



2025 Annual Report

Mission & Partnerships: Working together for a thriving Cecil County

Our partnerships strengthen community ties and enhance program delivery, ensuring a collaborative approach to address local needs and promote sustainable growth in Cecil County. The University of Maryland Extension (UME) serves the state by delivering research-based education and practical solutions that strengthen Maryland's communities, families and industries. With more than 300 faculty and staff across every county and Baltimore City, UME provides in-person and online programs that promote agricultural innovation, environmental stewardship, food safety, healthy living, youth and volunteer development and community engagement. Guided by the principles of diversity, equity, inclusion and respect, UME is dedicated to improving the quality of life and economic vitality of all Marylanders.

UME IN YOUR COMMUNITY

University of Maryland Extension engages over:

- 106,305** Residents
- 12** Faculty and staff
- 178** 4-H & Master Gardener volunteers
- Over 40** Partnerships



Director's Message

Dr. Paul Rickert
Area Extension Director
Upper Shore Cluster
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This past year has been one of **significant growth** and community engagement. Our initiatives have strengthened partnerships and fostered collaboration, demonstrating our commitment to bettering the lives of residents across Cecil County through impactful programs and services.

We have seen incredible participation in our programs, which focus on enhancing agricultural practices, environmental sustainability and youth development. Together, we are building a stronger, more resilient community that empowers individuals and families to thrive, ensuring a brighter future for all.

We appreciate the longstanding support and partnership that the Cecil County Executive and the County Council have continued to provide over the years. We look forward to continuing programming to improve the lives of the residents of Cecil County!

University of Maryland Extension – Staff Directory

Name	Title	Email / Notes
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We have a robust set of educational articles and resources organized by topic area on UME's website. Please scan the QR code to answer all your Maryland-based questions



extension.umd.edu

TAKE ADVANTAGE OF OUR WEBSITE

NMP BY THE NUMBERS

- 4 *New plans prepared*
- 61.66 *New acres covered*
- 63 *Updated plans*
- 3067.72 *Acres covered*
- 67 *Total plans*
- 30 *Total clients (27 updated & 3 new)*

Nutrient Management Program



Agriculture is Maryland's largest private industry, generating about \$2.9 billion in crop and livestock sales in 2023. The UME Nutrient Management Program (NMP) helps farmers comply with the Water Quality Act, which protects the Chesapeake Bay and its tributaries. Our office assists producers in developing and updating nutrient management plans required by state regulations. These plans promote Best Management Practices (BMPs) that balance nutrient use with crop needs—improving farm profitability while safeguarding water quality.

Source: Maryland Manual Online – <https://msa.maryland.gov/msa/mdmanual/O1glance/html/agri.html>



AgFS BY THE NUMBERS

- 21 *Private Pesticide Recertifications*
- 28 *Nutrient Management Recertifications*
- 92 *Attendees at meetings & trainings*
- 10,000 *Facebook Reaches*
- 607 *Facebook followers*

Agriculture & Food Systems

The Cecil County Agriculture Program delivered a variety of impactful educational events in 2025, supporting farmers, students and the broader agricultural community.

The Winter Agronomy Meeting offers updates on key regulatory topics such as the Pesticide Regulations and the Maryland Right to Farm Law. At the Cecil County Fair Ag Showcase, participants explored the latest farming technologies, legislative updates and agricultural policies. The event also featured Stop the Bleed training, where farmers received hands-on instruction and emergency first aid kits to enhance on-farm safety. Cecil County Agriculture Education Days (CCAED) reached 1,042 seventh-grade students from county middle schools through 12 interactive learning stations focused on Ag Technology, Animal Science, Food Safety/Food Science and Land and Water. Additionally, the Days of Learning Extension Program provided students at the Cecil County School of Technology with real-world agricultural experiences, helping them understand industry operations and the skills needed for future careers in agriculture.



Environment & Natural Resources Master Gardener Program



Master Gardeners are local residents trained to share research-based horticultural knowledge with the community. After completing over 50 hours of training, each Master Gardener volunteers at least 20 hours annually to support local education and outreach. Their mission is to educate residents about safe, effective and sustainable horticultural practices that foster healthy gardens, landscapes and communities.



Master Gardeners engage the public through demonstrations, workshops, lectures and plant clinics held at libraries, schools, parks, community and demonstration gardens and local events. There are many program areas aimed at promoting sustainable gardening and environmental stewardship across Cecil County.



MG BY THE NUMBERS

1,535

Master Gardener Volunteer Hours

\$53,419

Volunteer Dollar Value

17,700

Facebook Page Reach

1,148

Facebook Followers

482

Facebook Interactions

19

Presentations & Programs

7

Special Request Programs

4

Community Events

15

Bay-Wise Yard Certifications

4-H Youth Development

The 4-H Youth Development program empowers young individuals, fostering **leadership skills** and personal growth through practical experiences. Participants engage in various activities that promote teamwork, responsibility and community involvement, preparing them for future challenges and opportunities in their lives.



4-H BY THE NUMBERS

15

Community Clubs & Affiliated Programs

283

4-H Community Club Members

268

4-H Educator Programs

13,223

Direct Contacts Through 4-H Programming

48,000

Indirect Contacts Through 4-H Programming

61,223

Youth & Adult Contacts

153

UME Approved Volunteers

5,508

Volunteer Hours

\$191,623

Volunteer Dollar Value

Through community service projects, youth **cultivate a sense of responsibility** and belonging, enhancing their understanding of civic engagement. The program includes STEM education initiatives that encourage critical thinking and problem-solving while promoting healthy living habits, creating well-rounded, capable future leaders who are prepared to make positive impacts.



The Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program (EFNEP) is a nutrition education initiative funded by the U.S. Department of Agriculture's National Institute of Food and Agriculture. EFNEP's mission is to empower limited-income families with children and youth to make positive changes in diet and physical activity, supporting healthy lifestyles and reducing the risk of chronic diseases. EFNEP provides a strong return on investment, for every \$1 spent on the program, it saves \$10.64 in future healthcare costs.

EFNEP's success depends on strong community partnerships that help promote health-based behavior changes among limited-income populations. Through these collaborations, EFNEP teams are able to effectively reach and serve communities across Maryland.



Expanded Food and Nutrition Program (EFNEP)

Federally Funded Nutrition Program

- 92%** - Adults Improved Diet Quality Behaviors
- 38%** - Adults Improved Food Security-related Practices
- 92%** - Adults Improved Food Resource Management Behaviors
- 57%** - Adults Improved Food Safety Practices
- 69%** - Adults Improved Physical Activity Behaviors
- 73%** - Youth Improved Diet Quality Behaviors
- 20%** - Youth Improved Food Security Related Behaviors
- 56%** - Youth Improved Food Resource Management Behaviors
- 58%** - Youth Improved Food Safety Practices
- 34%** - Youth Improved Physical Activity Behaviors

SNAP-ED

Maryland Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program Education

SNAP-ED BY THE NUMBERS

74 *Trained Teachers*
(Trained-trainer to organize lessons)

1,327 *Participants reached through educational lessons*

2,682 *Reached through educational resource distributions from partnering sites*

2025 Maryland statewide Impact

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1kFKup8SJbbqz6aYdzpmjnmQ/NosNBAXyt/view?usp=sharing>

FY25 marks the final year of full federal funding for SNAP-Ed and the last year of implementing Maryland's statewide program focused on comprehensive nutrition education and policy, systems, and environmental (PSE) change initiatives. Despite this transition, available carryover funds from FY25 will allow SNAP-Ed to continue advancing its PSE efforts in collaboration with partners across the state.

For more than 25 years, Maryland SNAP-Ed has empowered families to live healthier lives by improving access to nutritious foods, promoting physical activity, and fostering environments that support healthy choices. Through strong partnerships with state and community organizations, SNAP-Ed has delivered impactful nutrition education and driven sustainable changes in policies and systems to reduce barriers to healthy eating and food accessibility.



Family and Consumer Sciences



The University of Maryland Extension's FCS program provides research-based education to help Maryland residents lead healthy, financially stable lives. In 2025, FCS delivered programs through partnerships with the Cecil County Health Department, Department of Social Services, Community Services, Public Schools and Libraries, YMCA, Cecil County Fair and the Elkton Veterans Center.

Programs such as Dining with Diabetes and Fresh Conversations improved participants' knowledge and confidence in managing health through better nutrition and physical activity. Workshops like Capture the Flavor, Grow It Eat It Preserve It, and Food Safety for 4-H Volunteers enhanced food safety and preservation skills.

Youth also engaged in nutrition education through the MyPlate fruit and vegetable game at the Cecil County Fair. The Don't Cross Me! youth food safety program improved handwashing knowledge and received positive feedback from teachers.

Through these efforts, FCS continues to strengthen the health, safety, and wellbeing of Cecil County residents.

FCS BY THE NUMBERS

66 in-person programs 1,735 Adult & youth residents..... 12 Monthly nutrition resources provided to the Elkton Senior Center..... 475 Residents receiving home delivered meals through the Elkton Senior Center.....



Watershed Specialist Eric Buehl sharing how runoff impacts local waterways at the 16th annual Wade In event in Charlestown. Image: Van Funk, Cecil County.

The Cecil County Watershed Stewards Academy (WSA), a partnership between the Cecil County Department of Public Works and the University of Maryland Sea Grant Extension, trains community leaders to reduce polluted stormwater runoff and improve local water quality. Graduates earn the title of Master Watershed Steward.

The Conowingo WIP is a multi-state effort led by the Chesapeake Bay Program Steering Committee to reduce nutrients and sediment in the Susquehanna River basin. Our specialists serve on a project team that shares information with Cecil County stakeholders about best management practices (BMPs) and progress reporting.

They also provide educational programs for local governments, watershed groups, and residents on Chesapeake Bay water quality, climate resilience, and residential BMPs. In addition, they assist counties, municipalities, and community associations by identifying needs, offering research-based guidance, and providing technical support to secure funding for water quality and climate resilience projects.

Environment & Natural Resources Watershed Protection & Restoration Program



ENR BY THE NUMBERS

20 Master Watershed Stewards trained

\$210,839.00

Grants approved for stormwater design & construction of practices

\$532.95

Value of volunteer hours

212 People reached through education & outreach

5 Communities received grant & technical assistance

34 Partners engaged through consultations & stormwater education

Thank You for Supporting Our Community and Future!



We are grateful for the **ongoing support** from our community partners and residents, ensuring we continue our mission of enhancing the quality of life in Cecil County through education and service.

- **Community Engagement Programs**
- **Sustainable Agriculture Initiatives**
- **Youth Development Opportunities**
- **Health and Wellness Workshops**

“University programs, activities, and facilities are available to all without regard to race, color, sex, gender identity or expression, sexual orientation, marital status, age, national origin, political affiliation, physical or mental disability, religion, protected veteran status, genetic information, personal appearance, or any other legally protected class.”

If you need a reasonable accommodation to participate in any event or activity, please contact the University of Maryland Extension, Cecil County Office, at 410-996-5280 at least 2 weeks prior to the planned program.”