



ASSOCIATION OF  
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UNIVERSITIES

COOPERATIVE  
EXTENSION



National Institute of Food and Agriculture  
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## **USDA, Cooperative Extension & APLU Award Top Honors in Extension Excellence and Diversity**

**WASHINGTON, Nov. 1, 2021**– Recognizing visionary leadership and diversity in educational programming, the U.S. Department of Agriculture’s (USDA) National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA), Cooperative Extension, and the Association of Public and Land-grant Universities (APLU) today announced that Ann Allgood Berry of the University of Tennessee will receive the 2021 Excellence in Extension Award while the [Coming Together for Racial Understanding Team](#) will receive the National Extension Diversity Award. USDA-NIFA and Cooperative Extension have sponsored the awards since 1991.

The Excellence in Extension Award is given annually to one Cooperative Extension professional who excels at programming, provides visionary leadership and makes a positive impact on constituents served. Ann Allgood Berry is an Extension specialist at the University of Tennessee, where she is responsible for developing, implementing and evaluating consumer economics programs to support outreach through the University of Tennessee’s network of family and consumer science and 4-H youth development agents in 95 counties across the state. By conducting 124 teacher workshops, personal finance instruction reached 1.2 million high school students. The estimated impact of this Consumer Economics programs is \$297,261,026.

“Each year, these awards showcase the fundamental, transformative difference Cooperative Extension continues to make in our society,” said NIFA Director Dr. Carrie Castille. “This important partnership and excellent programs like these are a testament to the true value of Cooperative Extension capacity funds more than a century after the Smith-Lever Act created this unparalleled system of outreach and education that enriches every community across the nation.”

“Congratulations to the outstanding professionals who will be honored on November 9th,” said ECOP Chair, Dr. Wendy Powers, Associate Vice President of the University of California Division of Agriculture and Natural Resources. “They are leading the way in communicating trusted science to the latest generation of learners and problem-solvers in communities across the nation.”

### **National Diversity in Extension Award**

The National Diversity Award recognizes significant contributions and accomplishments in achieving and sustaining diversity and pluralism.

The Coming Together for Racial Understanding Team, comprised of Extension specialists and administrators from 22 land-grant universities from 17 states, and other national representatives, is the winner of the National Diversity Award. The team helped train facilitators who guided community dialogues across the country around issues of race and discrimination.

The effort involved 29 states sending teams for national training, with more than 100 participants completing train-the-trainer workshops. All told, over 900 Cooperative Extension System staff completed some portion of the trainings.

### **Regional Awards**

NIFA, Cooperative Extension, and APLU will also present five regional awards for excellence this year. The 2021 Regional Excellence in Extension recipients are:

- **1890 Institutions Region:** Michelle L. Eley, Community and Economic Development Specialist, North Carolina A&T State University, for communication and economic development for underserved agricultural and rural audiences.
- **North Central Region:** Ashley L. Mueller, Extension Specialist, Disaster Education Coordinator, University of Nebraska-Lincoln, for disaster education leading to increased community preparedness and resilience.
- **Northeast Region:** Harry Crissy, Business and Community Vitality Extension Educator, The Pennsylvania State University, for promoting access to broadband Internet.
- **Southern Region:** Robert C. Kemerait, Jr., Extension Specialist, Plant Pathology, University of Georgia, for advancing public understanding of managing major disease threats to Agronomic Crops.
- **Western Region:** Ana Lucia Fonseca, Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Specialist, Oregon State University, for advancing diversity, equity, and inclusion for all learners.

*USDA's National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA) invests in and advances agricultural research, education, and Extension across the nation to make transformative discoveries that solve societal challenges. NIFA supports initiatives that ensure the long-term viability of agriculture and applies an integrated approach to ensure that groundbreaking discoveries in agriculture-related sciences and technologies reach the people who can put them into practice. In fiscal year 2020, NIFA's total investment was \$1.95 billion. Visit NIFA's website: [www.nifa.usda.gov](http://www.nifa.usda.gov); Twitter: @USDA\_NIFA; LinkedIn: USDA-NIFA. To learn more about NIFA's impact on agricultural science (searchable by state or keyword), visit [www.nifa.usda.gov/impacts](http://www.nifa.usda.gov/impacts).*

*APLU is a research, policy, and advocacy organization dedicated to strengthening and advancing the work of public universities in the U.S., Canada, and Mexico. With a membership of 244 public research universities, land-grant institutions, state university systems, and affiliated organizations, APLU's agenda is built on the three pillars of increasing degree completion and academic success, advancing scientific research, and expanding engagement. Annually, member campuses enroll 5.0 million undergraduates and 1.3 million graduate students, award 1.3 million degrees, employ 1.3 million faculty and staff, and conduct \$49.2 billion in university-based research.*

*Cooperative Extension (Extension) translates science for practical applications; engages with the public by providing reliable information leading to positive action; and transforms individuals, families, communities, and businesses in rural and urban areas. Extension operates through the nationwide land-grant university system and is a partnership among the federal government (through USDA-NIFA) and state and local governments. At the national level, Extension is coordinated by the Extension Committee on Organization and Policy (ECOP), which is the representative leadership and governing body of Extension nationwide and works in partnership with the APLU Commission on Food, Environment and Renewable Resources. See <https://advocacy.extension.org>, <https://landgrantimpacts.org>, [www.extension.org/ecop](http://www.extension.org/ecop) for more information or follow us on Twitter @Ext100Years, #CoopExtAward.*