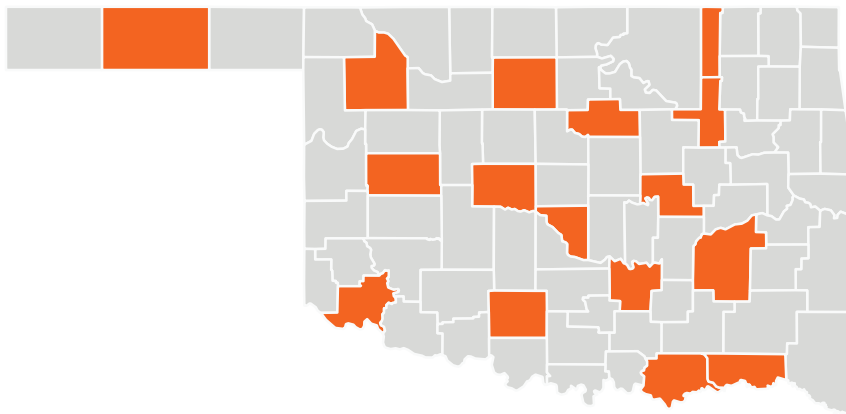


# OSU EXTENSION LISTENS TO OUR COMMUNITIES

Findings From Regional Community  
Engagement Forums Hosted Across Oklahoma



Statewide Results

# OSU EXTENSION LISTENS TO OUR COMMUNITIES

## 16 Community Engagement Forums Held Statewide

In spring and summer 2019, OSU Extension hosted community forums at sites across the state of Oklahoma. The forums sought to ensure that a wide range of community members were engaged so that their opinions and perspectives on important issues would be represented in OSU Extension's strategic planning.

### About OSU Extension

Oklahoma State University Extension is a thriving, sought-out, science-based educational resource dedicated to improving the lives of all Oklahomans. With a presence in all 77 counties, OSU Extension has the knowledge and leadership to help the state's citizens solve local issues and concerns, promote leadership and manage resources wisely through programs focusing on agricultural enterprises; natural resources and environmental management; food, nutrition, health and safety education; and youth, family and community development.

### OSU Extension Community Engagement Statewide Forums

#### Executive Summary

More than 400 people participated in one of the 16 OSU Extension community forums. They were asked to provide input on what they thought the most important issues facing their communities were going to be over the next 3 to 5 years. They were specifically asked about issues related to Families, Youth and Children, and about issues related to their Community, Economy (Farms and Businesses) and Natural/Environmental Resources. Based on the results of the community forums, researchers at OSU provided site hosts with results specific to their communities, as well as perspective on issues that came up as common themes statewide.

The forum results are summarized in a series of handouts and on the OSU Extension website. Extension educators will be using their results to engage the community in action planning around the identified issues and action ideas. Trainings for follow-up engagement activities are being offered to Extension educators so they will have an even greater ability to engage their communities authentically and effectively.

Results can be found online at [extension.okstate.edu/communityforums](https://extension.okstate.edu/communityforums).

# Top Issues and Action Ideas for Regional Forums Hosted Across Oklahoma

## Children, Youth and Families

### **Provide Workforce Education and Financial Training to Increase Job Skills and Promote Economic Security and Prosperity**

- Provide financial literacy courses for all ages
- Support both Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) education and Home Economics Courses (Family and Consumer Sciences)
- Promote agriculture and 4-H programs
- Partner with local businesses and leaders to offer job skills training, internships, and educational employment opportunities and seminars to promote work ethic
- Encourage cross-generational professional mentorship opportunities

### **Promote and Support Programs, Education, and Access to Resources for Healthy Living**

- Provide nutrition education and food preparation workshops
- Offer health-fairs and other programs to help people find resources
- Educate on substance abuse prevention

### **Support Life Skills for Strong Youth, Families, and Relationships**

- Foster mentorship opportunities and cross-generational activities
- Provide free and accessible parenting education, particularly for parents with young children (parenting skills, defining family roles, boundaries, etc.)
- Support families in creating activities that involve the whole family
- Increase engagement with schools, including after school programming

## Community, Economy (Farms and Businesses) and Natural/Environmental Resources

### **Strengthen and Grow Local Economies**

- Support and foster agritourism throughout the state
- Develop local commerce that is successful despite the growth of online shopping
- Offer educational opportunities around starting new businesses, restoring downtowns through historical preservation, and fostering tourism

### **Improve Water, Soil, Energy and Natural Resource Conservation Efforts**

- Provide education on water conservation and land stewardship
- Promote longevity of soil health, balancing profitability with stewardship
- Help industry, farmers, and people balance needs and conservation efforts

### **Support Agriculture Education and Promote Rural Prosperity**

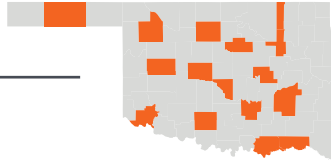
- Facilitate internships and apprenticeships that lead to mentoring opportunities with farmers
- Host skill-building workshops such as marketing, budgeting, social media, and other programming skills
- Partner across sectors to bring together knowledge and resources

### **Promote Education and Engagement with Policymakers about Local Issues**

- Improve infrastructure, including improving broadband access, roads, and recycling programs
- Educate on how taxes are collected and spent in the community
- Collaborate with local and state leaders to hear the needs of local communities

### **Invest in Resources and Programs to Secure the Future of Farming in the State**

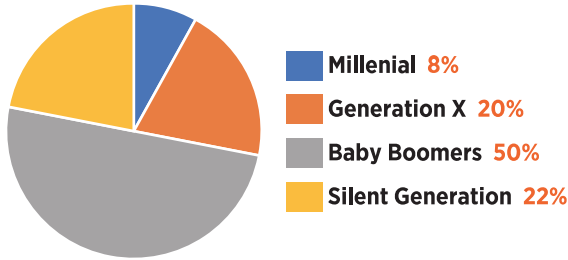
- Support the development of local businesses that support farming
- Help foster the next generation of farmers through education, career days in local schools, and transition planning
- Establish programs that help farmers do non-farm work such as establishing community pride, working with anti-agriculture groups, and navigating tax policy



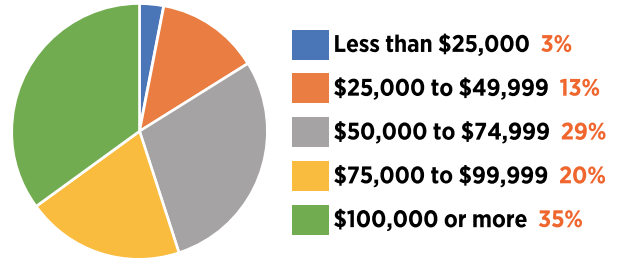
## Responses from Regional Forums Across Oklahoma

Percentages are rounded to the nearest whole number

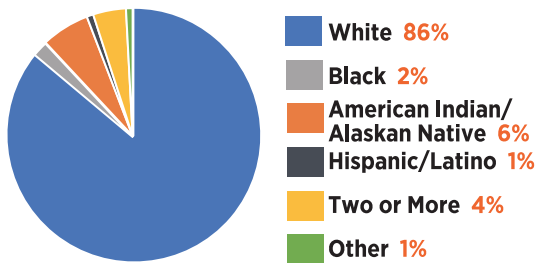
### Age Range



### Income Range



### Race/Ethnicity



### Gender



### Military Veteran



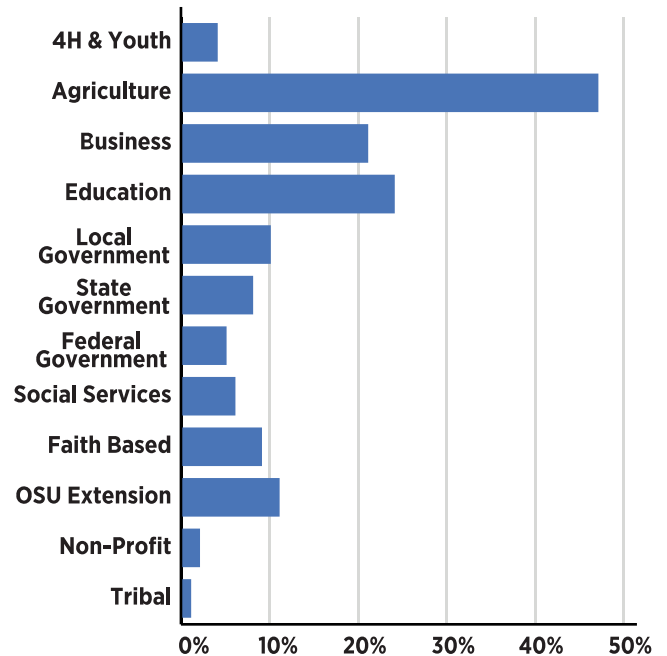
### Have a Disability



### Attended OSU Extension Program Previously



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