

impact

University of Idaho Extension programs that are making a difference in Idaho.

Oneida County enrollment sees encouraging growth due to new grant funding

AT A GLANCE

Funding through an ARPA grant has allowed University of Idaho Extension 4-H in Oneida County bolster its programs with needed supplies for the youth and volunteers.

The Situation

Oneida County is the sixth least populated county in Idaho. But despite its small size, it has a great 4-H program. However, the county has only had a UI Extension educator for roughly five of the last 10 years. With this dilemma and because of the COVID-19 pandemic, many of the supplies and equipment for many of the 4-H clubs/programs had been depleted or simply used past its lifespan. When a new UI Extension educator was hired in the fall of 2021, volunteers were bringing their personal equipment and supplies from home to aid in the teaching of these 4-H youth. This placed undue stress on the volunteers. It also reduced the number of youths they could adequately provide with supplies.

Our Response

In response to the shortage of supplies, the staff of the Oneida County's UI Extension office sought grant opportunities to aid in replenishing supplies for these programs. An ARPA grant was made available to 4-H starting in the spring of 2022 with the help from the University of Idaho Extension 4-H Youth Development's state office. Through multiple applications for funding within this grant, nearly \$25,000 was secured for the programs in Oneida County to purchase



Just a sample of the supplies purchased for the Oneida County's UI Extension 4-H program with the funds from the ARPA grant.

supplies to build program capacity. The purchase of these supplies occurred from the spring of 2022 through the summer of 2023.

Program Outcomes

Numerous Oneida County 4-H project groups benefited from this grant funding, including: horse club, cooking/baking clubs, all the species of our livestock clubs, art and other STEM projects, dog club, Clover buds club, leather club and the sewing club. Our horse 4H club enrollment had been low the past few years and there were still some questions surrounding the new helmet rule which took effect a few years ago. This grant allowed our program to purchase some riding helmets to give to new riders and to educate them on the reason behind the youth being asked to wear

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helmets for safety. The 4-H sewing club in Malad was able to purchase five new sewing machines and thread, which was a much-needed improvement over the two outdated machines the club had used previously.

An area of Oneida County, the Holbrook community, which has previously needed to travel to Malad to receive 4-H programs received supplies for leather, woodworking and rocket projects which they could do with a new club leader in their community without needing to travel 25 miles over a mountain range.

One of the main highlighted outcomes from these grant funds was the increase in 4-H youth enrollment due to the increase in opportunities. Enrollment numbers in the 2020-2021 4-H year (prior to any grant funding) were at 182 youth and 19 volunteer leaders. In the 2021-2022 year some purchases had already been made with the grant funds to aid the clubs and the enrollment increased to 199 youth and 30 volunteer leaders. The reason behind this increase in our volunteer leaders was due to the groups being bigger and the influx of new grant-funded supplies allowing for the availability of new projects. This year (2022-

2023) with further ARPA grant funding and further purchases for needed equipment and project needs, 4-H enrollment increased to 234 4-H youth and 40 volunteer leaders. The number of youth for each of the years mentioned equivalates to a 9% increase in youth enrollment from 2021 to 2022 and a 17.5% increase from 2022 to 2023. It is also equal to a 57% increase and a 33% increase in the number of 4-H volunteers for those respective years.

Over the course of two years, the youth and volunteers in Oneida County's UI Extension 4-H program have been able to shape the program into a thriving and continually growing program. The ARPA Building Capacity grant has allowed numerous clubs/projects to receive desperately needed supplies so that the youth could enjoy the opportunities that 4-H has to offer and regain the learning lost during the COVID-19 pandemic. Volunteers are now excited to help rather than needing to bring personal supplies to run these educational opportunities for the youth. The 4-H program in Oneida County will continue to thrive thanks to these funds.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

Sawyer Fonnesebeck, Extension Educator • University of Idaho Extension, Oneida County • 208-766-2243 • sfonnesbeck@uidaho.edu

Kelly Sorensen, Office Manager • University of Idaho Extension, Oneida County • 208-766-2243 • ksorensen@uidaho.edu

Sherry Moeller, 4-H Coordinator • University of Idaho Extension, Oneida County • 208-766-2243

Lacey Clark, 4-H Coordinator • University of Idaho Extension, Oneida County • 208-766-2243 • laceyclark@uidaho.edu

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