



2008 Key Issue Identification: Strafford County

Sustainable living practices education for families in Strafford County

- 2. Please describe the issue in 2-3 sentences** (i.e. craft an issue statement that describes what the issue at hand is and why it is a significant issue):

Families in Strafford County need education and support to live a more sustainable lifestyle that includes spending less, saving more, eating healthier for less, building in physical activity, increasing protective factors with parenting practices, increased gardening and agricultural activities and the use of renewable resources for heating.

In 2-3 sentences, please describe what the public value for Extension to address this issue is/would be

The research clearly shows that the rising rates of obesity and related chronic diseases such as diabetes are clearly linked to higher medical costs for everyone. When families are struggling financially and sometimes to the extent of crisis, more community dollars from welfare, community action and even federal programs such as Medicaid, are needed. This puts a strain on the entire community. Families are then not able to be contributing members of the local economy.

Identify and summarize key data that help make the case that this is a key issue

Child and adult obesity are still on the rise, as is the increase of diabetes. The declining economy and increasing rates of foreclosures are putting families in very tight financial situations. According to the New Hampshire department of Health and Human Services overweight and obesity is affecting almost 62% of New Hampshire residents

With oil prices increasing, families are struggling to pay their heating bills. This puts an additional strain on already tight budgets and increases the amount of state and federal aid to help these families pay their bills.

How does/would addressing this issue tie into UNH Cooperative Extension's Mission?

Promoting Sustainability is one key area for University of New Hampshire. UNH Cooperative Extension should work closely with the UNH department of sustainability to provide education and support to families on sustainable living so that they able to make healthy decisions that are beneficial to themselves and the community. This would ensure sustainable practices to prevent crisis and dependency.

What Extension programs/activities, if any, currently address this issue? For each, please succinctly describe how the program/activity addresses the issue.

UNH Cooperative Extension is addressing this issue through different program. Family and Consumer science and Nutrition Connection programs are addressing financial and

nutrition education, Agriculture 4-H Youth programs are addressing gardening education needs and the Forestry program is addressing sustainable and renewable heating methods. These efforts should be coordinated in order to provide families with practical sustainable living education.

What other organizations/agencies are currently addressing this issue?

The other agencies addressing this issue include: NH Department of Health and Human Services, NH Department of Agriculture, Markets and Food, UNH Department of Sustainability.