Arizona Cooperative Extension programs are grounded in county and community needs, and developed based on feedback from the county board of supervisors and appointed advisory boards. The University of Arizona (UA), as the land-grant institution in the state, has a three-pronged mission: teaching, research and outreach. One of the most effective ways to fulfill this mission is through Cooperative Extension educational programs, designed to make science useful for people in their everyday lives.

These extension-driven programs leverage and multiply each dollar of state support with additional outside funding. In addition, extension educational programs save money for consumers and clientele plus promote healthy environments and lifestyles. Some examples of these programs for Maricopa County follow.

Cooperative Extension programs address key quality of life issues in the county such as water availability and quality, wholesome food production, home and family care, production agriculture and natural resource conservation.

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Maricopa County
Families and Consumers

Healthier people are better able to contribute to a robust economy. Cooperative Extension programs are designed to strengthen families, promote healthy lifestyles and make wise financial decisions and develop community leaders. Programs are offered at community centers, schools, churches and other venues to reach different audiences. Many programs are delivered by volunteers who have been educated in content knowledge and presentation techniques through Train-the-Trainer instruction.

- The Grandparents Raising Grandchildren program educates grandparents, and other kin raising children, on family life and child development issues through one-on-one and group support and disseminating resource and referral information.
- T3 Training Program: Health, Safety and Sensory Screening educates nurses and health educators on a health, safety and sensory screening curriculum for dissemination to child care and school staff.
- Brain Builders Training educates parents and child care staff about child and early brain development in children through a 16-hour curriculum.
- Child Care Health Consultant Training educates public health nurses in the practice of becoming a health consultant to child care programs.
- The Tapestry Project connects high-risk families of young children 0 to age 5 with educational programs, services and resources to promote child health and well-being.
- Small Steps to Health and Wealth is a program designed to motivate consumers to implement behavior change strategies that simultaneously improve their health and personal finances.
- Bone Builders is an osteoporosis prevention and bone health education program targeting women of all ages to improve their nutrition and physical activity and build strong bones.
- Bone Builders Physical Activity Program includes nine weeks of progressive exercise that helps inactive seniors improve their overall fitness and prevent falls.
- Walk Across Arizona is a 16-week, team-based walking program to help individuals develop a healthy walking habit. The teams of six to ten people keep track of their miles walked for a friendly competition between teams.
- Healthy Active Kids brings together nutrition and fitness education to help reduce childhood obesity. UA Cooperative Extension is partnering with the Arizona Nutrition Network and local school districts to address nutrition education with at-risk children.
- Occasional Quantity Cooks is designed for church volunteers, 4-H youth, or community leaders who help prepare food safely for others.
- Germ City is an interactive, learning experience for school children and adults for proper hand washing techniques and how to prevent infections and food borne illness.
- Safe Food 2010 Conference is a bi-annual event focusing on recent research and outreach education related to food from the farm to the table. It targets a wide range of food professionals from educators and dietitians to farmers, sanitarians and food service workers.
- Master Consumer Advisors are trained volunteers who answer thousands of consumer phone and email questions about food safety, nutrition, home care, water treatment, and other consumer topics.
- The Extension Food and Nutrition Education Program reaches out to low-income families and children with classes on healthy food choices, food safety and nutrition.
- The Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program provides the same educational opportunities and is carried out in collaboration with local food banks and in schools.
- Master Gardeners share their knowledge with others and provide landscape as well as gardening information after completing a rigorous 16-week course.
- The Field Crops Program covers a wide variety of crops including, but not limited to, cotton, alfalfa, wheat, sorghum, corn silage, barley and a variety of vegetables. Precision questions come from farmers. Past Control Advisors, industry representatives and the public.
- The Turfgrass Science Program conducts research and outreach education for golf course superintendents, professional sports turf managers, municipal and school turf facilities personnel, and commercial landscapers on a range of issues and problems including water quantity and quality, integrated pest management, and improving techniques for optimal turf grass performance in the desert.
- The Arizona Invasive Species Management Plan is being implemented with contributions from, and partnerships with, the University of Arizona.
- The Agricultural Literacy Program provides educators information on agriculture they can incorporate into the subjects they already teach, while meeting the Arizona Academic Standards in writing, reading, math and science. The program also educates consumers about the Arizona agriculture industry and agriculture’s impact on their life.

Water Resources Program

Science-based technical, economic, legal and policy expertise is necessary for water development, use, and conservation. The multi-faceted Water Resources program creates quality interactive learning experiences to promote responsible water stewardship, including conservation. This program develops partnerships with multiple professional associations and governmental agencies. The program also utilizes Arizona Project WET (Water Education for Teachers) which provides customized and grade-specific curriculum enhancement to help partnering school districts better meet the science standards.

Agriculture and Natural Resources

Cooperative Extension promotes environmental stewardship through Commercial and Urban Horticulture, Field Crops, Turfgrass, and Invasive Species programs. It also educates the public about the economic impact of the agriculture industry in Maricopa County.

- Arizona Certified Nursery Professional and the Arizona Certified Landscape Professional programs for landscape and nursery professionals provide training on a range of topics including water conservation, environmental pest management, soils and plant nutrition, and pruning.
- An Invasive Plants Extension and Research Program informs, advises, and trains landowners and land managers about the harm caused by pest plant species (weeds/invasive vegetation) and provides information about methods to abate the damages to Arizona’s lands and waters caused by pest plants.

The Leadership Centre

This non-profit 501(c) (3) was created through a unique public-private partnership to provide information, resources, and tools supporting effective community leaders in eastern Maricopa County. Programs include: mediation training and services, classes and workshops focused on neighborhood and community leadership—including homeowner associations, community leadership forums and the Neighborhoods Arizona Annual Conference. http://www.theleadershipcentr.org

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