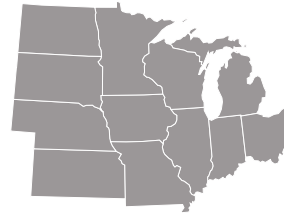
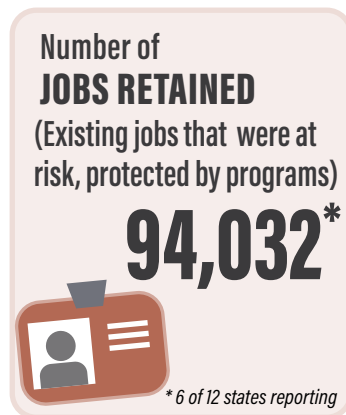
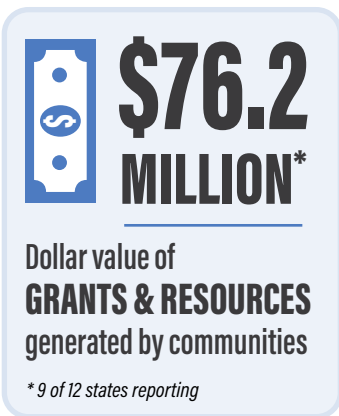
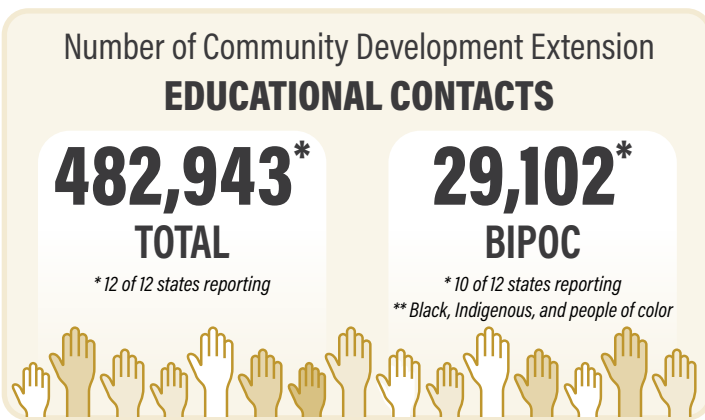


# Community Development Extension 2023 Executive Summary

University Extension leaders from the twelve North Central 1862 Land-Grant universities developed common indicators for reporting the impacts of community and economic development educational programs. Program leaders in each state reported on their program's outcomes to contribute to this report.



**North Central Region**  
Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, Nebraska, North Dakota, Ohio, South Dakota, Wisconsin



## 2023 Impact Briefs

**Sustainable Communities** ■

Rural Illinois has the potential to be a leader in the transition to clean energy. The 2021 Climate and Equitable Jobs Act paved a way for Illinois to transition to 50% renewable energy by 2040, while supporting rural communities. Illinois Extension conducted a needs assessment that concluded that rural communities need assistance with strategic planning, visioning, and grant writing. Communities want local success stories and trusted partners. Resistance to change is a significant barrier. Amplifying regional partnerships will help rural and underserved areas leverage resources and expertise and address capacity challenges. [Learn more](#)



**Illinois Extension**  
UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS URBANA-CHAMPAIGN

**Improving Communities' Access to Childcare and Child Development** ■

Local extension professionals partnered with organizations in their communities to lead coalitions that addressed the childcare access challenge. For several years, these coalitions have been establishing partnerships, completing feasibility studies, creating strategic plans, and raising funds.

Payoffs for this work began taking shape in 2023. Extension professionals raised approximately \$2,751,00 to expand and improve childcare access in Kansas communities. They also provided grant writing assistance and continuing education opportunities to current childcare providers to improve the support and quality of childcare. These efforts directly helped 861 families. This momentum and trans-disciplinary work will continue into 2024 as extension professionals plan to further expand access to childcare across the state. [Learn more](#)

**K-STATE**  
Research and Extension

**Customized Leadership Skills Training for Township Elected Officials and Staff** ■

In Indiana's 1,002 townships, elected officials and staff provide an array of community services, direct assistance, and often fire protection at a very local level. Because of the nature of these services, township offices work closely with diverse residents and issues. Purdue Extension worked with the Indiana Township Association to provide customized *Leadership Skills Training* for their members at their annual conference. Participants of the *Leadership Skills Training* explored the characteristics, skills, and ethics of effective leaders in public service through a series of mini-lectures and activities, and developed leadership skills in conflict management, cultural awareness, and public engagement. Over 160 township elected officials and staff participated, representing rural, suburban, and urban Indiana townships. [Learn more](#)

**PURDUE UNIVERSITY** | Extension

**Michigan Economic Development Corporation and MSU Extension Partner to Better Michigan Communities** ■

Michigan State University (MSU) Extension bridged a two-year partnership with the Michigan Economic Development Corporation (MEDC) in early 2021 for the purpose of offering the award-winning *First Impressions Tourism (FIT)* assessment program to select [Redevelopment Ready Certified \(RRC\) communities](#). The *FIT* assessment program assists communities in understanding themselves and unique assets more through visitor experiences. The partnership made available *FIT* assessments for four RRC communities between 2021 and 2022. Based on this initial success, MSU Extension and the MEDC are continuing this partnership for another two years. An additional four communities will be selected to participate in *FIT* over the course of 2023 and 2024. [Learn more](#)

**MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY** | Extension

**Assessing Rural Housing to Kick Start Development** ■

Since 2020, local decision-makers in 57 communities have completed Iowa State University Extension's *Rural Housing Readiness Assessment* program, and learned how to identify, assess, and meet their unique housing needs. Results include:

- 219 housing units improved or repaired in Newton.
- 200 new rental apartments and houses to be completed in Grinnell by the end of 2024.
- 180 moderate-income housing units under development in Nevada.
- \$1.2 million in housing grants awarded to Keokuk.
- 36 communities received \$10,000 Empower Rural Iowa grants from the Iowa Economic Development Authority. This initial investment of \$360,000 is being leveraged locally.

When rural communities can address their housing concerns, more Iowans have access to safe, affordable places to live. [Learn more](#)

**IOWA STATE UNIVERSITY**  
Extension and Outreach

**Welcoming Communities - UMN Extension** ■

Minnesota's rural communities are experiencing increased diversity due to immigration, particularly from Mexican and Somali immigrants. However, many communities are unprepared to support and integrate these newcomers. To address this, the *Welcoming and Inclusive Communities* program focuses on promoting inclusivity in various sectors like education, healthcare, law enforcement, and more. The program utilizes a tool to assess inclusiveness in different dimensions. By making communities more welcoming and inclusive, there is a greater potential for integration and growth. Additionally, this can help attract a diverse workforce to rural areas facing labor competition. [Learn more](#)

**UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA EXTENSION**

For more impact reports, view the full 2023 Impact Report at <https://ncrcrd.org/community-development/impact-reports/>

North Central Regional Center for Rural Development  
403 Mitch Daniels Blvd., West Lafayette, Indiana 47907

Color Coding: Recognizing the thematic areas of NCRCRD's mission.

- Creating Resilient Communities & Economies
- Developing Leadership & Civic Engagement
- Promoting Community Health & Wellness

## 2023 Impact Briefs

**Missouri Good Neighbor Week** ■

Missourians from all walks of life celebrated *Missouri Good Neighbor Week* (September 28 - October 4, 2023) by doing and reporting neighboring acts and nominating others as the most engaged neighbors in their respective counties. For the second year, University of Missouri Extension and The Hopeful Neighborhood Project teamed up to sponsor the week across Missouri. The goal for the week had been to document 15,000 acts of neighboring. But instead, Missourians reported 19,752 acts of neighboring during *Missouri Good Neighbor Week*. In addition, 74 community service events were completed across the state during the week, 65 of which involved University of Missouri Extension County Council members. [Learn more](#) | [Video Link](#)

**Building an Entrepreneur-Friendly Community** ■

Entrepreneurship is often overlooked as a critical economic development strategy to grow and sustain rural communities. Ohio State University Extension Community Development developed the *Building an Entrepreneur-Friendly Community* curriculum which consists of a hands-on, fact-seeking, action-oriented curriculum that assists communities in assessing their current micro-business situation, exploring the environment and potential for entrepreneurship as a growth strategy, and developing an action plan for implementation. A completed and branded curriculum, finalization of a successful pilot project, cross-research meetings, and sharing with other states, have shaped our team as program-ready. [Learn more](#)

**Leadership Chautauqua** ■

Rural Prosperity Nebraska held a groundbreaking *Leadership Chautauqua*, bringing together 120 community leaders from Nebraska and Iowa for transformative discussions. The think-tank sessions aimed to reshape community leadership development (CLD) through innovative strategies.

Funded by a NCRCRD grant, the day-long session explored CLD aspects like identifying assets and challenges, rethinking leadership structures, and expanding the pool of potential leaders. The event emphasized creating work groups, piloting projects, and enhancing CLD research, fostering collaboration and driving positive change in community leadership development. Rural Prosperity Nebraska aims to build on this momentum, driving positive change in community leadership development and positioning Nebraska as a leader in this field. [Learn more](#)

**AgritourismSD Transforms Assets Into Ventures** ■

South Dakota State University Extension's *AgritourismSD* program, now in its second cohort, has emerged as an opportunity for aspiring and developing agritourism operators. Over the 18-month duration, the program provides invaluable guidance, resources, and networking opportunities, empowering participants to transform their agricultural assets into thriving tourism ventures. By nurturing entrepreneurship and innovation, *AgritourismSD* not only enriches individual livelihoods but also invigorates rural economies and preserves agricultural heritage. Participants in this program not only discover the potential agritourism can bring to their lives but also contribute to the sustainable growth and vitality of South Dakota's rural communities. [Learn more](#)

**Rural Leadership North Dakota** ■

For over two decades, *Rural Leadership North Dakota* (RLND) participants have completed 175+ projects, showcasing dedication to enhancing North Dakotans' lives. RLND drives positive change, fosters community development, and bolsters residents' well-being. In North Dakota, 1 in 13 people is needed to fill 7,933 leadership roles, highlighting the need for leadership skills and networks. RLND emphasizes action-oriented leadership through its comprehensive curriculum. In 2023, RLND Class IX reported to have a deepened understanding of North Dakota's legislative process and economic landscape, and experienced personal growth. They completed 13 community projects, solidifying RLND's impact. RLND nurtures capable leaders ready to tackle state challenges with expertise. [Learn more](#)

**Local Government Education Program** ■

In 2023, the *Local Government Education* program provided fourteen (14) in-person trainings at the Spring and Fall Town Officials workshops to over 1,770 town elected officials. These seasonal in-person programs were located at seven locations throughout the State, as well as virtually for individuals unable to attend in-person trainings. The 2023 program topics were developed based on suggestions received during 2022 Town Official Workshop evaluations and discussions with Wisconsin Towns Association staff. Topics included: Review of recent Wisconsin state law changes, ordinance development, emergency medical services requirements, bidding processes for contracts, road load limits and road studies, and various property tax collection and accounting duties required in town government. 2023 evaluations will be used to improve future educational offerings and to understand the impact of these trainings. [Learn more](#)



For more impact reports, view the full 2023 Impact Report at <https://ncrcrd.org/community-development/impact-reports/>

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