

DISASTER EDUCATION, HEALTH, AND WELLNESS



Cooperative Extension Program

COMMUNITY RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT

Highlights

Deploying the "Disaster Recovery Unit" In Response to Historic Regional Flooding

April 7, 2025 - April 12, 2025

Frankfort, KY

Beginning on April 2, 2025, a series of severe weather events caused historic rainfall, flash floods, and tornadoes that affected 64 counties, including Frankfort, KY – the capital city of Kentucky and home to Kentucky State University (KYSU). This disastrous weather event ([DR-4864-KY](#)) displaced families across the Commonwealth, leaving many without internet access or disaster recovery resources.

RELEVANCE

Severe flooding impacted Frankfort and surrounding areas, damaging homes, displacing families, and leaving many residents without access to basic services or digital connectivity. Many of those affected were temporarily relocated to the Capital Plaza Hotel, where they faced uncertainty around food, communication, and disaster recovery resources. The situation was particularly difficult for low-income individuals, families with children, and seniors without access to internet or transportation.

As displaced residents struggled to complete Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) applications, safely return to damaged homes, and manage emotional stress, the need for immediate assistance and educational outreach became clear.



Figure 1. KYSU Disaster Recovery Unit

RESPONSE

The Community Resource Development Disaster Education team coordinated a multi-day flood recovery effort from April 7–12, 2025. Key actions included:

- Deploying the **Disaster Recovery Unit** as a Mobile Learning Lab to provide mobile hotspots and laptops so that displaced residents could complete FEMA applications, contact loved ones, and access recovery resources.
- Partnering with the American Red Cross to distribute meals to flood victims staying at the Capital Plaza Hotel.
- Using drone technology to capture aerial footage of flood damage, which was shared with emergency partners to support assessment and response planning.
- Providing educational materials and direct instruction on safe home reentry, proper mold cleanup, and disposal of damaged belongings.
- Offering computer-based educational activities for children in collaboration with KYSU's 4-H Youth Development team, giving families a brief reprieve during the crisis.

RESULTS

This collaborative initiative served 236 adults, seniors, and children, while supported the American Red Cross in distributing over 180 meals.

- 4-H Youth Development Program staff provided over 20 children with educational enrichment to reduce stress and provide age-appropriate education regarding displacement during a disaster.
- More than two dozen families utilized the Mobile Learning Lab's WiFi and devices to complete FEMA paperwork, connect with emergency services, and contact their loved ones.

After interacting with KYSU's Cooperative Extension Service, community members indicated strong, positive outcomes from their experience:

- Over 80% of the Mobile Learning Lab users verbally reported increased confidence in navigating the FEMA claims process.
- Other individuals shared that the disaster preparedness resources and education provided by KYSU helped them to recognize the health risks of mold exposure and reiterated the importance of creating an informed plan for cleaning up their homes.

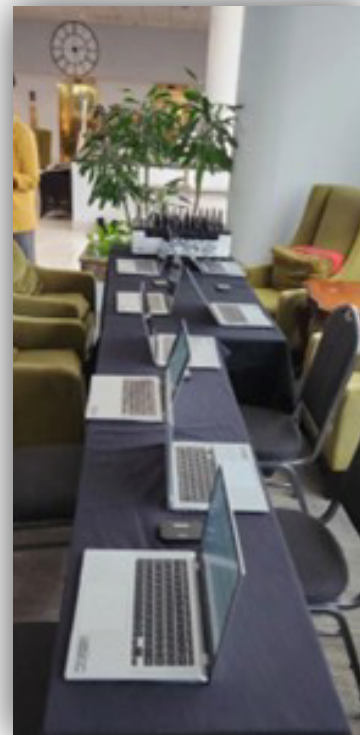


Figure 2. Mobile Learning Lab

PUBLIC VALUE STATEMENT

Through timely action, local partnerships, and a strong commitment to community-supported disaster response, KYSU Cooperative Extension played a vital role in helping individuals and families in Frankfort, KY begin the process of recovery. The combined use of innovative tools, accessible technology solutions, and hands-on outreach demonstrated KYSU's continued leadership in disaster education and community resilience.

Resources:

Articles

[Preparing Kentucky for the Unexpected](#)

Videos

[CRD Disaster Education, Health, and Wellness Video Library](#)

- Drone Footage of Floodwaters #1
- Drone Footage of Floodwaters #2
- Interview of Gill Finley, CRD Program Leader

“Our vision is to build resilience into everyday life. Preparedness is not just about responding to disasters; it’s about communities and institutions planning together so we can come back stronger, no matter what challenges we face.”

Gill Finley, Jr.
Program Leader, CRD

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