

Joint Council of Extension Professionals 2026 Public Issues Leadership Development Conference Hyatt Regency Bethesda

All times listed are Eastern Daylight Time

Sunday, April 19, Pre-conference			
Time	Topic	Location	Speaker/Notes
5:15 PM	Check-in for Educational Twilight Monument Tour, if registered	Hotel Lobby	Pre-registered participants for the tour must be checked in and ready to board the bus no later than 5:35 PM The bus will leave promptly at 5:45 PM
5:45 – 9:30 PM	Educational Twilight Monument Bus Tour	Buses will pick up right outside the front door to the hotel	Pre-registration required

DAY 1 Conference Schedule

All times listed are Eastern Daylight Time

Monday, April 20			Focus: The Cooperative Extension System: Structure & Funding
Time			
7:00 AM – 3:00 PM	Registration		
7:15 AM – 8:15 AM	Breakfast <i>Buffet served in Regency Ballroom Foyer; Seating in Regency Ballroom</i>		
7:15 AM – 8:15 AM	Poster Set-up <i>Check in at Registration Table, Regency Ballroom Foyer Posters displayed in the Regency Ballroom</i>		
8:15 AM – 12:00 PM	Session I: Plenary <i>Regency Ballroom</i>		
Time	Session Description	Presenter/Notes	
8:15 AM – 8:45 AM	Welcome to 2026 PILD Announcements	Travis West <i>Ohio State University Extension 2026 PILD Conference Chair, Presiding</i>	
	JCEP Introductions & Welcome	Bernie Wiesen <i>Cornell Cooperative Extension 2025/ 26 JCEP President</i>	

	Welcome from USDA-NIFA	Dr. Jaye Hamby <i>Director, United States Department of Agriculture-National Institute of Food and Agriculture (USDA-NIFA)</i>
8:45 AM – 9:30 AM Regency Ballroom	CARET, ECOP, and APLU: Who are they?	Dr. Bill Hoffman <i>Executive Director, Cooperative Extension System and Extension Committee on Organization and Policy (ECOP), Association of Public and Land-grant Universities (APLU)</i>
9:30 AM – 10:30 AM Regency Ballroom	Opening Keynote Presentation: Who are players on campuses and DC and how do they play as a team?	Dr. Doug Steele <i>Vice President, Food, Agriculture and Natural Resources (FANR), Association of Public and Land-grant Universities (APLU)</i>
10:30 AM – 11:00 AM	Networking Break	
11:00 AM – 12:00 PM	ECOP Program Committee and Program Action Teams Presentation	Dr. Thomas Dobbins <i>Director & Senior Associate Dean of Outreach and Engagement, Clemson Cooperative Extension</i>
12:00 PM – 1:15 PM	Lunch <i>Buffet served in Regency Ballroom Foyer; Seating in Regency Ballroom</i>	
Time	Session Description	Presenter/Notes
12:00 PM – 1:00 PM	JCEP Board/Extension Directors and Administrators Luncheon <i>By Special Invitation Embassy Room</i>	Bernie Wiesen <i>Cornell Cooperative Extension 2025/ 26 JCEP President, Presiding</i>
1:15 PM – 4:00 PM	Session II: Ignite Presentations and Special Meetings <i>Regency Ballroom, unless otherwise noted</i>	
1:00 PM – 2:00 PM	Extension Directors and Administrators' Meeting <i>by Special Invitation Embassy Room</i>	
1:15 PM – 1:45 PM	Ignite Session 1 <i>10-minute presentations plus 2 minutes for questions</i>	Travis West <i>Ohio State University Extension 2026 PILD Chair</i>
Ignite 1-1	ACAU- A Call to Action- Always Consider Acronym Use	Leslie Boby <i>University of Georgia</i>
Ignite 1-2	Advocacy in Action: Clemson Extension's Food Pantry Giving Guide Response to the 2025 SNAP Disruption	Michelle Altman <i>Clemson University</i>

DAY 1: Monday, April 20 (cont.)		
1:45 PM – 2:15 PM	Cap note: Extending Extension's Impact Through a Ready Generation: 4-H Beyond Ready Initiative	Shannon Hauf <i>Bayer Crop Science National 4-H Council Board</i>

2:15 PM – 2:30 PM	Day 1 Wrap-up & Announcements	Travis West <i>Ohio State University Extension 2026 PILD Chair</i>
2:30 PM – 4:00 PM	Association Meetings	
	ANREP Association of Natural Resource Extension Professionals NACAA National Association of County Agricultural Agents NACDEP National Association of Community Development Extension Professionals NAE4-HYDP National Association of Extension 4-H Youth Development Professionals NEAFCS National Extension Association of Family & Consumer Sciences NAEPSDP National Association of Extension Program & Staff Development Professionals ESP Epsilon Sigma Phi	<i>Diplomat</i> <i>Judiciary</i> <i>Ambassador</i> <i>Cabinet</i> <i>Old Georgetown</i> <i>Ballroom</i> <i>Congressional</i>
Evening, Day 1	Dinner on your own/Associations' Night Out	Consult your association's leadership for more information
6:00 PM - 7:30 PM	Evening Reception at National 4-H Council Clover Capital <i>Transportation to offsite location not provided (public transportation or ride share recommended)</i>	For pre-registered attendees only <i>If registered for this event, you would have received a confirmation email with further instructions</i>



DAY 2 Conference Schedule

All times listed are Eastern Daylight Time

Tuesday, April 21		Focus: Elevating Your Extension Story for Year-Round Impact	
Time			
7:00 AM – 12:00 PM		Registration Regency Ballroom Foyer	
8:00 AM – 9:00 AM		Breakfast Buffet served in Regency Ballroom Foyer; Seating in Regency Ballroom	
9:00 AM – 12:00 PM		Session III: Plenary, Ignite, and Poster Presentations Regency Ballroom	
Time	Session Description	Presenter/Notes	
9:00 AM	Welcome Day 2 Announcements	Travis West Ohio State University Extension 2026 PILD Chair, Presiding	
9:00 AM – 9:45 AM	Ignite Session 2 10-minute presentations plus 2 minutes for questions	Travis West Ohio State University Extension	
Ignite 2-1	Empowering Leaders Through Change: Tools for Organizational Success	Sheri Trent University of Florida	
Ignite 2-2	Perceptions and Policy: Exploring Public Attitudes Toward Farm Security	Karlibeth Leitheiser University of Florida	
9:45 AM – 10:45 AM	Federal Funding Lines: Why They Matter to You and How to Talk About Them	Christina Laridaen Principal, Lewis-Burke Associates, LLC	
10:45 AM – 11:00 AM	Networking Break		
11:00 AM - 11:30 AM	Importance of Advocating at the state and national level	Dr. Bill Hoffman Executive Director, Cooperative Extension System and Extension Committee on Organization and Policy (ECOP), Association of Public and Land-grant Universities (APLU)	
11:30 AM - 12:00 PM	Ignite Session 3 10-minute presentations plus 2 minutes for questions	Travis West Ohio State University Extension 2026 PILD Chair, Presiding	
Ignite 3-1	From Innovation to Impact: Green Up Alabama as a Model for Extension Advocacy	Georgios Arseniou Auburn University	
12:00 PM – 1:00 PM	Lunch Buffet served in Regency Ballroom Foyer; Seating in Regency Ballroom		
1:00 PM - 1:45 PM	PANEL: Congressional Visit Best Practices	Dr. Bill Hoffman Executive Director, Cooperative Extension System ECOP	

Day 2: Tuesday, April 21 (cont.)

Time	Session Description		Presenter/Notes
1:45 PM – 2:30 PM	Concurrent Sessions		
Concurrent 3-1	Understanding Heirs Property at the Community Level Cabinet Suite		Dr. Jamie Mardis <i>Auburn University</i>
Concurrent 3-2	Growing Your Impact with Six Permissions Judiciary Suite		Carter Oliver <i>Iowa State University</i>
Concurrent 3-3	Work Ready Florida Old Georgetown Room		Chris DeCubellis <i>University of Florida</i>
Concurrent 3-4	COMET™ - Changing Our Mental and Emotional Trajectory Diplomat/ Ambassador Room		Sara Croymans <i>University of Minnesota</i>
Concurrent 3-5	Identifying Opportunities to Secure New Revenue Sources for Extension Programming Congressional Room		Jerry Braatz <i>University of Wisconsin Madison</i>
2:30 PM – 3:00 PM	Break / Posters with Presenters		
3:00 PM – 3:30 PM	Closing Keynote Presentation:		Dr. Jinhee Kim <i>Associate Dean and Director, University of Maryland Extension</i>
3:30 PM – 4:00 PM	National Cooperative Extension Awards Recognition		Bernie Wiesen <i>Cornell Cooperative Extension 2025/ 26 JCEP President</i>
	JCEP Recognition		Alyssa Walden <i>Virginia Cooperative Extension 2026/ 27 JCEP President</i>
	Conference Wrap-up		Travis West <i>Ohio State University Extension 2026 PILD Chair</i>
	Invitation to 2027 PILD Conference April 12-14, 2027 Bethesda, MD		Jennifer Bridge <i>University of Kentucky Extension 2027 PILD Chair</i>
4:00 PM – 5:00 PM	State Delegation Planning Time for Hill Visits		Consult your state institution leadership and/or your institution's Government Affairs office
	Poster Take Down <i>Poster must be removed from 3:30 PM - 5:00 PM</i>		
Evening, Day 2	States' Night Out	Coordinated by Individual State Delegations	Consult your state institution leadership and/or your institution's Government Affairs office

DAY 3 Conference Schedule

All times listed are Eastern Daylight Time

Day 3: Wednesday, April 22		
Time	Session Description	Notes

8:00 AM – 5:00 PM	Congressional and Agency Visits – Please plan with your state administrators for these visits BEFORE PILD	Consult your state institution leadership and/or your institution's Government Affairs office
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Acknowledgements

2026 PILD Conference Planning Committee				
Chair Travis West, Ohio State University Extension, ESP Vice Chair Jennifer Bridge, University of Kentucky Extension, NEAFCS				
ANREP Association of Natural Resource Extension Professionals	Sarah Stewart Georgios Arseniou		ESP Epsilon Sigma Phi	Tyrone Gentry Joel Burnsed
NACDEP National Association of Community Development Extension Professionals	Novita Epps		NACAA National Association of County Agricultural Agents	Andrew Kness Jennifer Bentley
NAE4HYDP National Association of Extension 4-H Youth Development Professionals	Scott Nash		NEAFCS National Extension Association of Family & Consumer Sciences	Mindy McCulley Dhruti Patel
NAEPSDP National Association of Extension Program & Staff Development Professionals	Karli Leitheiser Lisa Davis			

And a special thank you to our PILD liaison: Dr. Bill Hoffman

JCEP Professional Development Committee	
Co-Chairs	Travis West (ESP) and Keith Mickler (NACAA)
Vice Co-Chairs	Jennifer Bridge (NEAFCS) and Michelle Eley (NACDEP)
Members	Rick Griffiths (NEAFCS), Leslie Boby (ANREP), Lisa Ingram (ESP), JJ Jones (NACAA), Vikram Koundinya (NAEPSDP), and Scott Jensen (NACAA)

Save the Date

2027 JCEP Public Issues Leadership Development Conference
April 12-14
Hyatt Regency Bethesda

2026 PILD Conference Ignite Sessions

Ignite Session #1: Monday, April 20 1:15 – 1:45 PM

ACAU- A Call to Action- Always Consider Acronym Use

Leslie Boby

University of Georgia

Ginger Orton, University of Georgia, Assistant Professor of Natural Resources Communication

OMG, acronyms cause communication problems! They abbreviate a series of words, as a way of saving valuable time, but at what cost? In this session, we discuss acronyms as a form of jargon that frequently work against clear communication efforts and strategies to minimize their use.

Advocacy in Action: Clemson Extension's Food Pantry Giving Guide Response to the 2025 SNAP Disruption

Michelle Altman

Clemson University

Weatherly Thomas, Clemson University, Rural Health and Nutrition Associate; Hannah Wilson, Clemson University, Assistant Professor, Food, Nutrition, and Packaging Sciences; Donna Bowen, Clemson University, Executive Director of Marketing and Communication

Clemson Extension's Rural Health & Nutrition team created a Food Pantry Giving Guide prior to the 2025 SNAP disruption. The guide was distributed on social platforms and the University website. With 2.7 million impressions through media outreach, this effort demonstrated timely advocacy in action.

Ignite Session #2: Tuesday, April 21 9:00 – 9:45 AM

Empowering Leaders Through Change: Tools for Organizational Success

Sheri Trent

University of Florida/Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences

Many leaders in extension struggle to manage change. Organizational transformation is essential for sustainability. Leaders must communicate vision, build trust, and empower teams. This session blends theory with application, ensuring participants gain both knowledge and confidence.

Perceptions and Policy: Exploring Public Attitudes Toward Farm Security

Karlibeth Leitheiser

University of Florida

Ashley McLeod-Morin, University of Florida, Extension Scientist

This session shares results from a survey of 1,000+ southeastern U.S. residents on farm security. Findings reveal public views on agricultural risks and support for stronger safeguards, offering insights to guide educators, advocates, and policymakers.

Ignite Session #3: Tuesday, April 21 11:30 AM – 12 PM

From Innovation to Impact: Green Up Alabama as a Model for Extension Advocacy

Georgios Arseniou

Alabama Cooperative Extension System, Auburn University

Green Up Alabama demonstrates how innovative urban forestry Extension can drive advocacy, build partnerships, and deliver measurable community impact. This Ignite Talk highlights a replicable model that equips Extension professionals to tell compelling stories to decision-maker

2026 PILD Conference Concurrent Sessions

Tuesday, April 21 1:45 – 2:30 PM

Understanding Heirs Property at the Community Level

Dr. Jamie Mardis

Auburn University

This project addresses heirs property as a public issue affecting land retention, economic stability, and community development. Through leadership-focused education, participants learn how shared ownership impacts families and communities and explore strategies for prevention and resolution.

Growing Your Impact with Six Permissions

Carter Oliver

Iowa State University

Extension employees create significant effects or impacts for families and communities across the country every day. Resource limitations create challenges and the pressure to do more with less has never been higher. This session will cover six “Permissions” to go from busy to focused.

Work Ready Florida

Chris DeCubellis

University of Florida

Learn about Florida's Work Ready Florida 4-H Program. Teenagers learn about careers in agriculture by participating in zoom-based club meetings supplemented by virtual field trips and in-person workshops. Youth gain workforce preparation skills and prepare for industry recognized certifications.

COMET™ - Changing Our Mental and Emotional Trajectory

Sara Croymans

University of Minnesota

The University of Minnesota Extension, with community partners, implemented evidence-based COMET™ community workshops and train-the-trainer sessions to help meet a need to strengthen connections, expand program impact, and position Extension as a leader in mental well-being innovation.

Identifying Opportunities to Secure New Revenue Sources for Extension Programming

Jerry Braatz

University of Wisconsin Madison Extension

This session will review unique and novel ideas for exploring new funding opportunities for Extension. Learn first hand about different revenue sources used to enhance Extension county outreach programming that leveraged funding from county, state, and federal partners.

2026 PILD Conference Posters

Staffed Time: Tuesday, April 21 from 2:30 – 3 PM

Advocacy Through Education: Invasive Species Identification and Management Using the WISE Model

Jim Davis

UF/IFAS Extension Sumter County

The WISE program addresses invasive plant and animal species through innovative Extension education. By emphasizing identification and science-based management, the program equips residents and government personnel to make informed decisions and take responsible action on invasive species issues.

Bite-Sized Policy Communication Skills: Lessons from Lunch & Learn Workshops for Extension Professionals

Karlibeth Leitheiser

University of Florida

This presentation shares results from delivering hands-on policy communication training to Extension and industry professionals. Topics covered include workshop content, participant reception, skill improvement, and how Extension professionals can apply policy messaging tools in their own work.

Bridging Necessary Partnerships- Utah State University, DWR, and Producers Tackling Elk Depredation Challenges

Ethan Gilliam

Utah State University

Additional Presenters: Anna Gilliam, Utah State University, Assistant Professor, Home and Community

Explore partnerships among Utah State University Extension, the Department of Wildlife Resources, and producers to address elk depredation's economic and mental health impacts. We will share insights from ranchers and collaborative efforts leading to the study's replication in Idaho and Montana.

Data as a Shield: Leveraging 3,000+ Clinical Records to Advocate for Extension at the State and Local Level

Cody Zesiger

Utah State University

In an era of increasing fiscal scrutiny, Extension professionals must transform raw data into powerful advocacy narratives. This poster illustrates how one diagnostic clinic utilized over 3,000 case records—spanning 168 unique zip codes—to quantify its economic and environmental impact.

Engaging Stakeholders to Support Sustainable Fruit and Vegetable Prescription Programs

Christine Zellers, MPP

Rutgers Cooperative Extension

Additional Presenters: Luanne Hughes, MS, RDN Full Professor Rutgers Cooperative Extension, Karen Ensle EdD, RDN, FAND, CFS, Full Professor Rutgers Cooperative Extension, Sara Elnakib, PhD, MPH, RDN, Associate Professor/FCHS Department Chair/Program Leader FCHS, Rutgers Cooperative Extension

This study examined stakeholder-identified best practices for sustaining Fruit and Vegetable Prescription programs by analyzing implementation barriers and successes. Stakeholder interviews and a scoping review generated a best-practice framework to support long-term program viability.

From Do/Don't to Decision Confidence: Utilizing Confidence Intervals to Improve Extension Communication and Advocacy

Joanna Bloese

New Mexico State University

Extension recommendations often oversimplify complex decisions. A decision-confidence model, using low/medium/high categories, better aligns guidance with variable research results. This framework embraces uncertainty, improves clarity, and supports informed stakeholder adoption.

Learning from Data: Strengthening Extension Engagement with Public Officials through An Employee Survey

Christina Galardi

Virginia Tech (Virginia Cooperative Extension)

Additional Presenters: *Lia Kelinsky Jones, Virginia Tech, Research Assistant Professor, Department of Agricultural, Leadership, & Community Education and Assistant Director for Research, Center for Food Systems and Community Transformation*

Engaging public officials is key to extending Extension's resources and expanding its reach. Our poster shares findings from a statewide survey of Extension employees on how they engage officials. These insights inform future strategies to strengthen Extension's engagement with decision makers.

Leveraging Federal Funding and Mobilizing Citizen Volunteers to Sustain the Community Forest in Small, Rural, Cities

Jennifer Swanson

Montana State University (MSU)

An invitation to a DNRC-sponsored tree board retreat led to the appointment of an Extension agent to the city's Tree & Sidewalk board and to implementation of two federal grants for city forest renewal. Federal monies are critical for saving trees in economically disadvantaged small, rural, cities.

Paws, Claws, and Clean Hands: Biosecurity Basics

Melissa Bright

Rutgers University: 4-H Youth Development

Additional Presenters: *Amelia Minervini, Rutgers University, County 4-H Sr program coordinator*

This poster highlights how Cooperative Extension delivers public value through youth biosecurity education. It demonstrates a replicable model that protects animal and public health, strengthens federal–state partnerships, and equips professionals with clear messaging for engaging policymakers.

Public Speaking: Building Resiliency in Yourself

Melissa Bright

Rutgers University

This workshop is designed for easy replication and focuses on enhancing communication, public speaking, and teamwork skills. It can be adapted for both youth and adults, making it ideal for learning, team-building, and personal development activities.

2026 JECP Public Issues Leadership Development Conference

Speaker Bios



Dr. Jaye Hamby is the director of the U.S. Department of Agriculture's National Institute of Food and Agriculture, the extramural funding agency in the USDA Research, Education and Economics Mission Area. Prior to joining USDA NIFA, Dr. Hamby led and directed hundreds of proprietary research efforts, specializing in concept testing, product marketing, value driver analysis, and farm demographic trends. His consultative expertise includes the agronomy, livestock, and farm machinery markets. He has assisted with the launch of numerous crop protection products and authored field sales and competitive positioning manuals.

Dr. Hamby, a Tennessee native, graduated from the University of Tennessee's College of Agriculture with a Bachelor of Science degree in Agricultural Education. Following his selection as a Harry S. Truman Scholar, he attended Oklahoma State University and earned master's and doctorate degrees in Agricultural Education with a specialization in Agricultural Economics. He was an active 4-H'er and a national FFA officer. Dr. Jaye L. Hamby was sworn in as the USDA NIFA Director on March 25, 2025.



Dr. Bill Hoffman, former Chief of Staff at University of Tennessee Institute of Agriculture (UTIA) and former Chief of Staff at USDA National Institute of Food & Agriculture (NIFA), currently serves as Executive Director, Cooperative Extension System (CES) and Extension Committee on Organization and Policy (ECOP).

Hoffman championed Cooperative Extension nationally in various roles at USDA's National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA) for over 20 years. As a second-generation Cooperative Extension professional, Bill has been committed to Extension and the land-grant university mission throughout his life. He grew up on the Agronomy Research farm that his father managed as an Extension Tillage specialist at Penn State University. He further developed his passion for Extension by visiting and seeing first-hand the impactful outcomes of Extension's work across the U.S. and its territories at all types of institutions.

Hoffman earned a Doctor of Education: Higher Education Administration from George Washington University as well as a Master of Education: Instructional Systems, Master of Business Administration, and Bachelor of Science: Agricultural Economics and Rural Sociology from Penn State University.



Dr. Doug Steele is Vice President for Food, Agriculture and Natural Resources at the Association of Public and Land-grant Universities (APLU). Through collaborative partnerships with over 250 member institutions, including 115 Colleges of Agriculture and Natural Resources, Doug provides leadership with a focus on broad cross-cutting issues related to agriculture, food and fiber, forestry, human sciences, natural resources, and veterinary medicine. Priority areas include advocating yearly on behalf of agricultural research, extension, and education funding in support of land-grant universities with an emphasis on agricultural productivity, improving land productivity, long-term approaches to sustainability, positive youth development, enhancing families and communities, and the nexus between agriculture/food/nutrition/wellness.

Doug previously held positions as Director of Texas A&M AgriLife, Vice President for External Affairs and Director of Extension for Montana State University, and Extension roles at Colorado State University and Purdue University. He believes in the power of public higher-education and the Land-Grant University system to provide access and affordability to higher education to students, address the agriculture challenges of feeding a growing population, and transform families, youth, and communities.



Dr. Thomas Dobbins serves as Director of the Clemson University Cooperative Extension Service and Associate Dean of Outreach and Engagement for Clemson University's College of Agriculture, Forestry and Life Sciences (CAFLS). As the Cooperative Extension Director, he provides leadership for the Clemson University statewide Cooperative Extension system. He is responsible for overseeing programmatic activities, personnel, budgets and strategic planning. He is also responsible for building and maintaining relationships with strategic partners such as the SC Departments of Agriculture and Education, SC Farm Bureau, SC Forestry Commission, SC Department of Natural Resources, USDA Farm Service Agency and agricultural lending agencies.

He previously served as a professor and program coordinator for the undergraduate and graduate programs that prepare Clemson students to teach agriculture in high schools across the state. He also served as Chair of the Agriculture Division in the School of Agricultural, Forest and Environmental Sciences (now CAFLS). His Extension career includes positions as a County Agent, 4-H Dairy Project Leader, Secondary Agriculture Teacher, Area Agent for dairy and Extension Associate for dairy. He received his PhD in vocational-technical education from Virginia Tech, a master's degree in dairy science and a bachelor's degree in agricultural education from Clemson University, and an associate degree in agriculture from Abraham Baldwin Agricultural College.



Dr. Shannon Hauf (pronounced HOWF) is the Senior Vice President and Head of North America, Australia, and New Zealand Product Supply at Bayer Crop Science and a National 4-H Council Trustee.

As a Minnesota 4-H alum, Hauf has built a career focused on innovation, sustainability and supporting women in the sector. She has a lifelong connection to agriculture, having grown up on a corn, soybean and livestock farm in southern Minnesota where she remains actively involved in her family's farming operations. She is also a 4-H volunteer leader in Missouri where her children are 4-H members.

At Bayer, Hauf leads a team responsible for delivering the highest quality crop protection and seed products to farmers while maintaining a competitive cost position

Her impact in the agriculture sector has been recognized through multiple industry awards, including honors for leadership in agriculture technology and contributions to sustainable farming practices. She has also been recognized as St. Louis Metro YWCA Women Leader in the Workplace and St. Louis Business Journal Most Influential Businesswoman for her contributions in business and to St. Louis community.

Hauf has a B.S. from Iowa State University, and M.S and Ph.D. degrees from North Dakota State University, where she was recently recognized as the Distinguished Alumna for the College of Agriculture, Food Systems, and Natural Resources.



Dr. Jinhee Kim is Associate Dean and Associate Director of the University of Maryland Extension in the College of Agriculture and Natural Resources and a Professor in the Department of Family Science, School of Public Health at the University of Maryland. Her research focuses on financial management, family well-being, and health outcomes, with an emphasis on evaluating interventions that improve health and quality of life. Dr. Kim has published more than 70 refereed journal articles and three chapters and has delivered over 100 invited and referred presentations on topics including financial stress, family financial decision-making, food insecurity, financial education, and health. Her scholarship has received multiple best paper awards from leading journals in her field.

Dr. Kim has secured and managed more than \$13.5 million in grant funding as PI or Co-PI and generated over \$700,000 in cost recovery for Extension programs. She currently leads several large-scale initiatives, including TOGETHER, a five-year project funded by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services; the Maryland Rural Opioid Technical Assistance project funded by SAMHSA; and the \$6 million Digital Literacy and Digital Navigation project funded by the State of Maryland. A nationally recognized leader, she has served as president of the Association for Financial Counseling and Planning Education (AFCPE), held editorial roles for major journals, and served on multiple national boards. Her contributions have been recognized with numerous awards, including the Distinguished Fellow Award from the American Council on Consumer Interests (2025) and the Celia Hayhoe Distinguished Fellow

	Award from AFCPE (2019). <u>Christina Lairdaen</u> is a trusted advisor to clients and community leader in agriculture, environment, conservation, and resilience topics. She supports Lewis-Burke clients by providing in depth information about actions in Congress and at federal agencies and strategizing new initiatives and positioning for success. Christina is a key member of the firm’s agriculture practice and is intimately familiar with the ins and outs of research, education, and extension policy within USDA NIFA, ARS, and NRCS. Additionally, she has extensive experience assisting clients with strategies to support environmental and ecosystem sciences including through diversifying funding via lesser-known funding streams for this work across the federal agencies. Before joining the Lewis-Burke team, Christina interned in the U.S. Senate, where she assisted on the research, commodity, and conservation titles in the 2018 Farm Bill in addition to covering regulation of bioengineered foods. Prior to moving to D.C., Christina worked as the Government and Legislative Affairs Coordinator for the Minnesota Student Association, where she managed advocacy efforts relevant to University of Minnesota students at all levels of government. At the State Capitol, she helped secure increases in biennium university funding by creating a statewide coalition of student advocates, regularly testifying at the legislature, and authoring letters on behalf of the student body to the Governor. Christina is a graduate from the University of Minnesota, where she studied political science and applied economics.
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