

KSU responds to Regional Flooding

In early April 2025, 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 FEMA applications, safely return to damaged homes, and manage emotional stress, the need for both immediate assistance and educational outreach became clear.



In response, Kentucky State University (KYSU) Extension coordinated a multi-day flood recovery effort from April 7–12, 2025. The team deployed drone technology to capture aerial



footage of flood damage, which was shared with emergency partners to support assessment and response planning. KYSU partnered with the American Red Cross to help distribute meals to flood victims staying at the Capital



Plaza Hotel. Simultaneously, the **KYSU Disaster Recovery Unit** was deployed as a Mobile Learning Lab, offering displaced residents access to Wi-Fi and laptops to complete FEMA applications, contact loved ones, and access recovery resources. In collaboration with KYSU's 4-H Youth Development team, the unit also provided

computer-based educational entertainment for children, giving families a brief reprieve during a time of crisis. Educational materials and direct instruction were provided on key topics such as safe reentry to flooded homes, proper mold clean-up, and disposal of damaged furniture and belongings.

A total of 236 individuals were served during this initiative. This included displaced adults, seniors, and children who engaged with the Disaster Recovery Unit, received meals, or participated in 4-H youth engagement activities. Over 180 meals were distributed in collaboration with the Red Cross, and at least two dozen families used the mobile unit's internet and computer access to complete FEMA paperwork and connect with emergency services. More than 20 children took part in 4-H activities designed to reduce stress and provide age-appropriate educational interaction during displacement.

Evaluation feedback gathered from residents during the event indicated strong positive outcomes. Feedback was given verbally and over 80% of users reported feeling more confident about the FEMA claims process after using the mobile lab and reviewing the handouts. Several participants noted that they would not have



been able to complete the application without KYSU's assistance. Others reported that the disaster preparedness education provided helped them recognize the health risks of mold exposure and plan a more informed clean-up of their homes.



Through timely action, local partnerships, and a strong commitment to equitable disaster response, KYSU Extension played a vital role in helping individuals and families in Frankfort begin the process of recovery. The use of innovative tools like drone

footage and the Mobile Learning Lab—combined with hands-on outreach—demonstrated KYSU's continued leadership in disaster education and community resilience.