

EXTENSION TRENDS: **VALLEY COUNTY**

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2025 By the Numbers

- **5,636** direct contacts
- **1,097** youth participants
- **56** volunteers
- **3,289** volunteer hours
- **\$38,150** extramural funding

Our Advisory Council

Special thanks to our volunteers who help shape programming and inform the work we do for UI Extension in Valley County: Shauna Arnold, Lindsey Harris, Karla Eitel, Steve Anderson, Katlin Caldwell, Kevyn Booth and Brian Davis.

UI Extension Educator



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2025 Impact

UI Extension community development programming focuses on strengthening the local food system and supporting the creative class to advance economic development through the arts. These efforts rely on community partnerships and dedicated volunteers. Food system projects included community gardens, food coalitions, pollination and story maps. Alzar School students made significant contributions by building and repairing community garden infrastructure in McCall and Cascade. Master Gardeners taught a three-part pollination series to 6th grade students in McCall. The West Central Mountains (WCM) Food Coalition hosted its third farm-to-table fundraising dinner, featuring eight local producers in partnership with Paikka Home Grown and Baked. U of I intern Parker Ames developed an updated WCM Food Coalition story map. The coalition hosted a foodie trivia networking mixer and a farm-to-restaurant panel discussion. Educator Melissa Hamilton supported a virtual connection to the Cultivating Success Whole Farms Planning course. Arts-focused economic development efforts included establishing the Free Little Art Gallery program, featuring rotating art exhibits. The Cascade Arts Walk continued to showcase 10 local artists, including four youth artists, through this self-sustaining initiative that supports downtown beautification in Cascade.

4-H in Valley County

The Ranchers Feeding Youth event, held in collaboration with the Valley/Adams Farm Bureau, Payette River Cattlemen, local FFA chapters, and UI Extension specialists, engaged hundreds of K-5 students in hands-on agricultural learning. Through grant and community support, the 4-H program secured over \$19,000 in external funding to expand youth opportunities. The NRA Foundation grant provided \$12,000 in equipment and supplies, while \$4,000 in fundraising covered the new 4-H Shooting Sports trailer. A local outdoor store also contributed by waiving FFL transfer fees valued at over \$400. Additional support from Perpetua Resources and proceeds from the Valley County 4-H Pie Auction funded an AmeriCorps position and \$3,000 in upgrades for drone and shooting sports equipment. Collaborations with schools and afterschool programs in Cascade, Donnelly and McCall offered hands-on experiences in cooking, STEM, art and leadership. Programs such as Coding, Communication and Cooking connected STEM and life skills through age-appropriate projects, strengthening workforce readiness and communication skills while keeping 4-H visible and relevant across all grade levels.

On the Horizon

Two 4-H coordinator positions were made possible through partnership with the county. A new 4-H community partnerships position will focus on afterschool programming and non-traditional 4-H efforts, including Beyond Ready initiatives and workforce development. Traditional 4-H club programs will continue and are actively seeking volunteers to serve as leaders. The new community partnerships coordinator will also explore opportunities to develop youth entrepreneurial programming in collaboration with the WCM Economic Development Council. UI Extension is closely involved with the county as it redesigns the fairgrounds and looks forward to the possibilities this new community space will offer. The Extension team will continue to provide community development facilitation and leadership development services, including capacity building and Real Colors training. A virtual Money Habitudes training will be offered for the first time and an Agriculture Entrepreneur class in partnership with the Cultivating Success program. The high-altitude Master Gardener program will be offered again in 2026, in collaboration with Blaine and Teton counties, as part of its every-other-year delivery.