



**COLORADO STATE UNIVERSITY  
EXTENSION**

# Front Range Region

## 2023 IMPACT REPORT

**Across the state, Extension is where  
Colorado State University meets community.**

Our work starts by understanding the story of each community. In 2020, we launched a year-long community needs assessment effort to learn more about each county's unique needs and challenges. Through data collection and community-based events, meetings and conversations, we were able to identify opportunities to meet county-specific needs through community partnerships, programming and resource development.

Across the Front Range, five key themes and priority issues emerged from this community needs assessment: Food and Agriculture, Youth Development, Community and Economic Development, Land Management and Natural Resources, and Health and Wellbeing.

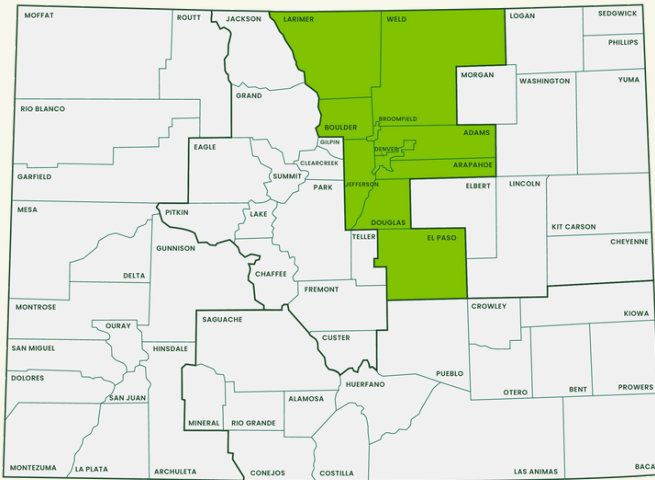
These regional issues shape conversations and guide our areas of focus. This report highlights some examples that represent the work that is underway across the Front Range to meet county and community needs across the region.

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Boulder County Outdoor Education Programming

### How We Do Our Work, Together

Colorado's Front Range Counties and CSU are part of a historical partnership that is foundational for collaboration and how we approach our work.

We partner across the region to provide webinars and workshops, provide budget-smart food and nutrition information to underserved audiences through the Expanded Food & Nutrition Education Program (EFNEP).

We collaborate with CSU Spur, the Sturm Collaboration Campus, CSU departments and field research stations, and we support CSU students through experiential learning and research opportunities across a range of Extension Summer Internship projects in the region each year.

#### Collaboration Spotlights:

- **Adams, Douglas, and Larimer Counties** collaborated with college partners to develop grant proposals that were focused on air quality, outdoor recreation, and health.
- **Weld County** partnered with CSU's Department of Human Development and Family Studies to offer Health Without Barriers – a nutrition, exercise, and mental health program.

### Youth Development

Front Range counties support youth outreach and engagement through leadership and life skills development, education and career pathway programming, and partnerships with underserved communities to ensure access, equity, and opportunity.

Youth development activities across the region include Colorado 4-H and county-based 4-H clubs, Colorado Master Gardener Youth Outreach activities, and college and career readiness programs and webinars. Examples of our work in the area of Youth Development include:

- **Arapahoe County 4-H** was awarded an Excellence in Urban Program recognition for its work with 28 schools, 6 libraries, and a military base to provide youth education programs in science and life skills.
- **Jefferson County** established a new opportunity to connect local youth to gardening through a partnership with Jefferson Healthy Schools and the Colorado Master Gardener program.
- **Arapahoe County Master Gardeners** created a pollinator garden at Jewell Elementary in Aurora. Arapahoe County also provides families of school-age children with a monthly newsletter in both English and Spanish that is focused on promoting healthy eating and physical activity.

## Community & Economic Development

Extension specialists throughout the Front Range are building community engagement, fostering civic discussions, creating spaces and opportunities for community members to work together and bridge differences, and are creating safe, welcoming, and inclusive opportunities by ensuring language access, accessibility, and a community-focused approach to program development and outreach. Examples of our work in the area of Community & Economic Development include:

- **Jefferson County** launched a pilot site at Title 1 school for Building Allyship and Diversity in Jeffco (BADJ) training for volunteers, empowering them with the skills and resources to visibly identify as trusted adults working with LGBTQIA+, BIPOC and multiracial youth.
- **Broomfield County** created a bilingual community outreach position to assist with critical touchpoints in areas of workforce, community partnerships, youth and family development, and language access.
- **Larimer County** piloted a high school Juntos 4-H program aimed at Hispanic youth and conducted civic dialogue training through the Family Leadership Training Institute with a focus on families who have been traditionally underrepresented in civic engagement.

## Health & Wellbeing

Front Range counties provide resources and programming that support the health and wellbeing of individuals and communities.

Examples of our work in this area include:

- **Denver County** developed three demonstration and education gardens at Harvard Gulch Park. These public gardens feature PlantSelect research as well as vegetable demonstrations and native plant landscaping. In addition, 1,500 lbs. of food produced by the vegetable demonstration garden was donated to hunger relief organizations.
- **Larimer County** hosted its 48th Farmers' Market season, promoting locally grown foods and Extension education.

## Land Mgt. & Natural Resources

Front Range counties are supporting their communities by providing programming and resources on sustainable landscaping, pollinator conservation, youth and community environmental education, outdoor recreation, and natural resources and land stewardship. Examples of our work in this area include:

- **Adams County** developed a partnership with Trout Unlimited and the Eco-Explorers programs to foster youth environmental education.
- **Jefferson County's** ENOR environmental youth summer camp received the Jeffco Open Space Gamble Oak Award as a pioneer program.
- **Boulder County** and Wildfire Partners provided site visits to HOA communities to promote Firewise landscaping and best practices for reducing fire risk.

## Food & Ag

Regional Extension Specialists support local food systems, farms, agricultural producers and emerging businesses through resources and programs including on-farm soil health consultations, crop clinics, Certified Crop Advisor, food safety clinics, and agribusiness development programming. Examples of our work in this area include:

- **Weld County** developed and hosted the first Colorado Women in Ag conference in fall 2023. The conference was designed to create a community of women working in ag from across the state and to foster information-sharing through educational and networking opportunities.
- **El Paso County** created a community garden for local community members to grow their own food.
- **In partnership with Food Bank of the Rockies**, Regional Specialist Martha Sullins provided educational support, resources and training to local producers on best practices and food safety while ensuring language access and classes tailored for specific producer needs. As a result, producers reported a higher volume of sales and were able to increase support for the food bank's mission to provide locally sourced produce to underserved communities.

## Regional Impact Highlights

### Boulder County Farm to Early Care and Education Program

Boulder County Extension partnered with Boulder County Health to deliver Farm to Early Care and Education program to over 30 early childcare centers in 2023. The program provides a gardening kit to early care centers, complete with seeds, a "Know How to Grow" introductory gardening brochure in both English and Spanish, and troubleshooting assistance from Boulder County Master Gardeners. Horticulture Program Specialist Kristen Anderson leads volunteers who help kick the growing season off with a hands-on class in garden prep and seed starting.

### Addressing Food Insecurity in El Paso County

Food insecurity is a serious concern with many implications for nutrition and the health of our community. For Food Banks, meat continues to be the most in-demand food item but has one of the highest costs to obtain. The Protein 4 Helping Others program was developed by a member of the El Paso County CSU Extension Advisory Committee, El Paso Extension Director Jonathan Vrabec, and a member of the Junior Livestock Sale Committee to help address the food insecurity needs of the local community. This local Extension program brings together corporate sponsors, 4-H youth, the El Paso County Junior Livestock Sale Committee, and the Colorado Springs Rescue Mission to provide donated protein from Junior Livestock projects to the Colorado Springs Rescue Mission, where it is donated to community members and is also used to help to build job skills in butchery and food processing.

### Native Bee Watch Program in Arapahoe County

CSU Extension specialist Lisa Mason created the Native Bee Watch biodiversity monitoring project that began in 2016 at Colorado State University. In 2023, Mason and researchers from CSU were awarded a \$850,000 grant from the National Science Foundation to create a scalable community science AI training system, using Native Bee Watch program to expand the number of adult learners acquiring STEM skills and the opportunity for rural or place-bound learners to participate in science.



### Front Range By the Numbers

# 37,578

Total volunteer hours contributed by **818** Front Range Colorado Master Gardeners in 2023

Colorado 4-H Clubs in the Front Range:

# 178

# 26

CSU Extension Summer Internship projects across the Front Range in 2023

