

June 2026 Program Report

Preparing High School Students for Future Local Government Careers

Extension's Career Pathways Internship Program connects high school students with paid summer internships that provide hands-on experience while introducing them to careers in local government. Led by College & Career Pathways Educator, Venkata Karri, the program helps youth build leadership and workplace skills while contributing to Dane County departments that serve the community.

During the summer of 2026, interns will work in the Dane County Executive Office, Land & Water Resources, Human Services, Library Services, and the UW-Madison Division of Extension Dane County. Extension collaborated



with department leaders to identify workforce needs and develop meaningful internship opportunities. Through these experiences, students will strengthen their professional skills, explore careers in public service, and gain a deeper understanding of how local government serves Dane County residents.

To learn more, contact [Venkata](#).

Building Strength and Community Through StrongBodies

Extension's StrongBodies program helps older adults improve their physical and mental well-being through progressive strength training and health education. Designed to meet the needs of aging adults, the program promotes increased strength, mobility, healthy habits, and social connection in a supportive group setting. The recent session also fostered meaningful relationships, helping reduce social isolation and build

a stronger sense of community among participants.

Healthy Communities Coordinator Claire Mance, alongside a newly trained StrongBodies volunteer leader, brought the program to the Middleton community through a partnership with St. Luke's Lutheran Church. Participants engaged in regular strength training while learning about nutrition and healthy lifestyle practices. A representative from



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This summary report highlights just a few of the programs and projects Dane County Extension Educators facilitated or taught this past month. If you would like more information on any of our programs, please contact me or visit our website.

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The University of Wisconsin-Madison Division of Extension provides equal opportunities in employment and programming in compliance with state and federal law.

St. Luke's shared, "The class fostered not only physical wellness and functional fitness but also meaningful connections among participants."

To learn more, contact [Claire](#).

Helping Gardeners Build Healthy Soil Throughout Wisconsin

Extension's Green Thumb Gardening series helps gardeners make informed decisions about soil health and fertilizer use through research-based education. Led by our Horticulture Educator, Lisa Johnson, a recent online session focused on soil composition, pH, nutrients, soil testing, and how to choose and apply fertilizers effectively.

Healthy soil is the foundation of successful gardening, but many home gardeners are unsure how to evaluate or manage their soil. The class encouraged participants to use soil testing as the basis for making informed decisions, reducing unnecessary fertilizer use while supporting healthier plants and ecosystems.

Participants reported learning practical concepts they could



immediately apply, including how soil texture affects plant growth, how to interpret soil test results, and when fertilizers are truly needed. Many shared plans to improve their gardening practices. One participant said, "'I'm going to spend focused time this summer working on soil texture and nutrient levels, in a more informed manner.'"

To learn more, contact [Lisa](#).

Building Transportation Solutions for Older Adults

Extension is bringing together service organizations across Dane County to improve transportation options for older adults through a series of facilitated community conversations.

Many organizations said that helping older adults access transportation has become increasingly challenging, requiring significant staff time and limiting their ability to offer programs and services. Transportation barriers can also prevent older adults from participating in activities that support their physical, mental, and social well-being.

To address these challenges, Community Development Educator, Noah Reif, is working with organizations to build relationships, identify shared transportation needs, and develop collaborative solutions. Through these conversations, participants are working together to create short, intermediate, and long-term strategies that improve transportation access and strengthen services for older adults throughout Dane County.

To learn more, contact [Noah](#).

Upcoming Extension Programs



Money Matters LIVE 2026

Tues, Aug 4 | 10am-7:30pm Zoom

Free virtual financial education workshops offered on a variety of topics held monthly.



Focus on Fathers

Tue, Aug 11 | 1-2pm Zoom

The class is designed especially for dads and anyone interested in the series.



Ask Your Gardening Question LIVE

Wed, Aug 19 | 1:30 pm-2:30 pm | Zoom

These monthly sessions connect sustainable gardening practices with positive impacts on landscapes and ecosystems.



Foundations in Gardening

Sep 6 – Dec 12 | Self-paced Online

Teaches practical gardening skills along with easy-to-understand explanations behind why and how they work.

Supporting Healthy Habits Through Community-Based Nutrition Education

By Shana Leith, Nutrition Program Administrator



FoodWise partnered with Allied Wellness Center to provide a seven-week *Eating Smart Being Active* series for adults in the community. The evidence-based program focused on helping participants build confidence around healthy eating and active living through interactive lessons, recipe preparation, light physical activity, and group discussions.

The program addressed the need for practical nutrition education among adults who may face barriers such as limited time, financial constraints, or uncertainty about how to prepare healthy meals. Through the series, participants explored strategies for grocery shopping on a budget, making balanced food choices, increasing physical activity, and building sustainable, healthy habits that fit their daily lives.

Seven adults participated in the series and actively engaged in the lessons each week. Participants shared that they gained new money-saving strategies for grocery shopping and felt more confident preparing healthy meals at home. Several participants incorporated recipes from the classes into their regular meal routines, supported by weekly ingredient kits from the Allied Wellness Center that enabled them to recreate the recipes at home.

Beyond the nutrition knowledge gained, the program also helped create a sense of community among participants. Participants created a WhatsApp group where they shared photos of their meals, celebrated successes, and encouraged one another. Seeing participants build connections, support each other, and feel empowered to make healthier choices demonstrated the lasting impact of community-based nutrition education.