



PURDUE
UNIVERSITY®

Extension

NEWSLETTER, WINTER 2026

ORANGE COUNTY



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COMMUNICATION AND CONTACT INFORMATION

Staying informed is key to having a positive 4-H experience!

In this new year, let's stay connected!

EMAIL (Primary Method – 95% of All Communication)

Most of our announcements, reminders, deadlines, and updates are sent via email through 4-H Online.

Please be sure that the email account tied to your 4-HOnline profile is:

- Able to receive emails from 4-HOnline
- Checked regularly
- Not filtering messages into spam or junk folders

If you did not receive a welcome or enrollment approval email, please check your spam folder and add 4-HOnline as a trusted sender.

Important Email Notes:

- AOL, Yahoo, and Hotmail email accounts typically block or filter 4-HOnline messages. We strongly recommend using an alternative email provider.
- If using a work email, please be sure your employer allows mass messages and be aware that you will receive frequent communication from us.
- Please DO NOT unsubscribe from 4-H emails. Even if a message does not apply to your child, unsubscribing removes you from essential updates—and your child may miss deadlines or opportunities.

SOCIAL MEDIA We also share reminders, event promotions, deadlines, and updates on social media.

Follow us on:

- Facebook: Purdue Extension – Orange County
- Instagram: orangeco.in_4h

QUARTLY NEWSLETTERS Every quarter, we send a newsletter packed with updates for 4-H families and Extension programming in all areas.

POST MAIL

Occasionally, we send important reminders or documents through standard mail (“snail mail”).

Please make sure your mailing address in 4-HOnline is current. If you have moved, please notify our office so we can update your records.

**All of these methods ensure you receive the information needed to
have a successful and positive 4-H experience.**



GRANT ANNOUNCEMENT!

Orange County 4-H has been awarded a **\$10,000 Smithville Foundation Grant** to launch Nourish & Lead, a youth-led countywide service, nutrition, and leadership initiative. This project will support the construction and maintenance of Community Blessing Boxes across the county and fund a new 4-H Meal Program to help youth build real-world skills in budgeting, food safety, and healthy eating.

We're excited to kick off with Blessing Box installation and maintenance rolling out by Spring 2026. A huge thank-you to the Smithville Foundation for supporting youth leadership and community service—and thank YOU for helping us make a difference!

Blessing Box Questions or Requests:

If you know of a Blessing Box needing maintenance, or if your organization, church, park, or business is interested in being involved with the initiative or if you would like to request a newly constructed box, please contact Veronica Portillo at vportill@purdue.edu or call the Orange County Purdue Extension Office at 812-723-7107.



Thank You

to everyone who joined us at our annual meeting December 1st! Great fun was had with everyone participating in our civic engagement activity to assemble Holiday Meal Kits and to disburse forty of them, along with hygiene kits, to each blessing box in Orange County! More information will be shared soon with club leaders about our upcoming meal program and Blessing Box stocking initiative this program year.



BLESSING BOXES
packed during 2025 Annual Extension Meeting!





Orange County 4-H STEM Enrichment Programming

Thanks to funding secured by the Indiana 4-H Foundation and gifted by the Indiana Energy Association, Indiana Soybean Alliance, and Indiana Corn Marketing Council, Orange County was able to make an investment of \$1,300 in STEM programming for local 4-H youth, preparing them to be #BeyondReady for the future in a rapidly changing world.

This project will provide 3D pens, filament for our MakerBot Replicator Mini+ printer, and MicroBits to support a variety of STEM workshops and club activities



If you are interested in hosting a STEM enrichment program, using these or other resources, please contact Julie Harris - carrell@purdue.edu.



Beyond Ready





Orange County 4-H Council

4-H Council Elections held at Annual Extension Meeting on December 1, 2025.

Orange County 4-H Council welcomes two new members as we move into 2026!



Taisha Robbins

“ I’m currently a junior at the Kelley School of Business at Indiana University, studying business management and data analytics. I have accepted an internship at Cintas and plan on joining the Management Trainee program after I graduate.

I wouldn’t be where I am without 4-H. Orange County 4-H gave me my work ethic, dedication, and self-discipline. I’m excited to be able to have the chance to be on council and give back to the community that made me who I am.”

Michaela McCabe

Michaela is working toward a career in early childhood education while staying actively involved in the agriculture industry, by raising and showing high-quality market lambs. Her 4-H experience has helped shape her responsibility, confidence, and passion for agriculture, giving her the life skills that guide her goals today. Through her involvement in agriculture, she hopes to contribute to youth livestock programs, promote agricultural awareness, and support the development of the next generation of young producers.

She chose to run for 4-H Council because she wants to give back to a program that has given so much to her. She hopes to bring strong leadership, fresh ideas, and a positive attitude to support members and strengthen the 4-H community.

She is excited to meet more youth, help plan engaging activities, and ensure every member feels included and supported.



Calling all Springs Valley residents! There is an OPEN position on the 4-H Council as a representative! Call our office for more information! 812-723-7107



Remember when you were a kid, navigating life's challenges?

The world's changed, and it's moving fast. It feels like now it's even harder and moving even faster than when we were kids.

And Yet for over 120 years, 4-H has been there!!

Just like generations before, they're preparing today's youth to be beyond ready —

Ready to serve,
Ready to build,
Ready to conquer,
Ready to succeed.

Through dynamic programs that are proven to work, and building skills like -
Leadership,
Problem-solving,
Team building,
and confidence.

4-H is preparing the next generation to be -

B e y o n d R e a d y !

GET HEALTHIER IN THE NEW YEAR!

PURDUE EXTENSION
GET WALK IN'
PROGRAM

Helping Hoosiers get on their feet!



SCHOOL OF NURSING



**REGISTER by
Friday January
9th at this link:**

[https://forms.gle/A4H3ht
WFzZyud2zv7](https://forms.gle/A4H3htWFzZyud2zv7)



OR scan the QR Code

WANT TO IMPROVE YOUR HEALTH

...but short on time ...and lack motivation?

This **FREE** email-based walking program has you covered!

Sign-up, walk, and get email support. Take steps to a healthier you in the new year!

Start Date: Monday January 12, 2026

You will receive a total of 16 emails- 2 per week for the first month and 1 per week for the next 8 weeks.

WALK TO:

- Reduce risk of obesity, heart disease, diabetes
- Feel energized
- Add daily physical activity
- Get social



Extension - Orange County

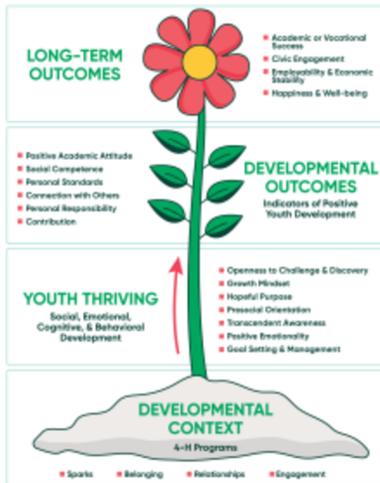
Purdue University is an equal opportunity/ equal access/
affirmative action institution.

For more information or to join us, contact 812-723-7107 or vportill@purdue.edu

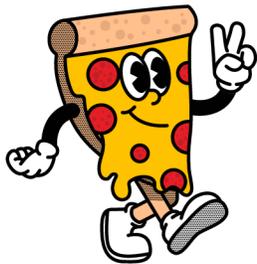
Join us for a Volunteer Kick-Off Dinner on

January 12th from 6-8pm

We will be discussing Annual Trainings, Updates for the new program year, and idea sharing!



Learn about the Beyond Ready Initiative & 4-H Thrive Program



Extension - 4-H Youth Development



Orange County 4-H Presents:

Volunteer Kick-Off

Dinner



Sponsored by:
Orange County 4-H Council

Monday, January 12, 2026

6-8pm

Block Building



Come Join Us at the
Volunteer Kick-Off Night!

- Complete Annual Trainings
- Get updates for the 2026 4-H season
- Share ideas
- Enjoy a Free Meal

RSVP by January 5th



SCAN HERE

Every volunteer has a story.

Join Julie & Veronica in conversations about your “Why” and the heart behind Orange County 4-H. Let us know when you are available to chat!



Orange County 4-H



Extension - 4-H Youth
Development



**Mark your
calendars!**



WHEN:

JANUARY 24, 2026
2:00PM-4:00PM

LOCATION:

ORANGE COUNTY ANIMAL CLINIC
2840 IN-37, PAOLI, IN 47454

WHAT:

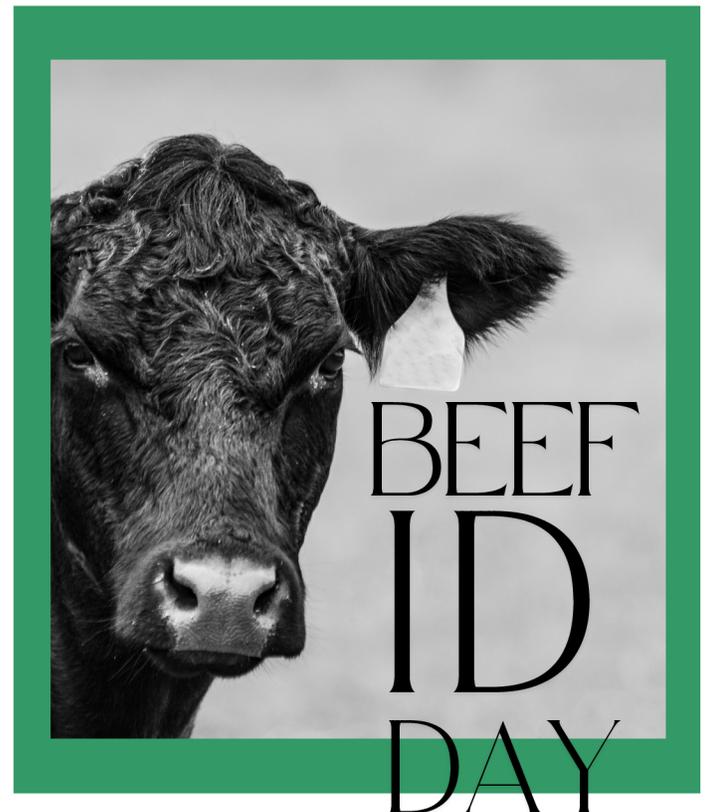
ALL BEEF STEERS
& COMMERCIAL/CROSSBRED
HEIFERS MUST BE BROUGHT FOR
TAGGING AND DNA HAIR SAMPLES

QUESTIONS?

PLEASE CONTACT OUR OFFICE
812-723-7107

RAIN DATE:

JANUARY 31, 2026





INDIANA 4-H SCHOLARSHIP APPLICATIONS



Over \$150,000 is **awarded annually** to support 4-H members pursuing college or trade programs.

 **Learn more & apply:**

<https://extension.purdue.edu/.../get.../scholarships.html>

Applications due to the Extension Office by January 25

Need a review before submitting?

Email vportill@purdue.edu



NEXT GENERATION HOOSIER EDUCATORS SCHOLARSHIP

APPLICATIONS DUE BY FEBRUARY 28

High-achieving high school and college students who plan to teach in Indiana for at least five years can receive up to \$10,000 per year of college (up to \$40,000 total).

Learn more at bit.ly/HoosierEducators





Orange County 4-H Program



ARE YOU A 4-H VOLUNTEER?

ENSURE YOUR PARTICIPATION BY COMPLETING THE RE-ENROLLMENT PROCESS TODAY!

REGISTER ONLINE
V2.4HONLINE.COM



JOIN US IN MAKING A DIFFERENCE!

4-H volunteers are the heart of the 4-H program. Their time, energy, and dedication are what make hands-on learning, mentorship, and leadership development possible for thousands of youth across the country as well as in Orange County. From organizing club meetings to guiding project work, volunteers help create safe, supportive environments where young people can thrive. Their role is not just supportive—it's essential.

Being enrolled and approved as a volunteer in the current program year is vital. It ensures that volunteers are up-to-date with training, safety protocols, and policies that protect both youth and adults. Approved enrollment helps maintain the integrity and quality of the 4-H experience, and it allows volunteers to be covered by liability insurance and recognized for their service. Staying current isn't just a box to check—it's a commitment to excellence, safety, and the youth we serve.

KEY AREAS OF NEED:

LIVESTOCK COMMITTEE

MEMBERS NEEDED FOR:
BEEF, DAIRY, HORSE, POULTRY, RABBIT, SHEEP, GOAT, & SWINE

SHOOTING SPORTS COORDINATOR /INSTRUCTOR

CLUB LEADERS

EVENTS PLANNING COMMITTEE

PROJECT LEADERS

EXHIBIT HALL COMMITTEE

**Have you completed the steps
to ENROLL in the 2025 - 2026 4-H year?**



Enroll/Re-enroll in 4-H Online

**** Please be certain to check the status of your 4-H enrollment and call the office with any concerns.**

*Note - When enrolling in the new program year 2025-2026 Grades 7 - 12 - Junior Leaders may choose junior leaders as their Primary OR Secondary Club! (Jr Leaders can be part of two clubs.)

Please contact our office today if you need assistance with enrollment.



Orange County 4-H Program

2025 - 2026 YEAR AT A GLANCE

OCTOBER

1 - New program year begins with Enrollment

JANUARY

24- Beef ID Day - tagging at Orange Co Animal Clinic

Rain date January 31

25- Scholarship Applications Due in 4-H Online

MAY

1- Animal ID Day -livestock tagging at fairgrounds

Stall Fee payment - during Animal ID Day

4-H Enrollment Deadline - suggested

15- 4-H Online Animal ID Deadline - firm deadline. No exceptions.

4-H Online Drop/Add Project Deadline - suggested

Animal Lease Agreements - due in extension office

Stall Forms/Fees Deadline - due in extension office

Vaccination Records: Cat, Dog, Horse & Pony

- due in extension office. *Note - must have current vaccine record on file to participate in animal workshops for Cat, Dog, Horse & Pony

18- Fair Entry Opens - This is secondary website for 4-H Exhibition

29 - 31- Southern Indiana 4-H Camp - registration opens April 1

JUNE

3 and 4 Orange County 4-H Mini Day Camp - registration begins in April

5 - Fair Entry Closes!!!

16 - Static Project Check-in - *non-perishable*

18 - Static Project Check-in - *Perishable & Fashion Revue*

19 - Livestock Check-in

20 -26 Orange County Fair

*Refer to Fair Schedule for all show and event times

26 - Livestock Auction & Achievement Program

AUGUST

7 thru 23 Indiana State Fair

Additional workshops / contests will be announced closer to date.





Save the Dates!

- **Chef University Spark Club — March 16–18**

Location TBD — offered pending adult volunteer support; minimum class size required. Details and pricing once volunteers are confirmed.

Volunteer sign-up on pg. 9

- **Etiquette Spark Club & Dinner — April 7**

Planned at the Orange County Community Center — date/location subject to change; details and pricing coming soon!

Stay tuned for registration information!

Questions? Contact Veronica Portillo at 812-723-7107 or email vportill@purdue.edu



Orange County 4-H Program

Need for **Adult Volunteers** to help us offer another **Chef University** during spring break **March 16-18 2026!**

Daily Time Commitment: ~4-5 hours/day (exact shifts TBD, program timing estimated to be from 10:00-2:30 with prep before and cleanup after) Location: 4-H Block Building
Contact: Veronica Portillo vportill@purdue.edu

What is *Chef University*?

Chef University is a free, hands-on cooking experience for 3rd–5th graders offered during Spring break. Over three days, youth will rotate through fun and educational stations focused on cooking, teamwork, nutrition, and cultural exploration. They'll prepare real meals, learn valuable life skills, and grow their confidence in the kitchen.

We're looking for volunteers to help bring this exciting program to life!

Volunteer Info

We welcome volunteers of all experience levels and availability. Whether you can join for one day or all three, your time is appreciated! Volunteers will assist with:

- Station setup & cleanup
- Cooking instruction and safety supervision
- Youth engagement and guidance
- Handout distribution
- General support

Community Impact

Orange County youth often lack structured enrichment during breaks. Chef University fills this gap with fun, inclusive, and skill-building programming—empowering kids with practical cooking knowledge and nutritional awareness. This will be offered as a 4-H Spark Club to provide food education through hands-on learning and further promote the program.



Note: Youth participant sign-ups for Chef University will open once we confirm volunteer support and finalize program logistics (including cost and scheduling). Your help as a volunteer is essential to making this program possible!



Volunteer Sign Up:





Orange County 4-H Program



We're looking for 4-5 dedicated volunteers to help relaunch our 4-H Shooting Sports program!

Instructor Certification Training April 10-12, 2026

Help our youth learn:
safety, responsibility, and outdoor skills all while having fun!!

No expert experience is required -
just enthusiasm and a willingness to work with youth!

To learn more, please contact the
Purdue Extension – Orange County office at 812-723-7107
or email orangeoces@purdue.edu.

Let's build this opportunity for our youth together!

Explore additional information:



Orange County 4-H Junior Leaders



Extension - 4-H Youth Development



Orange County 4-H Junior Leaders



Orange County 4-H Junior Leaders, there is a place for you!

Junior Leaders is for anyone in *Grades 6-12*

that is now, or may in the future, be a member of 4-H. Junior Leader activities each year include many community service projects, leading or providing input on aspects of the county 4-H program, and socialization opportunities with peers both inside and outside of Orange County.

Meetings are typically held the 2nd Tuesday of each month at 6:00 pm at the Orange County Fairgrounds Block Building.

ENROLL FOR THE 2025-2026 PROGRAM YEAR SELECT ORANGE COUNTY JR. LEADERS AS YOUR PRIMARY OR SECONDARY CLUB & ENROLL TO CONTINUE RECEIVING COMMUNICATION

ACTIVITY: BUILD YOUR OWN SANDWICH!

FEBRUARY MEETING: FEBRUARY 10TH AT 6:00 PM, 4-H BLOCK BUILDING

Next Meeting
Tuesday January 13th @6:00 pm
4-H Block Building 1079 N County Rd 125
W. Paoli, IN 47454

A big shout out of **THANKS** to all Junior Leaders and adult volunteers for the wonderful baked potato bar they served during the annual program debrief.

Shout out to the Edwards Family and Anthony Hartzburg for helping with Chef University!

YOU are appreciated!

Purdue University is an equal opportunity/equal access affirmative action institution. If you have any questions, need accommodations, an interpreter, or a translator to attend this program, please contact our office at 812-723-7107 or email vpportill@purdue.edu prior to the meeting.



Teen Leadership Weekend



Extension - 4-H Youth Development



INDIANA 4-H

TEEN LEADERSHIP WEEKEND

Where: Camp Tecumseh
When: March 27-29, 2026
Ages: Grades 7-12

CONFERENCE INFO

The Teen Leadership Weekend is an exciting opportunity for 4-H members to build their leadership skills, connect with peers from across the state, and prepare to make a positive impact in their communities. Held annually, this conference is designed for youth in grades 7-12 who are ready to take their leadership journey to the next level. Participants engage in hands-on workshops, interactive team activities, and inspiring sessions led by experienced mentors and fellow 4-H members. With a focus on personal growth, teamwork, and service, the weekend empowers youth to step into leadership roles, develop practical skills, and create lasting memories!



CONTACT YOUR LOCAL PURDUE EXTENSION OFFICE TO LEARN MORE AND REGISTER



Registration for Teen Leadership Weekend is OPEN!
Complete through 4-H Online using the link or QR code below:

<https://2026teenleadershipweekend.4honline.com>



Youth in grades 7-12 can attend March 27-29 at Camp Tecumseh for \$50.

JUNIOR LEADERS UPDATE:

Junior Leaders voted to cover the \$50 fee for any Orange County Jr. Leader who attends. Transportation is being arranged. If a member commits and cannot attend, they will be responsible for the \$50.

If you are interested in attending, need transportation, or are an adult willing to assist or chaperone, please contact our office.

Contact the Extension Office for details or support with volunteering
812-723-7107 or email Veronica at vportill@purdue.edu

4-H Camp!



OUR MORE DETAILS
[HTTPS://BIT.LY/4HCAMPCOUNSELOR26](https://bit.ly/4hcampcounselor26)



Registration
for Campers
(Grade 3-8)

opens April 1st!

SAVE THE DATE
MAY 29-31ST

If interested in being a
camp counselor
(9-12 Grade) or Adult
Chaperone -

Contact our office at
812-723-7107

Purdue Extension – Orange County

HEALTH & HUMAN SCIENCES

Programming Areas: Food • Family • Money • Health

Purdue Extension HHS provides practical, research-based education to help Hoosiers strengthen relationships, eat smart, improve health, and achieve financial wellness. We support individuals, families, schools, and community partners through accessible programs and resources.

What We Offer

- Workshops, demonstrations, and guided activities
- Professional development and hands-on learning for youth and adults
- Collaboration with childcare providers, libraries, and organizations

New Library Resources

All Orange County libraries now have new children's books and early-literacy tools funded by the Jean Ann Behney Endowment. Families and community groups are encouraged to visit and use them!

Additional Services

- Pressure gauge testing – \$5 (drop-off or scheduled appointment)
 - ServSafe Manager Exam Proctoring – \$30 proctor only
- ServSafe Manager Exam Code + Proctor – \$65 (proctor with online or paper exam/access code)

Appointments available upon request.

Contact:

Veronica Portillo, MPH

Health & Human Sciences / 4-H Youth Development Extension Educator

vportill@purdue.edu • 812-723-7107

SAVE THE DATES 2026

FAMILY DINNER PROJECT

Enjoy a healthy crockpot meal, learn about the Family Dinner Project, and tips for using a slow cooker! Sharing a meal is good for the spirit, the brain and the health of all family members.

No Cost to attend, Please RSVP for any of the program offerings at 812-723-7107 or email vportill@purdue.edu

Orleans Public Library

174 N Maple St, Orleans, IN 47452

Thursday February 19th 5:00-6:00 PM

Paoli Public Library

100 W Water St, Paoli, IN 47454

Thursday March 12th 5:00-6:00 PM



Doughnuts & activities to follow from 6:00-7:00 PM by the library team!

Melton Public Library

8496 W College St, French Lick, IN 47432

Thursday April 16th 5:00-6:00 PM

Purdue University is an equal opportunity/equal access affirmative action institution. If you have any questions, need accommodations, an interpreter, or a translator to attend this program, please contact our office at 812-723-7107 or email vportill@purdue.edu prior to the event(s).

PURDUE AGRICULTURE
AND
NATURAL RESOURCES



Our virtual BEGINNER FARMER PROGRAM can help!

8-session virtual program

Farmers will: set goals
identify assets and challenges
become aware of resources
find success through creation of action plan

The program is offered to: beginning farmers with farms of any size, but the typical audience tends to be those with smaller farms, those with urban farms, and people wanting to launch a farm that includes direct-to-consumer sales.

Registration is \$90 and closes on Jan. 5.

-includes a digital copy of the Beginning Farmer workbook

To register, visit <https://cvent.me/xEyg2g>
or scan the QR Code

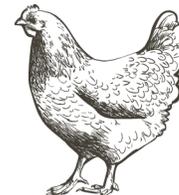
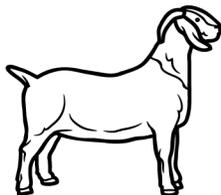
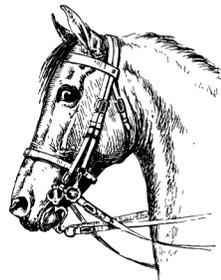
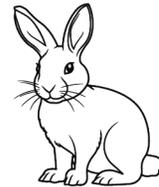
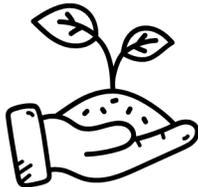
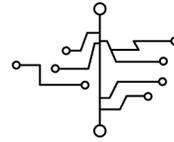
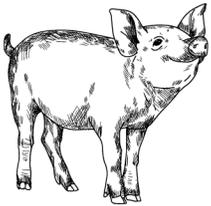


Orange County 4-H Programming Survey



We want to hear from YOU

Please complete this survey to help us determine the needs of the community through programming efforts that benefit community members directly.



PURDUE EXTENSION AG NEWS

➤➤➤ AGRICULTURE & NATURAL RESOURCES ◀◀◀

Educator: Julie Harris
carrell@purdue.edu

➤➤➤ HELP US HELP YOU!

Agriculture & Natural Resources Needs Assessment



This survey will be used to help determine the needs of the community to help educate farmers, producers, and community members through programming efforts that benefit them directly.



<https://bit.ly/OrangeANRSurvey>



If you have any questions about the survey, please contact Julie Carrell - Extension Educator Ag & Natural Resources

Email: carrell@purdue.edu

Phone: 812-723-7107

Paper copies can be made upon request



PURDUE EXTENSION HHS NEWS

➤➤➤ HEALTH & HUMAN SCIENCES ◀◀◀

Educator: Veronica Portillo
vportill@purdue.edu

➤➤➤ INPUT NEEDED FOR HEALTH PROGRAMMING!



PURDUE
UNIVERSITY®

Extension - Orange County

HHS NEEDS ASSESSMENT

**HELP IMPROVE OUR HEALTH
PROGRAMMING**

**Scan this QR to help us improve health
programming in Orange County:**



Paper copies available at the extension
office.

Call 812-723-7107 or email
vportill@purdue.edu with any questions

Winter 2026

Orange County

Extension Newsletter

PURDUE UNIVERSITY COOPERATIVE EXTENSION SERVICE

Orange County
County Office Building
205 E Main Street, Suite 4,
Paoli, IN 47454-1596

Cooperating with U.S. Department of Agriculture

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affirmative action institution.