

## **Extension in North Carolina | Historical Milestones Timeline**

*Nothing could be finer than to be 100+ years...*

- **1862** | Abraham Lincoln signs the Morrill Act, allocating funds from the sale of public lands to establish “land-grant” colleges for teaching agriculture and mechanical arts in every state.
- **1889** | The North Carolina College of Agriculture and Mechanic Arts, now NC State University, opens its doors as the state’s land-grant institution.
- **1890** | The Second Morrill Act addresses educational inequality among African Americans, leading to the creation of new land-grant colleges including N.C. A&T State University in 1891.
- **1907** | James A. Butler is hired as the state’s first county agent, serving in Iredell. He hosts North Carolina’s first farm demonstration two days later.
- **1909** | North Carolina becomes the first state to officially partner with the USDA to conduct farm demonstration programs through land-grant colleges.
- **1910** | Neil Alexander Bailey becomes the state’s first Black agent. Working from his wagon, he travels Guilford, Randolph and Rockingham counties giving demonstrations wherever he can gather farmers.
- **1911** | Home demonstration agents start the first Girls’ Canning Clubs, which expand and evolve into today’s Family and Consumer Sciences programs.
- **1914** | The Smith-Lever Act establishes a national Cooperative Extension System associated with each land-grant institution. Extension in North Carolina – first known as the N.C. Agricultural Extension Service – is born on May 8.
- **1929** | Extension opens the state’s first N.C. 4-H camp in Swannanoa.
- **1936** | For the first time, Extension farm agents are serving all 100 counties.
- **1940s** | World War II prompts an increase in agricultural output, as Extension agents lead efforts to establish Victory Gardens and emphasize food conservation.
- **1952** | Mary Margret Smith becomes the first agent to serve the Qualla Boundary, as Extension formally partners with the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians.

- **1960s** | Extension's 4-H program expands to include urban youth for the first time, reflecting both the state's declining rural population and Extension's expanding focus beyond the farm.
- **1964** | The Civil Rights Act promotes racial integration of any separate Extension programs in North Carolina.
- **1965** | The [school name](#) officially becomes North Carolina State University at Raleigh, or NC State for short.
- **1969** | Extension and USDA launch the Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program (EFNEP), the nation's first nutrition education program for low-income families.
- **1979** | Extension's Wake County center trains the first NC State Extension Master Gardener<sup>SM</sup> volunteers.
- **1991** | The North Carolina Agricultural Extension Service changes its name to the N.C. Cooperative Extension Service to emphasize the breadth of its programs.
- **1993** | NC State launches the first university Extension website in the nation. Today, nearly 4 million people visit the site each year.
- **1999** | Extension disaster efforts take center stage after Hurricane Floyd, the state's most costly natural disaster ever at the time, as agents assist with emergency management and go door-to-door to provide research-based information to help flood victims recover.
- **2000** | After the tobacco Master Settlement Agreement of 1998, Extension helps kickstart an era of agricultural innovation and expansion as farmers adopt new crops and markets through initiatives like the N.C. Specialty Crops Program.
- **2008** | The 2008 Farm Bill establishes NIFA, a new agency within the USDA, to allocate funding and guide Extension efforts in every state.
- **2014** | 4-H and Family & Consumer Sciences (FCS) programs become official units housed within NC State Extension.
- **2017** | The N.C. Cooperative Extension Service rebrands as NC State Extension.
- **2019** | Extension's annual economic impact to North Carolina is valued at [\\$2.1 billion](#).
- **2022** | NC State is selected as the forever home for the presidential-pardoned National Thanksgiving Turkeys, Chocolate and Chip, for the first time. Extension specialists oversee their care at the university's turkey education unit.