



# IMPACT 2024

Through Extension programs across the nation, Family and Consumer Sciences Extension Educators provide a multitude of Educational opportunities to meet the needs of diverse audiences.

## Disaster Preparedness

Natural disasters impact every aspect of human well-being for those affected. Several extension programs concentrate on enhancing preparedness for such calamities and mitigating their enduring effects. These programs encompass various formats to cater to specific community needs. For instance, initiatives vary from ensuring personal financial stability during crises to assembling emergency preparedness kits. Notably, Extension Family and Consumer Science endeavors have educated 10,055 clients on disaster preparedness topics.

### Food Preservation in Crisis

Access to nutritious food and safe drinking water becomes a paramount concern following a natural disaster. In light of the recent historic flooding in the eastern part of the state, the **Kentucky** Cooperative Extension Service conducted the *Preparing Your Family and Home in The Face of Disaster* program. This initiative comprised ten sessions conducted across the affected areas, with a significant focus on educating participants about the safe preparation, handling, and storage of food during emergency situations.

*“Historic East Kentucky flooding affected over 8,900 households. Families lost their homes and stored food supplies” - KY Extension Educator*

Through the program, workshop participants successfully preserved over 400 pints of fruits and vegetables. In times of disaster, prolonged power outages are common due to the impact of the storm on the power grid, resulting in the spoilage of food stored in household freezers that become inadequately cold for food preservation. These

classes served as a lifeline immediately following the crisis to allow families to begin to rebuild their food stock. Consequently, building confidence in recovery following tragic flooding.



### Radio Preparedness Series

*“The radio program empowers communities to proactively safeguard lives” - Carrie Guderjahn, Montana Extension Educator*

The radio serves as a vital communication tool in times of emergency because they are battery operated or equipped with hand cranks. In **Montana**, extension educators at Montana State University recognized the radio's potential to disseminate information on research-based disaster preparedness techniques. This initiative, known as the *Emergency Preparedness Radio Series*, comprised multiple segments aimed at providing extensive advice, building resilience, and formulating efficient disaster response tactics. These radio segments were designed to cater to a wide audience, from rural communities to urban areas, ensuring that crucial information reached as many people as possible. The radio series not only served as a source

of valuable information but also as a platform for fostering unity and mutual support among individuals facing the challenges of disaster situations. Its impact extended beyond just providing practical advice; it instilled a sense of empowerment and readiness in individuals, equipping them with the knowledge and tools needed to navigate uncertain times with confidence and resilience.

## Financial Wellness in Disasters

Financial well-being plays a pivotal role in achieving comprehensive recovery post-disaster. The aftermath of a disaster extends beyond physical and emotional realms to include financial implications. To facilitate a resilient recovery, a robust financial strategy is needed. This philosophy underpins the University of Minnesota's initiative, *Preparing Your Finances for a Potential Disaster*.

*"Participants indicated that they will apply information gained from the program"* - Sara Croymans, Minnesota Extension Educator

The *Preparing Your Finances for a Potential Disaster* program was a webinar open to all interested participants. The webinar attracted a total of fifty-nine attendees and encompassed various financial preparedness subjects. The program was sponsored by the University's Department of Family, Health and Wellbeing, which played a critical part in the program's preparation. Overall, the success of the program highlighted the importance of proactive financial planning and the positive impact it can have on individuals and families' overall well-being.

## General Disaster Preparedness

Extension Educators at North Carolina State University and the University of Florida independently spearheaded disaster preparedness initiatives in their states. In **North Carolina**, educators offered educational sessions which covered youth, pet safety, assembling portable emergency kits, safeguarding

essential documents, and establishing evacuation plans. While in **Florida**, sixty resiliency kits containing fundamental items like flashlights, first aid supplies, and emergency blankets were disbursed to families to enhance their resiliency in times of crisis.



## Working For a Safer Tomorrow

Extension is dedicated to diligently assisting in the development of resilient and well-prepared communities. It acknowledges the importance of cultivating a robust community spirit of readiness amongst its clients. Through proactive community preparation, Extension endeavors to mitigate the devastating impacts of future disasters and expedite the recovery process. Extension will continue to anticipate the needs of its communities and respond to disasters.

*This report was compiled by Dylan Gentry, BS, Kentucky Cooperative Extension, Public Affairs Education Committee members, Amanda Dame, University of Kentucky Cooperative Extension and Christine Zellers, NEAFCS Vice President Public Affairs. For more Information, email [zellers@njaes.rutgers.edu](mailto:zellers@njaes.rutgers.edu).*

*Raising kids, Eating right, Spending smart*



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