

November 10, 2025

NDSU Extension Family and Community Wellness programs help North Dakotans improve their health and wellbeing and build strong communities. NDSU Extension Agents and Specialists live and work in many counties within the state and have extensive networks within and across communities. However, to sustain their excellent programs and meet the needs of constituents in *all* parts of the state, additional funding is needed. Increasing programming funds will allow NDSU Extension to increase the availability of FCW programming by reaching across county lines and investing in the training of community members, volunteers and partners to extend their reach.

For the past 40 years, NDSU Extension has provided resources and education that helped me to be successful in my personal and professional life. As an educator, my students and I benefited from access to materials provided by NDSU Extension FCW in Personal and Family Finance. These materials were accurate and accessible, easy to understand, and were used by students in their coursework and in their careers. Most of the students in my classes went on to work as educators, in non-profit or social service organizations, or in some aspects of business. Favorite resources included the Family Net Worth Statement (FE2226), Talking to Children About Money (FS 144D), To Buy or Rent? The Choice (FE 241) and What to Look for in a Financial Professional (FE 451).

As a family business researcher, I am particularly impressed with the content and quality of the Design Your Succession Plan for Small Business/Farmers and Ranchers series. While many family businesses are comfortable working with accountants, attorneys, insurance companies, bankers and other financial professionals, they often need the tools that FCW programs provide to have critical conversations about who will lead or inherit the family business once the current generation is no longer in control, who will get titled and untitled personal property, what challenges might there be between siblings who do and do not work in the business and so on. NDSU Extension FCW materials help people better prepare for their meetings with financial professionals and communicate more effectively within their families.

And now, in retirement, I am serving on the Volunteer Executive Council for ND AARP and have learned about NDSU Extension FCW programs related to Aging in Communities, Falls Prevention, and Caregiving and how people across the state have benefited from these programs. FCW Specialists and Agents are leading the efforts to help people age in place and retain their independence to lead healthy and productive lives. Moreover, these curriculums provide national models that have been adopted in other states. North Dakota FCW is leading the way for others.

I encourage you to support the request for additional funding for FCW programming. There is a great deal of evidence that these programs are cost effective and lead to positive behavioral changes. NDSU Extension is widely respected and FCW programs can benefit the entire population of the state.

Sincerely,

*Dr. Margaret Fitzgerald*