



**Oregon State
University**

College of Public Health Sciences and Human Sciences

“The Statewides”

**OSU Extension Service, Agricultural Experimental Station, Forest Research Laboratory
Investment Options 2018-2020**

Improving Youth and Family Mental Health

Increase infrastructure, capacity and partnerships to facilitate community engagement in prevention efforts to tackle root causes of opioid epidemic and mental health crisis

Issue: Oregon ranks 44th to 50th in the country in rates of mental illness and access to care. Suicide is the second leading cause of death for young adults in Oregon and 15% of teenagers experience a major depressive episode. Less than half receive treatment. Farmers, farmworkers, fishers, and foresters are at elevated risk for suicide. Almost all of the state’s communities included at least one objective on improving mental and behavioral health in their 2014 Community Health Improvement Plans.

Opportunity: In February 2018, Gov. Brown called for a statewide strategy to combat the opioid epidemic and other behavioral health challenges. To address and prevent problems, Oregon can leverage the capacity of Extension Service Family and Community Health and 4-H programs to help communities build local capacity for better mental health. We propose developing a network of locally recruited and trained Community Mental Health Innovators (CMHI) to develop local solutions for local mental health needs. Solutions could include needs and resource assessments; connecting business and mental health organizations; and training, including parent education and mental health management.

Our role: The Statewides can help Oregonians achieve better mental health so our youth and families thrive, our communities are strong, and our businesses have a stable and productive workforce. County commissioners have identified ideas for how additional resources for Extension services could promote youth and family mental health: fostering preventive measures, outreach into schools, training, and coordinating local resources.

Other possible areas of investment under consideration:

- **Agriculture and natural resource technology**
- **Community and workforce development**
- **Fire resilience**
- **Specialty crops**
- **Water quality and safety**