental illness and a non-fatal suicide attempt, the event aimed to reduce stigma and increase knowledge about helping those experiencing suicidal thoughts.

RYV club members were also trained in Question, Persuade, Refer (QPR) during a Suicide Prevention Training session, equipping them with the skills to lower suicide rates among their peers.

- ***On average, 54% of youth surveyed self-reported anxiety.***
- ***On average, 35% of youth surveyed self-reported depression.***
- ***On average, 23.5% of youth surveyed reported that they had intentionally engaged in self-harm.***



Addressing adolescent well-being is an identified priority across the state of Wisconsin.

Data from Oneida County 2023 High School Youth Risk Behavior Results: <https://dpi.wi.gov/sspw/yrbs/online>

✓ YOUTH LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT

4-H RICOCCHET

Krause partnered with the YMCA of the Northwoods to offer a week-long day camp for 10 - 14 year old's, where Iowa 4-H's Ricochet curriculum was utilized to develop leadership skills in the areas of leadership attitude, communication, decision-making, and stress management. Participants completed a community service project at a state forest and visited a homeless shelter.



RICOCHET PARTICIPANT FEEDBACK

- I know characteristics of what makes a good team and a good leader.
- I can identify at least one method for positively dealing with stress.
- I had at least one opportunity to share my ideas with others.
- I learned at least one way to minimize distractions to improve my listening.

“

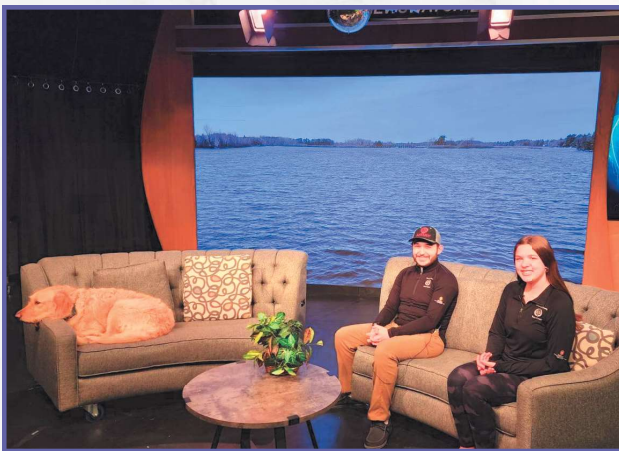
I am having such a good time this week! It's really fun and I'm learning a lot about how to be a strong team member.

-11 year old participant who has been in YMCA's Leadership In Training program

”



24 Teen Court Panelists 30 RYV Club Members



ABOVE: Oneida County Teen Court panelists Tony Barnett and Jadyn Wentland appeared on live TV as part of WJFW's Up North program on April 24, 2024.

ONEIDA COUNTY TEEN COURT

- One of the highlights of the year was the Teen Court Ceremony. Circuit Court Judge Michael Schiek awarded pins and certificates to the Teen Court panelists, thanking them for their service and encouraging continued involvement. The judge also engaged with the students, learning more about the program and answering their questions about the law.
- The Teen Court panelists received training, including a session with the director of the Oneida County's Coordinated Services Team (CST), to educate them about county-based juvenile justice and social services systems. This training helped the panelists become more familiar with local agencies and explore new sanctions to help Teen Court respondents and their families.
- Oneida County Teen Court panelists enhanced visibility within the community through live TV interviews on WJFW, where they talked about the Teen Court program in order to recruit more panelists and to educate the general public about restorative justice practices used during the process.

I was part of Teen Court several years ago. I loved it and want to work in a field that makes similar impacts. It would have been nice to do this when I was here, this was very nice. I'm glad my sister was able to be here, she really enjoyed being a panelist as well.

-Panelist's older sister



ABOVE: Oneida County Circuit Court Judge Michael Schiek addresses Teen Court panelists during a ceremony on May 15th, 2024.



ABOVE: Interactive displays at the Positive Alternatives 6th Grade Conference included one from the Health Department that focused on vaping. Students were asked, "Why do you think kids vape?" and, "What ingredients are in vapes?"

TEEN COURT PANELISTS BUILD SKILLS IN:

- ★ *Communication*
- ★ *Critical Thinking*
- ★ *Responsibility*
- ★ *Empathy & Ethical Reasoning*
- ★ *Accountability*
- ★ *Knowledge of Legal System*
- ★ *Teamwork*
- ★ *Leadership*
- ★ *Problem Solving*

Krause also led sessions at the Positive Alternatives Conference for 6th-grade students where she provided leadership; teaching students about positive activities, mental health and addiction, healthy relationships, and building friendships.

1,112

**Positive Youth
Development
Connections**

OFFICE MANAGEMENT SUPPORT STAFF

Jessica Young
1 FTE

✓ MANAGEMENT

The Oneida County Extension office manager expertly balances a multitude of responsibilities by managing the daily operations of the office and ensuring that everything runs smoothly. This includes overseeing inventory, placing supply orders, maintaining meticulous records, managing the budget, handling bookkeeping tasks, processing invoices and accounts payable, and fostering positive employee relations. Additionally, the office manager coordinates maintenance, communications, marketing, manages external relations, and plans various events, among many other tasks.

✓ SUPPORT

Beyond these administrative duties, Young provides invaluable support to the educators at the Oneida County Extension office by assisting with the planning, coordination, and execution of various programs, ensuring they are delivered effectively. Moreover, Young administers a range of services offered through the office, including insect identification, horticulture and agriculture inquiries and research, water and soil testing, PAT Exams, and pressure gauge testing.



✓ RELATIONS

Young also serves as the crucial link between the UW-Madison Division of Extension resources and the individuals living within Oneida County. Her role as an intermediary ensures that the needs and concerns of the community are communicated effectively to the university, fostering a strong and supportive relationship between the two.

165

Community
Contacts

62

Service
Hours

1,200

Support
Hours

185

Project
Hours

✓ RESEARCH

In 2024, Oneida County Extension directly provided resources and assistance to 165 community members, with many more benefiting indirectly through our website and Facebook communications. Here are some highlights of our service efforts:



- **Insect Research and Diagnostics:** Conducted research and diagnostics on various insects, including weevils, spongy moths, cicadas, millipedes, cankerworms, worms, ticks, and flying carpenter ants. Connected clients to the Insect Diagnostic Lab in Madison for further assistance.
- **Horticultural and Agricultural Support:** Linked clients and DNR employees to specialists at UW-Madison for horticultural and agricultural inquiries.
- **Plant Disease Assistance:** Directed clients to the Plant Disease Diagnostic Clinic for help with identification and control of plant diseases.
- **Pesticide Application Training:** Proctored four PAT Exams.
- **Soil and Water Testing:** Processed 22 soil samples and distributed seven water testing kits.
- **Pressure Gauge Testing:** Conducted six pressure gauge tests.

Through these efforts, we ensured that our community received the necessary resources and support to address their agricultural, horticultural, and environmental needs.

✓ PLANNING & COORDINATION

Young played a pivotal role in the planning, coordination, and execution of over 25 programs and events for Oneida County Extension. Her efforts to streamline processes significantly improved the efficiency and reduced the complexity of program planning. Here are some highlights of her contributions:

- Developed a more efficient registration process for community youth participating in Oneida County 4-H and Teen Court programs.
- Created a website to facilitate easy collection of post-evaluations and better organization of data.
- Established guidelines to improve the tracking of financial accounts.
- Designed a variety of online forms to streamline the communication process between staff, educators, and volunteers.
- Developed an online marketing tool to assist with the planning of engaging and relevant posting on social media and the website.
- Implemented processes to simplify the tracking of program registrations and essential data, such as emergency contact lists, allergy and medication lists, and payments.

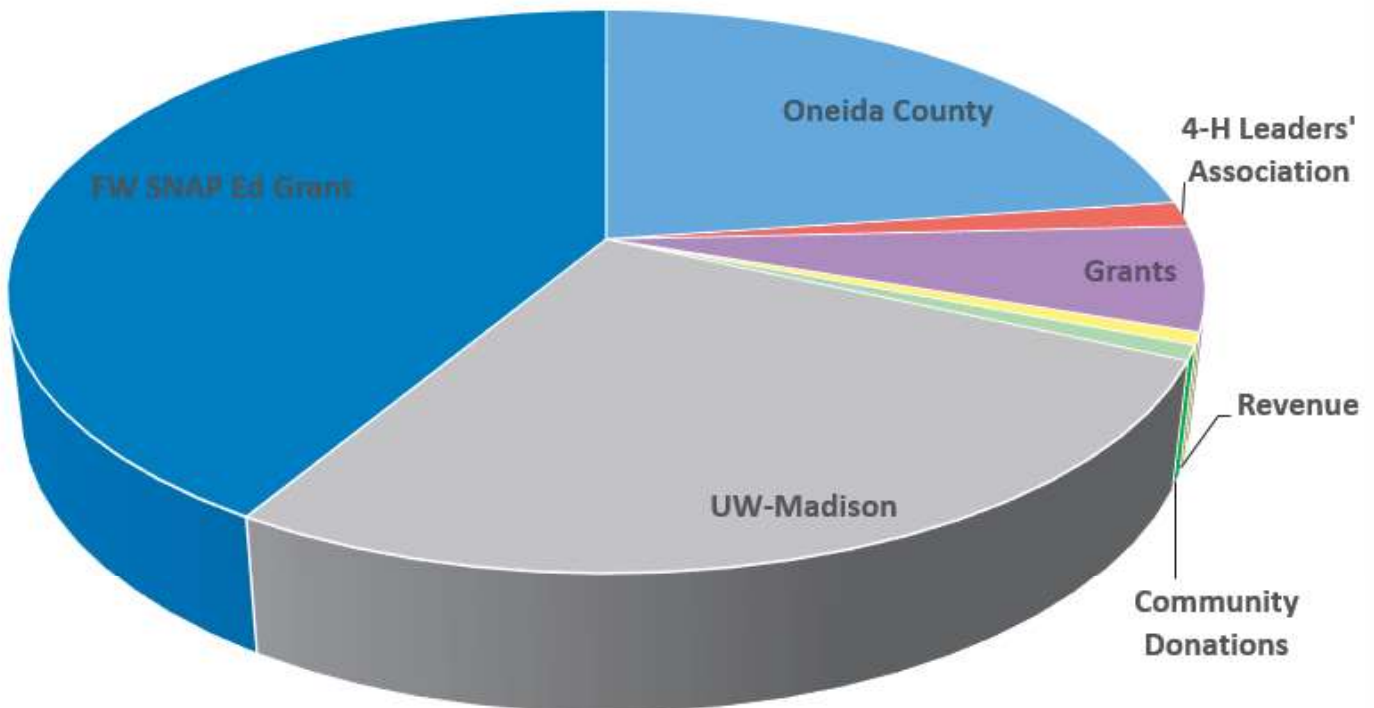
FINANCIAL OVERVIEW

The following provided financial support to
Extension Oneida County in 2024:

Oneida County	\$56,688
Oneida County 4-H Leaders' Association	\$3,590
Community Donations	\$2,128
Revenue	\$1,719
Grants	\$14,900
UW-Madison	\$66,688
FW SNAP Ed Grant	\$103,026

(\$99,181 salary/fringe | \$3,845 non salary expenses)

2024



Oneida County: Educator Fees, Support Staff and Administration, Operational Expenses.

Oneida County 4-H Leaders' Association: General financial support of Oneida County 4-H and program start-up costs; funding comes from past fundraising efforts.

Revenue: PAT Exams, Soil Samples, Teen Court, and External Services Provided.

Grants: Rhinelander Community Foundation, Northern Arts Council, and Mental Health America of Wisconsin.

UW-Madison: Educator Salaries, Fringe Benefits, Technology, Support, and Professional Development.

FW SNAP Ed Grant: Salary and fringe benefits for FoodWise educators, and funding for supplies, travel, and training.

STAFF DIRECTORY



Jessica Young
Office Manager
Oneida County



Anne Williams
Oneida County 4-H Educator
.5 FTE



Sharon Krause
PYD Educator
.5 FTE



Mary Stys
FoodWise Educator
.5 FTE



Allison Wilson
FoodWise Educator
.65 FTE



Laurel Parins
Health & Well Being Educator
.4 FTE



Amber Rehberg
Area 4 Extension Director
Oneida, Florence, Forest, Lincoln,
Price, Taylor, Lac du Flambeau &
Forest County Potawatomi



Terri Kolb
FoodWise Coordinator
Oneida, Vilas, Florence,
Forest, Lincoln, Langlade
Taylor and Price Counties



Conservation & UW-EX Education Committee

Collette Sorgel, Chair
Linnaea Newman, Vice Chair
Lenore Lopez
Robb Jensen
Chris Schultz

**For more information about our programming,
please visit <https://oneida.extension.wisc.edu> or
call 715-365-2750.**

Written by: Jessica Young, Oneida County Extension Office Manager

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