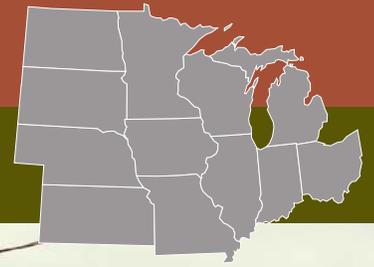


NORTH CENTRAL REGION 2023

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT EXTENSION



IMPACT REPORT





**NORTH CENTRAL REGIONAL CENTER
FOR RURAL DEVELOPMENT**

403 Mitch Daniels Blvd.
West Lafayette, Indiana 47907
Email: ncrcrd@purdue.edu
Phone: (765) 494-8541

<https://ncrcrd.org>

It is the NCRCRD's mission to build rural communities through cutting-edge research, Extension programs, and innovative partnerships. To achieve this mission, we seek to engage research and Extension at all of the land-grant institutions across the North Central Region.

The NCRCRD facilitates partnerships among Extension program leaders and community development programs at land-grant institutions in the North Central Region, including those established by the Morrill Acts of 1862 and 1890, and the Tribal Land Grant colleges funded in 1994. Led by many of our land-grant institution partners, Community Development Extension programs can be found in all twelve states of the North Central Region.

We approach our endeavors from three thematic areas:



NCRCRD is honored to support the valuable work of the North Central Region's Community Development Extension programs by publishing the annual Impact Report on their behalf. This year's report, as well as previous annual reports, can be found on the NCRCRD website at <https://ncrcrd.org/community-development/impact-report/>.

The United State Department of Agriculture National Institute of Food and Agriculture (USDA NIFA) provides core budget and logistical support for coordination across the four regional centers. The North Central Regional Association of State Agricultural Experiment Station Directors is composed of key Land Grant University research administrators from the twelve-state region, and provides operating support for the NCRCRD. The North Central Cooperative Extension Association (NCCEA) is composed of Extension Directors from the twelve-state region, and provides operating support for the NCRCRD.



North Central Regional Center for Rural Development (NCRCRD) is one of four Regional Rural Development Centers in the United States. To learn more, visit <https://rrdc.info/>

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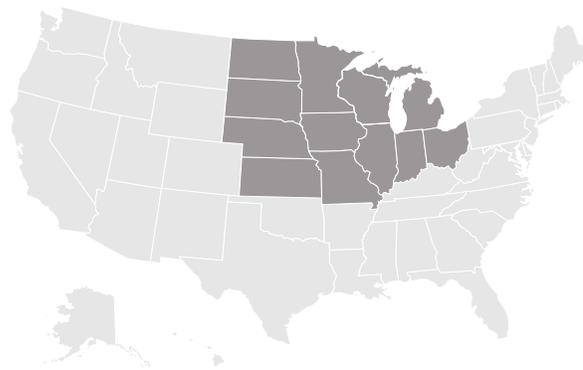
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North Central Region

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT EXTENSION

The National Association of Community Development Extension Professionals (NACDEP) defines community development as “a practice-based profession and an academic discipline that promotes participative democracy, sustainable development, rights, equality, economic opportunity, and social justice, through the organization, education, and empowerment of people within their communities, whether these be of locality, identity or interest, in urban and rural settings.”

Community Development Extension programs can be found in all twelve states in the North Central Region. Given the breadth of community development as a field, Community Development Extension programs are implemented in a variety of ways.



NCRCRD Thematic Area Color Coding

The impact statements in the report are color coded to recognize their connection to the thematic areas of NCRCRD’s mission. The color of the line above the impact statement title indicates the thematic area.

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

2023 Impact Report

Program leaders from the twelve North Central 1862 land-grant universities developed common indicators to measure the impacts of their community development programming. This report is based on information shared by the North Central states.

2023 North Central Program Leaders and Liaisons

David Civittolo, The Ohio State University
Mary Emery, University of Nebraska
Lynette Flage, North Dakota State University
Josh Gunn, Michigan State University
Brandi Hilton-Hagemann, University of Nebraska
Brandon Hofstedt, University of Wisconsin-Madison
Dave Ivan, Michigan State University
Benoy Jacob, University of Wisconsin-Madison
Steve Jeanetta, University of Minnesota
Carrie Johnson, North Dakota State University
Deborah Kohl, Kansas State University
Maria Marshall, NCRCRD

Yvonne Matthews, Lincoln University
Jaime Menon, Kansas State University
Erin Olson-Douglas, Iowa State University
Jordan Rasmussen, University of Nebraska
Mark Rendleman, Central State University
Bob Russell, University of Missouri
Peggy Schlechter, South Dakota State University
Anne Silvis, University of Illinois Extension
Amber Twitty, Central State University
Michael Wilcox, Purdue University
Claire Wolff, University of Missouri

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

Number of Community Development Extension
EDUCATIONAL CONTACTS

482,943*
TOTAL
** 12 of 12 states reporting*

29,102*
BIPOC**
** 10 of 12 states reporting*
*** Black, Indigenous, and people of color*

Number of participants reporting
NEW LEADERSHIP ROLES and
OPPORTUNITIES UNDERTAKEN

992*
** 10 of 12 states reporting*

\$76.2 MILLION*

Dollar value of
GRANTS & RESOURCES
generated by communities
** 9 of 12 states reporting*

Number of
VOLUNTEER HOURS
for community
generated work

77,507*
** 9 of 12 states reporting*

DOLLAR VALUE OF VOLUNTEER HOURS leveraged to deliver programs

\$820,029*
** 6 of 12 states reporting*

Number of community or
ORGANIZATIONAL PLANS / POLICIES DEVELOPED **518***
** 11 of 12 states reporting*

Dollar value of
RESOURCES LEVERAGED
by businesses

\$184 MILLION*

** 7 of 12 states reporting*

Number of
JOBS RETAINED
(Existing jobs that were at risk, protected by programs)

94,032*
** 6 of 12 states reporting*

Number of
BUSINESS PLANS DEVELOPED

1,111*
** 8 of 12 states reporting*

Number of
BUSINESSES CREATED **565***
** 8 of 12 states reporting*

ILLINOIS



Illinois Extension

UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS URBANA-CHAMPAIGN

Office of Extension and Outreach
 111 Mumford Hall (MC-710)
 1301 W. Gregory Drive
 Urbana, IL 61801
 Phone: (217) 333-5900
<https://extension.illinois.edu/>

UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS URBANA-CHAMPAIGN

Impact Indicators

Total program participants	17,430
BIPOC* participants	3,561
Number of participants reporting new leadership roles and opportunities undertaken	140
Number of business plans developed	12
Number of community or organizational plans/policies developed	32
Number of community or organizational, plans/policies adopted and/or implemented	33
Number of businesses created	3
Number of jobs created	48
Number of jobs retained	50
Dollar value of volunteer hours leveraged to deliver programs (Independent Sector value)	\$73,163
Dollar value of organization and/or community-generated volunteer hours (based on Independent Sector hour value)	\$102,632
Number of volunteer hours for community generated work	3845
Dollar value of efficiencies and savings	\$35,000
Dollar value of grants and resources leveraged/generated by communities	\$26,710,973
Dollar value of resources leveraged by businesses	\$25,000

* Black, Indigenous, and people of color

Impact Statement Key

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

2023 Impact Statements

■ Developing a Creative Economy

Developing a Creative Economy is a planning process for entrepreneurs, community leaders, and economic development professionals, and anyone interested in tapping into the creative talent in their communities to build viable businesses by developing a culture that appreciates and supports the creative sector. Creative entrepreneurs include artists, designers, musicians, boutique retailers, specialty food producers, and others. The program offers ways to start up and fund those enterprises. Examples include microbreweries, pop-up retail shops, co-businesses, art cooperatives, outdoor markets, music festivals, and Internet cafes. All these enterprises can be the ‘third spaces’ that young adults find attractive.

Greenville, like many rural communities in Illinois, was following a traditional economic development strategy focused on attracting businesses into Greenville and its industrial park. After working through the planning process, Greenville expanded its vision to include support of a culture of art and creativity, with a mission to: Develop and support the arts and creativity in Greenville, to expand tourism, enhance entrepreneurial development, create economic prosperity, and improve the quality of life for its residents.



Creative BOCO is a promotional group established to share the creative talents of Bond County, Illinois.
<https://www.facebook.com/CreativeBoCo/>

To follow the plan, arts are included in all community events, pop-up shops and vendor booths are at festivals and events, artists are networking through social media (Creative BoCo), and a tourism director was hired.

When communities use a creative economic development strategy, they build on the creative talents and abilities of residents. Greenville has accomplished this.

More information about *Developing a Creative Economy*:
<https://extension.illinois.edu/community-planning/developing-creative-economy>



Bond County Fourth Fest: A new music festival that drew over 3,000 people its first year (Greenville population: 7,000). A new music festival was #1 in the community planning efforts. <https://myfourthfest.com/>

■ State Hazard Mitigation Plan

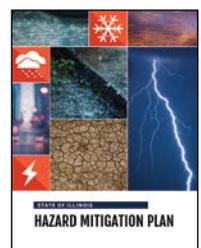
Illinois Extension led the effort to develop the *2023 Illinois Natural Hazard Mitigation Plan*. The plan allows Illinois communities and organizations access to funding through the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA). Extension worked with the Illinois State Water Survey and graduate students to gather stakeholder input and create technical tools for the plan. The plan addresses new FEMA requirements to review the impact of climate change on the state, as well as how disasters affect vulnerable populations. The plan incorporates an enhanced state profile, organizing the state into four regions, with demographic and economic data for each region, as well as the climate and geology of the regions. These regional profiles will allow local jurisdictions to compare their areas to the surrounding area, instead of the state as a whole.



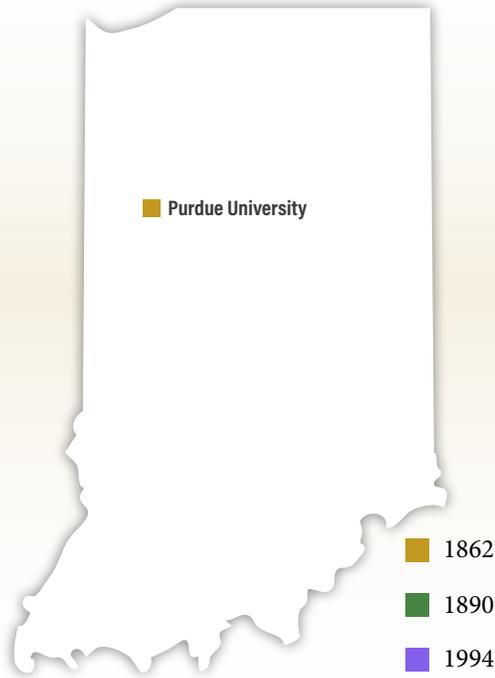
Illinois Hazard Mitigation Plan Regions

Extension Community and Economic Development Educators and Specialists have developed local multi-jurisdictional hazard mitigation plans across the state. According to Extension Educator Carrie McKillip, “We worked with county emergency managers after flooding in 2008 to develop hazard mitigation plans, since very few existed in the state. The Disaster Mitigation Act of 2000 requires that any jurisdiction wanting to apply for mitigation funding must have a FEMA approved *Natural Hazard Mitigation Plan* in place, and most of our counties did not.” According to McKillip, the state must also have a FEMA approved *Natural Hazard Mitigation Plan* for the local plans to tie local mitigation actions to statewide initiatives.

The plan is on the IEMA-OHS website under the mitigation section.
<https://iemaohs.illinois.gov/content/dam/soi/en/web/iemaohs/recovery/documents/plan-illmitigationplan.pdf>



INDIANA



Purdue Extension
 615 Mitch Daniels Blvd.
 West Lafayette, IN 47906
 Phone: (765) 496-3425
<https://extension.purdue.edu/cdext/>

PURDUE UNIVERSITY

Impact Indicators

Total program participants	2,095
BIPOC* participants	251
Number of participants reporting new leadership roles and opportunities undertaken	24
Number of community or organizational plans/policies developed	278
Number of community or organizational, plans/policies adopted and/or implemented	38
Number of jobs created	1
Dollar value of volunteer hours leveraged to deliver programs (Independent Sector value)	\$6,411
Dollar value of organization and/or community-generated volunteer hours (based on Independent Sector hour value)	\$25,102
Number of volunteer hours for community generated work	1,014
Dollar value of grants and resources leveraged/generated by communities	\$6,452,170
Dollar value of resources leveraged by businesses	\$250,000

* Black, Indigenous, and people of color

Impact Statement Key

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

2023 Impact Statements

■ Purdue Extension Worked with the Indiana Township Association to Provide Customized Leadership Skills Training for Members at Annual Conference

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. Pro-active conflict management strategies, cultural competency, and public engagement skills help these leaders to be effective in their positions.

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.

Many townships attended the training as a team, which offered them the opportunity to participate together. All participants worked with their teams to name shared values for their offices. Township teams brainstormed ways their offices could engage in meaningful and inclusive ways with the public. Attendees responding to a post survey reported that they learned something new (93%). Most said they planned to incorporate something they learned into their work (78%). Several township officials shared they would like to offer focus groups, surveys, and public forums to engage the public. Participants also shared that the workshop “really gave us some time to brainstorm some ideas to grow in leadership and engaging in the community,” and “The idea and thought-provoking conversations help[ed] me identify what could be done better.”

Learn more about Purdue Extension's leadership and civic engagement programs: <https://extension.purdue.edu/cdext/thematic-areas/leadership-civic-engagement/index.html>

■ Purdue Extension's Homelessness Efforts in Wayne County, IN Addresses Issue and Reshapes Community Care Standards

In rural areas like Wayne County, Indiana, homelessness often flies under the radar, lacking the visibility of urban centers. Despite this invisibility, the problem persists, exacerbated by limited shelter beds, scant resources, and disconnectedness from state-level aid. The county struggled to gauge the extent of homelessness, relying on ad hoc efforts for the annual [Point-in-Time \(PIT\)](#) count, which in 2020 tallied just 20 individuals. Led by Elisa Worland, Purdue Extension embarked on a four-year mission to confront this issue amidst skepticism from local leaders.

Purdue Extension mobilized stakeholders to bolster data collection and outreach. Starting with a modest outreach event in 2021, providing meals and limited resources, the initiative expanded rapidly. Volunteer resource navigators were trained to assess needs and guide attendees to available services. Agencies set up tables offering direct connections to vital resources such as health screenings, housing applications, distributing hygiene supplies, and exploring expedited acquisition of essential documents. In recent years, the group has reached over 70 people at each event.

Their endeavors garnered attention from the Indiana Department of Health, which provided funding to develop a strategic regional plan to address homelessness and enhance service delivery. The local planning council has seen increased attendance and interest in participating in efforts. Wayne County's narrative of homelessness is shifting as a result. What was once dismissed as a non-issue is now met with collaborative action and compassion. Through the team's steadfast dedication, Purdue Extension is not just addressing homelessness; they're reshaping community care standards.

IOWA



■ 1862 ■ 1890 ■ 1994

IOWA STATE UNIVERSITY Extension and Outreach

Iowa State University Extension and Outreach
2150 Beardshear Hall
Ames, IA 50011
Phone: (800) 262-3804
<https://www.extension.iastate.edu/>

IOWA STATE UNIVERSITY

Impact Indicators

Total program participants	157,885
Number of business plans developed	52
Number of community or organizational plans/policies developed	35
Number of community or organizational plans/policies adopted and/or implemented	1,767
Dollar value of organization and/or community-generated volunteer hours (based on Independent Sector hr value)	\$33,968
Number of volunteer hours for community generated work	1,544

Impact Statement Key

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

2023 Impact Statements

■ Rock Valley Rallies for Housing and Economic Growth

The city of Rock Valley, Iowa fueled by its entrepreneurial spirit, had grown for years. But then, the town's steady growth began to stall.

"We had been seeing constant growth, with anywhere from 10 to 25 houses added each year. Then, shortly before COVID, those numbers really started to dry up," explained Tom Van Maanen, Rock Valley's city administrator.

For Van Maanen, the shift in numbers warned of a dry spell in the community's expansion, a view Dave Miller, Rock Valley's development director, shared.

"For our businesses to grow, we need to continue to recruit and retain our residents. And to achieve that, we need housing," Miller stated.

Recognizing the need for action, Miller and Van Maanen collaborated with Iowa State University Extension and Outreach for education and the Iowa Economic Development Authority for funding. As a result, Rock Valley has experienced an estimated \$8.35 million investment in new housing construction.

In 2021, Rock Valley completed the *Rural Housing Readiness Assessment* facilitated by ISU Extension and Outreach's Community and Economic Development unit, learning how to self-assess and address their unique housing needs through their own community-driven initiatives. Completing the assessment enabled them to leverage a \$10,000 Empower Rural Iowa grant from IEDA.

Equipped with the *Rural Housing Readiness Assessment* plan and the Empower Rural Iowa grant, Rock Valley initiated projects to develop housing incentives, revitalize urban areas, and combat blight. The concerted community effort has already resulted in the completion of five downtown housing units, with six more units in progress. Additionally, this initiative has sparked the construction of 20 new single-family homes and seven multi-family housing units.

Since 2020, 57 Iowa communities have taken action to address their rural housing crisis by completing Iowa State University Extension's *Rural Housing Readiness Assessment* program.

More information: <https://www.extension.iastate.edu/communities/rural-housing-readiness-assessment>,



City of Rock Valley, IA single family housing construction.

■ Training the Leaders Who Support Iowa's Local Governments

The Iowa Municipal Professionals Institute (the Institute) and the Iowa Municipal Professionals Academy (the Academy) are adult educational programs provided by Iowa State University Extension and Outreach in cooperation with the Iowa Municipal Finance Officers Association (IMFOA) to offer instructional sessions in a variety of topics that assist municipal professionals in their day-to-day duties. The Institute and Academy are the educational component for municipal clerks and finance officers to receive certification by IMFOA. The Institute and Academy are directed toward municipal professionals who recognize that education and training in the areas pertinent to local government are beneficial to the entire community that they serve.



Sessions for the Institute are held three times per year with two of the sessions offered virtually and one in-person session with approximately thirty courses spread across the three sessions. Eighty-five percent of participants identified change in knowledge upon completing Institute courses.

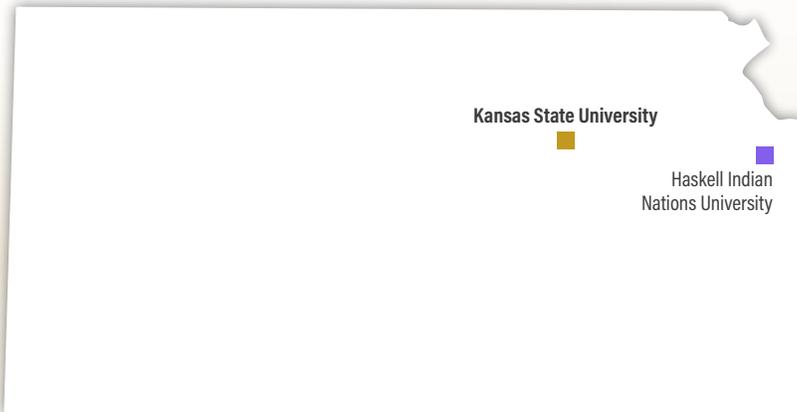
The Academy is a three-day conference held in Ames, Iowa. The conference consists of a general sessions (required), and break-out sessions that attendees choose based on the needs of their community and their position.

The successful completion of the required Institute courses fulfills the educational requirements for certification by the International Institute of Municipal Clerks (IIMC) and the IMFOA. The Academy is the educational component to becoming a Master Municipal Clerk as certified by the IIMC.

In 2023, over 400 City Clerks and municipal professionals attended courses offered by the Institute and Academy, representing 91 of Iowa's 99 counties.

Learn more: <https://www.extension.iastate.edu/communities/iowa-municipal-professionals-institute-academy>

KANSAS



■ 1862
 ■ 1890
 ■ 1994



K-State Research and Extension
 123 Umberger Hall
 Manhattan, KS 66506
 Phone: (785) 532-5820
<https://www.ksre.k-state.edu/>

KANSAS STATE UNIVERSITY

Impact Indicators

Total program participants	95,942
BIPOC* participants	501
Number of participants reporting new leadership roles and opportunities undertaken	4
Number of community or organizational plans/policies developed	5
Number of community or organizational plans/policies adopted and/or implemented	5
Number of volunteer hours for community generated work	59,161
Dollar value of grants and resources leveraged/generated by communities	\$1,756,491
Dollar value of resources leveraged by businesses	\$1,756,494

* Black, Indigenous, and people of color

Impact Statement Key

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

2023 Impact Statements

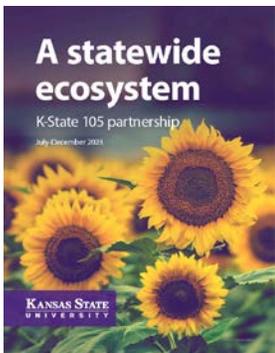
K-State 105 Initiative

<https://www.k-state.edu/105/>

Mid-way through the 2023 programming year, Kansas State University announced a unique legislatively-funded initiative – *K-State 105* – aimed at leveraging academic research and resources from all of the university’s colleges and campuses in partnership with corporations and small businesses to deliver economic prosperity in all 105 counties.

The aim of the *K-State 105* project is to deliver additional solutions direct to Kansans through the statewide K-State Research and Extension network. *K-State 105* also offers funds via a competitive process to provide expertise for select community and economic development efforts.

Working with Extension professionals in local units, the *105*-leadership team began to build a network of committed, creative partners to advance the economic prosperity of Kansas. The initiative provided an opportunity for the system to highlight the strong coalitions, partnerships, and efforts already underway in communities across the state — largely led by our Extension teams. *K-State 105* rapidly became a tool Extension professionals used to convene conversations in their communities and to make progress on adaptive problems across the state — including workforce development, housing, childcare, and healthcare. Many of these conversations are on-going, and several resulted in projects that were funded for the 2024 year. As with all initiatives aimed at creating lasting change — *105* work is iterative, and being part of the ground-floor launch and initial efforts has been rewarding for our Extension system.



K-State 105 initiative’s first 6 months (July-December 2023) progress report. [Read report \(pdf\)](#)

First Friday E-Call

432 Participants; 1199 Follow-on Views

<https://www.ksre.k-state.edu/program-areas/supporting-communities/first-friday-ecalls/>

Long before the pandemic, or the renewed focus by the Legislature on economic development, Extension professionals in Kansas began a webinar series in hopes of building an ecosystem of entrepreneurs around the state. The purpose of the *First Friday E-Call* is to increase the local community’s knowledge of the experts, education, and economic resources available to help small businesses and entrepreneurs and to share innovations in community development. On the first Friday of each month, dozens of stakeholders across the state gather to share with and learn from one another.

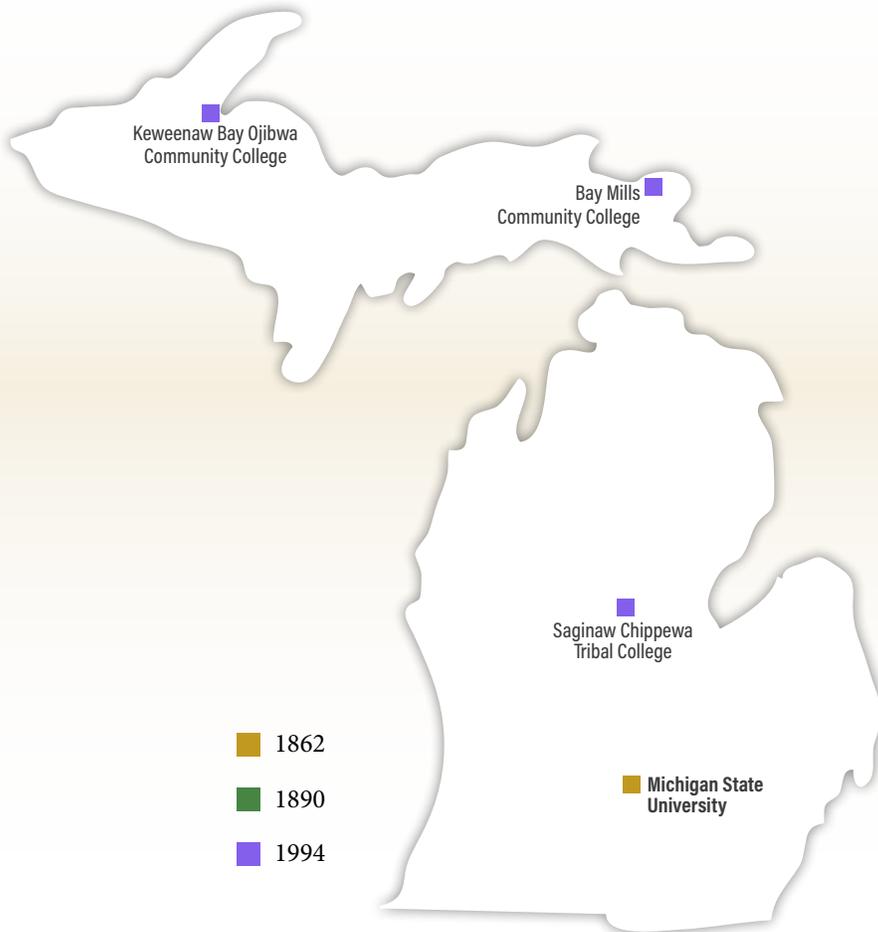
In 2023, as many as 75 attendees logged in for unique expert sessions discussing the Build Kansas Fund, the role of housing in economic development, rural downtown economic development, tools and support for Main Street Development, creating safe spaces for workers, and K-State resources for childcare development. In addition to these topics, entrepreneurs in communities shared their lessons learned and best practices for creating Airbnb’s to support vibrant economic development, and work in downtown revitalization and tourism. Evaluation of the program shows that the majority of participants are easily able to identify three or more people in their sphere of influence with whom they will share the information from the webinar each month. When asked what they learned that they would share:



- “I now appreciate the importance of historical preservation in my town.”
- “Cities need to act in their best self-interest and not wait for others. Upgrades are contagious. Historic designation can make a tremendous difference in funding opportunities.”
- “The possibilities of revitalizing downtown and doing so in a way that could incorporate healthy living.”
- “Tourism equals jobs.”

An additional focus of the webinars in 2023 included doubling down on networking during the webinar, creating a platform for colleagues to come together to connect, not just listen to a speaker. Those efforts paid off and when the K-State 105 funding was announced, the relationships formed on *First Friday E-Call* became the backbone of a successfully funded project to build entrepreneurial community capacity. We look forward to providing an update on the impact of this follow-on programming in our 2024 report.

MICHIGAN



MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY

Impact Indicators

Total program participants	62,275
Number of participants reporting new leadership roles and opportunities undertaken	223
Number of businesses created	27
Number of jobs retained	347
Dollar value or organization and/or community-generated volunteer hours (based on Independent Sector hour value)	\$874,659
Dollar value of grants and resources leveraged/generated by communities	\$5,415,950
Dollar value of resources leveraged by businesses	\$11,235,170

MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY | Extension

Michigan State University Extension
 446 W Circle Drive #102
 East Lansing, MI 48824
 Phone: (517) 335-2308
<https://www.canr.msu.edu/outreach/>

Impact Statement Key

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

2023 Impact Statements

Empowering Local Leaders to Make Science-based Decisions that Best Fit Community Needs

Michigan has seen some drastic changes over recent decades that shape how local leaders plan for the future of their communities, making it vital to have access to the latest science-based information on important topics and the understanding of how it informs decision making for future generations.

The *Master Citizen Planner* webinar series is an annual offering from the Michigan State University Extension *Citizen Planner* team, and consists of six one-hour webinars on topics of interest to land use decision makers, such as planners and appointed or elected officials. The series is designed to meet the *Master Citizen Planner* requirements of six hours of continuing land use education. Webinars explored statewide demographic trends, as well as regional variation within the state. Topics important to community planning like aging population, racial-ethnic diversity, and sources of population growth were discussed in-depth.

A total of 35 individuals from across the state registered for this program. Thirteen participants completed the supplied evaluation after the program showing that:

- 85% of respondents reported increased knowledge about the topic;
- 85% of respondents reported enhanced skills to be effective in their role;
- 70% of respondents reported increased confidence in their ability to fulfill their role in their community; and
- 77% will learn more information about the topic.

By equipping local leaders with the latest research-based community development best practices, and the necessary tools to understand how to implement, Michigan's *Master Citizen Planner* program strengthens communities and ensures they are productive and engaged with the needs of their residents, both current and future.

MSU Extension Tourism Educators Partner with St. Clair County 4-H Fair Board to Pilot Visitor Assessment Tool and Drive Future Development

Michigan State University (MSU) Extension has been helping communities reimagine themselves and their assets by capturing first-time visitor perspectives through our *First Impression Tourism (FIT)* assessment program. *FIT* is a comprehensive community assessment conducted by unannounced visitors in a host community. Overall, *FIT* helps communities learn about their strengths and weaknesses through the eyes of first-time visitors.

The St. Clair County 4-H Fair Board invited MSU Extension in spring 2022 to conduct a first-time visitor assessment and analysis of their fair, based on *FIT*, as a pilot program. Using the *FIT* framework responsible for a wide-range of success across Michigan, MSU Extension tourism educator, Andy Northrop, chose questions known for generating a plethora of relevant data for communities.

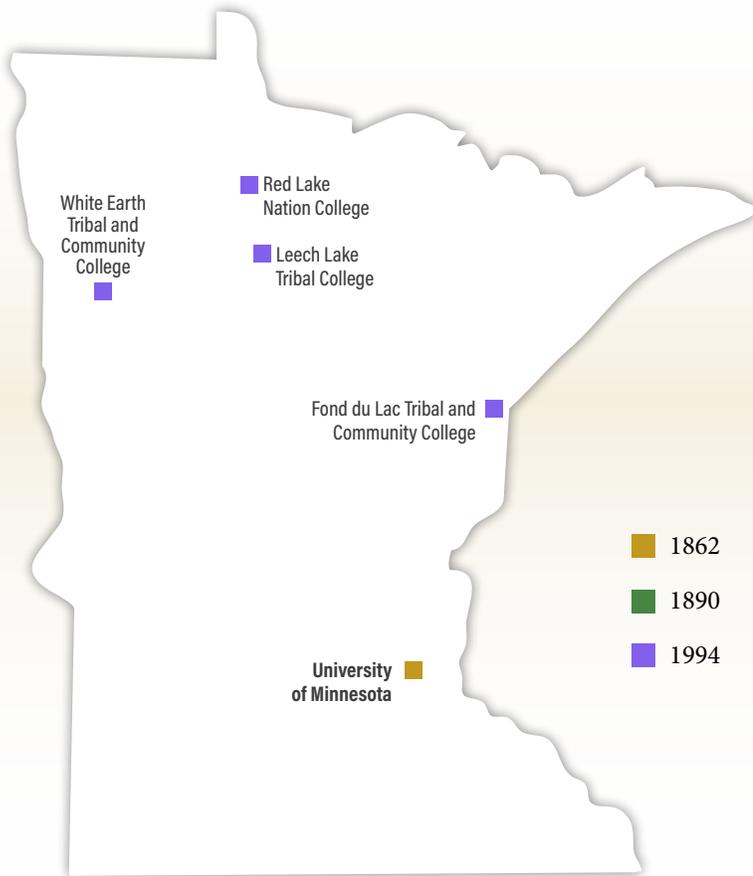
An assessment of St. Clair County 4-H and Youth Fair (SCC4H) took place during the week of July 18-23, 2022. Three assessors (along with some of their family members) visited SCC4H at multiple times throughout the week. The results generated from the assessment were extracted directly from the electronic data-collection tool used to capture the visitors' experiences and impressions. The assessment tool captured a wide range of topics, including initial impressions, visitor motives for attending, fair infrastructure and assets, parking, service/food industry, and provided personal reviews of events, along with public and private assets. Visitors to the fair were also asked to provide feedback on strengths, weaknesses, threats, and opportunities, as well as what would bring them back next year.

Results from the assessment were shared with the Board of Directors of the St. Clair County 4-H and Youth Fair Board in September 2022. Results were used to guide improvements to the SCC4H throughout 2023 and will be used into the future.

MSU Extension is pleased to enhance its partnership with the Board of Directors of the St. Clair County 4-H and Youth Fair. In addition, MSU Extension is thrilled to partner on this opportunity and engage SCC4H as a pilot for what is intended to become a tool applicable to all fairs and festivals across Michigan.

More information about *First Impression Tourism*, visit https://www.canr.msu.edu/tourism_first_impressions/index

MINNESOTA



UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA EXTENSION

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 240 Coffey Hall
 1420 Eckles Avenue
 St. Paul, MN 55108
 Phone: (612)-634-1222
<https://extension.umn.edu/>

UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA

Impact Indicators

Total program participants	12,753
BIPOC* participants	3,052
Number of participants reporting new leadership roles and opportunities undertaken	115
Number of business plans developed	2
Number of community or organizational plans/policies developed	28
Number of community or organizational plans/policies adopted and/or implemented	18
Number of businesses created	1
Dollar value of volunteer hours leveraged to deliver programs (Independent Sector value)	\$587,386
Dollar value of organization and/or community-generated volunteer hours (based on Independent Sector hour value)	\$58,047
Number of volunteer hours for community generated work	1,684
Dollar value of grants and resources leveraged/generated by communities	\$114,550

* Black, Indigenous, and people of color

Impact Statement Key

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

Homegrown Entrepreneurship Program

Entrepreneurs play a crucial role in generating social and economic value through their businesses. Rural areas, however, often lack the necessary resources and support for entrepreneurs. To address this, the University of Minnesota Extension developed a workshop called, *Homegrown*, in collaboration with the University of Wisconsin Extension and University of Missouri Extension, that focused on organizing and activating resources to support entrepreneurs in rural communities.

This half-day workshop educates local leaders on the importance of entrepreneurship, research on supporting entrepreneurs, and the significance of well-coordinated networks in developing a robust entrepreneurial ecosystem. Through discussions with local leaders, the workshop aims to create actionable plans.

The *Homegrown* workshop was successfully piloted in Caledonia, Minnesota in 2023. The workshop had three main goals: initiating a community conversation about entrepreneurship, expanding and connecting the network of individuals interested in assisting entrepreneurs, and establishing a strategic plan for supporting entrepreneurs over six months.

Caledonia took two significant actions to address entrepreneurial challenges identified in the workshop. Firstly, they engaged with at-home businesses and implemented a holiday pop-up store program. This initiative, supported by a \$100,000 grant, promoted business activities and provided consumers with new shopping opportunities during the holidays. Secondly, Caledonia was selected as a Rural Entrepreneurial Ventures community. This three-year capacity-building program, operated by the Southern Minnesota Initiative Foundation, aims to foster entrepreneurial ecosystems.

The University of Minnesota Extension's *Homegrown* workshop proved instrumental in preparing Caledonia's application for the Rural Entrepreneurial Ventures program, leading to their selection as a participant from January 2024.

Welcoming Communities

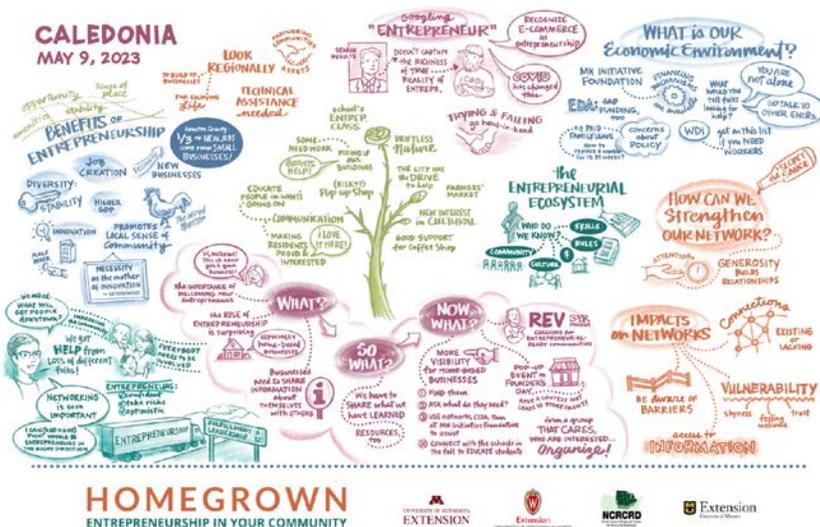
The racial and ethnic makeup of rural communities in Minnesota is increasingly more diverse, with an increased number of immigrants settling in these areas. Many rural communities, however, are not equipped to support these newcomers effectively. Recognizing the need to create more inclusive spaces, University of Minnesota Extension's *Welcoming and Inclusive Communities* program aims to educate and engage community members, building their capacity to work in diverse settings, and promote greater inclusion.

The Welcoming Communities Assessment Tool examines seven community sectors across six dimensions of inclusion, including awareness, engagement, resources, leadership, power sharing, and policies. This assessment helps community members understand how inclusive their sectors are for immigrants, refugees, and people of color. Evaluations of the program in Alexandria and Glencoe revealed areas of both strength and improvement within each community.

Participation in the program has led to increased community engagement, such as a participant becoming a member of the Glencoe city council. The community also raised \$5,000 and organized a Unity Festival to celebrate local cultures.

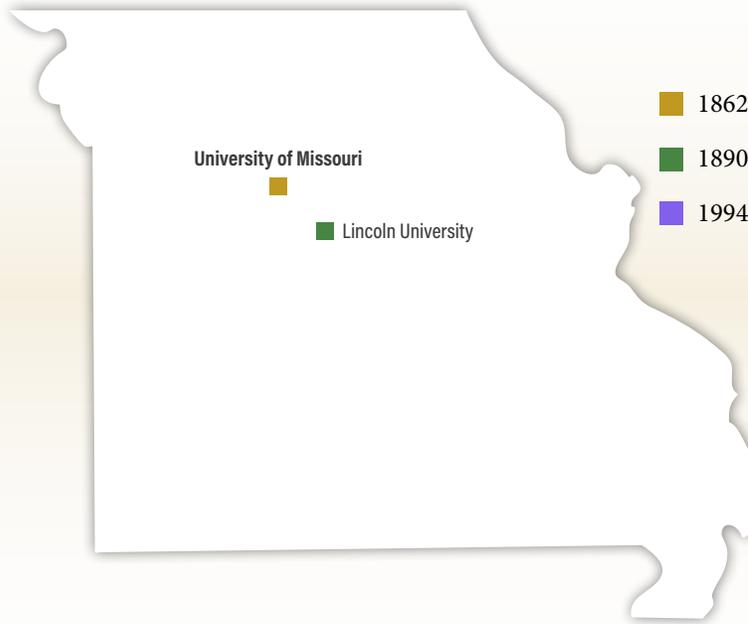
It is crucial for rural communities to embrace diversity, as the only growing segment of Minnesota's population consists of diverse and marginalized groups. By becoming more inclusive, communities can integrate newcomer populations and historically marginalized groups, benefiting from their involvement as volunteers, consumers, and contributors to the local economy.

Additionally, rural communities in Minnesota face challenges in attracting labor to support their economies. By making their communities more welcoming to diverse populations, they can increase their appeal to an increasingly diverse workforce.



GRAPHIC RECORDING BY Babalola Anderson-Caslin.com

MISSOURI



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Impact Statement Key

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

UNIVERSITY OF MISSOURI

Impact Indicators

Total program participants	71,386
BIPOC* participants	12,892
Number of participants reporting new leadership roles and opportunities undertaken	7
Number of business plans developed	976
Number of community or organizational plans/policies developed	16
Number of community or organizational plans/policies adopted and/or implemented	3
Number of businesses created	291
Number of jobs created	5,858
Number of jobs retained	89,982
Dollar value of organization and/or community-generated volunteer hours (based on Independent Sector hr value)	\$253,539
Number of volunteer hours for community generated work	7,656
Dollar value of efficiencies and savings	\$990,000
Dollar value of grants and resources leveraged/generated by communities	\$96,403
Dollar value resources leveraged by businesses	\$168,001,055

* Black, Indigenous, and people of color

2023 Impact Statements

■ Connecting Entrepreneurial Communities Conference: Benton County

The *Connecting Entrepreneurial Communities (CEC) Conference* was held in Benton County, Missouri on September 19-23, 2023. This is the third iteration of this conference, with previous *CEC Conferences* being held in 2021 and 2022 in Hannibal and Hermann, Missouri, respectively.

This conference focuses on sharing real-life success stories of rural communities supporting entrepreneurs and entrepreneurial ecosystems. It includes information on the strategies those communities have deployed to support entrepreneurs; the tools that are available to help those efforts; and the broader economic and workforce trends that are impacting entrepreneurship locally and across the United States.

The 2023 *CEC Conference* brought together 104 participants from 48 communities across four states to learn how the communities of Benton County – Warsaw, Cole Camp, and Lincoln – have built a robust entrepreneurial ecosystem that is supporting a variety of small businesses. The target audience for the *Connecting Entrepreneurial Communities Conference* is different, as this effort focuses on helping rural communities – and community leaders – build and support entrepreneurial ecosystems in their towns and regions.

This program is one of the first intentional efforts in Missouri to focus on rural entrepreneurship, with sessions designed to bridge the gap between the academy and practitioners on ways to support rural entrepreneurship.

Attendees report that the conference includes a number of “tangible takeaways” that they are putting “into practice almost immediately in my community.”



Images from the 2023 Connecting Entrepreneurial Communities Conference in Benton, Missouri.

Learn more about CEC: <https://extension.missouri.edu/programs/creating-entrepreneurial-communities>



■ Developing a 21st Century Workforce

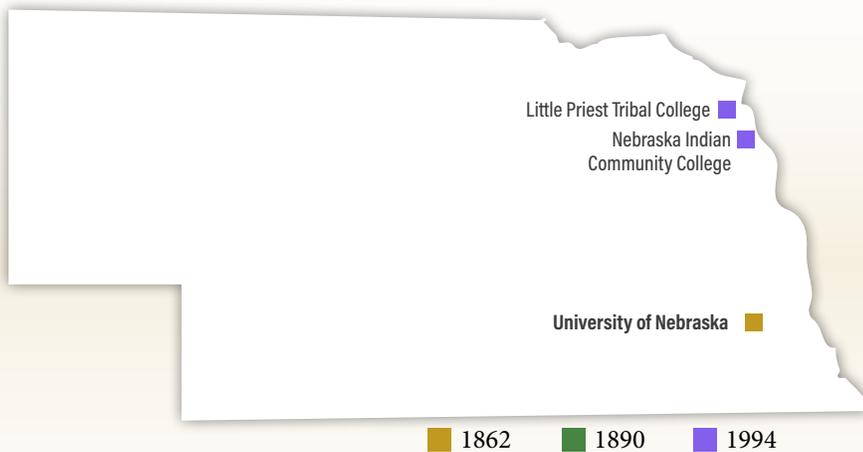
Our efforts to engage in workforce development programs designed to help develop Missouri’s 21st century workforce took a variety of forms. Notably, our programs and activities seek to do three things in this space. They A) build awareness of the career opportunities and pathways to those careers that exist in Missouri; B) ensure that all Missouri employers are able to provide adequate supports in order to gainfully employ those people in recovery from substance use and other relevant disorders; and C) provide programs to enhance the skills of Missourians already in the workforce.

One of the primary activities undertaken by MU Extension over the past year as it relates to developing a 21st century workforce seeks to build awareness of manufacturing careers across the state. The program, which was piloted in 2023, is called the *Missouri Manufacturing Academy* and brings together experts from MU Extension, Missouri University of Science & Technology, and several key industry partners to introduce manufacturing and manufacturing careers to middle-school aged youth in the after-school space.

In 2023, 57 youth from six different school districts, representing six Missouri counties, participated in the pilot program, which culminated with visits to both the Kummerer Center for STEM Education at Missouri University of Science & Technology and several specialized manufacturers in the region.

Over time, we anticipate expanding the scale and geographic scope of this program to create a dedicated pathway into manufacturing careers for Missouri’s youth.

NEBRASKA



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Impact Statement Key

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

UNIVERSITY OF NEBRASKA

Impact Indicators

Total program participants	3,685
BIPOC* participants	2,001
Number of participants reporting new leadership roles and opportunities undertaken	41
Number of business plans developed	22
Number of community or organizational plans/policies developed	11
Number of community or organizational plans/policies adopted and/or implemented	5
Number of businesses created	223
Number of jobs created	234
Number of jobs retained	31
Dollar value of volunteer hours leveraged to deliver programs (Independent Sector value)	\$7,954
Dollar value or organization and/or community-generated volunteer hours (based on Independent Sector hour value)	\$4,008
Number of volunteer hours for community generated work	129
Dollar value of efficiencies and savings	\$420,000
Dollar value of grants and resources leveraged/generated by communities	\$7,316,627
Dollar value of resources leveraged by businesses	\$2,012,895

* Black, Indigenous, and people of color

2023 Impact Statements

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-style sessions aimed to reshape community leadership development (CLD) through innovative strategies and collaborative approaches.

Lindsay Hastings, a leadership development professor at the University of Nebraska–Lincoln, celebrated the event’s success: “We wanted the *Leadership Chautauqua* to unite peer networks of community leaders for a robust think-tank discussion on CLD, and I believe we achieved that.”

Funded by a North Central Regional Center for Rural Development grant, the day-long session was led by a collaborative team of researchers, Extension Educators, graduate students, and community partners. The event explored various aspects of CLD, including identifying assets and challenges, rethinking leadership structures, focusing on leadership systems versus programs, and expanding the pool of potential leaders.

Tyler Pribbeno, Imperial’s director of community development, stressed the need for continuous leadership development. “To prevent leadership gaps, particularly in Greater Nebraska’s smaller communities, ongoing development is crucial,” he said. “With many Baby Boomers retiring, we risk a leadership void if we don’t cultivate new leaders.”

Stacy Miller, Knox County’s economic development assistant, emphasized integrating new ideas into leadership practices. “The *Leadership Chautauqua* taught me the value of inviting community members to join groups and determining their talents before assigning roles,” she said. “This approach prevents burnout and encourages active participation.”

The event emphasized creating work groups to contextualize and share strategies, pilot projects, and enhance CLD research. The *Chautauqua* facilitated a dynamic exchange of ideas, fostering collaboration among attendees. 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.

Additional information: <https://ruralprosperityne.unl.edu/chautauqua-aims-revolutionize-rural-leadership-development>



eCommunities

To help foster an entrepreneurial mindset within rural Nebraska, Rural Prosperity Nebraska Extension Educator, Shawn Kaskie leads the *eCommunities* program, funded by the U.S. Economic Development Administration, which focuses on helping communities identify, collect and cultivate resources that encourage entrepreneurship within their towns. He’s working with three entrepreneurial coaches (eCoaches) in twenty communities.

The *eCommunities* program follows an outline aimed at getting people to start thinking about what success looks like in their towns. It begins with conversations among community-selected steering committee members who focus on identifying the strengths and weaknesses of their entrepreneurial climates.

In Grand Island “we hadn’t created, fostered, grown, supported (the entrepreneurship) area of our business development for years,” said Cindy Johnson, a member of Grand Island’s committee and the Chamber of Commerce. “We’re a community that was founded by entrepreneurs, but there was a gap.”

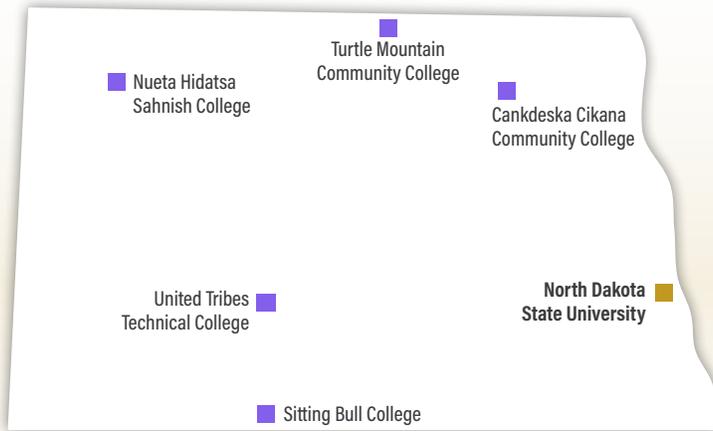
These discussions lead communities to the next step in the process, creating goals and action plans to bolster the strengths and build up areas that may be lacking. While the program follows an outline, the results so far have varied city to city — exactly as it was designed to.

To date, 129 *eCommunities*-supported businesses have added 69 full-time jobs and 59 part-time jobs, and increased revenues by more than \$2.5 million.

“Entrepreneur-led development builds community capacity for entrepreneurs and community development. Human talent is the building block of today’s successful economies and communities,” said Kaskie.

Learn more about *eCommunities*:
<https://ruralprosperityne.unl.edu/eCommunities-program-boosts-rural-nebraska%E2%80%99s-entrepreneurial-capacity>

NORTH DAKOTA



■ 1862 ■ 1890 ■ 1994

NORTH DAKOTA STATE UNIVERSITY

Impact Indicators

Total program participants	7,525
BIPOC* participants	484
Number of community or organizational plans/policies developed	9

* Black, Indigenous, and people of color

NDSU

EXTENSION

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Impact Statement Key

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

2023 Impact Statements

Soil and Water Conservation Leadership Academy

The *Soil and Water Conservation Leadership Academy* is a locally delivered educational program designed to build skills and enhance abilities to lead community-based watershed conservation projects that improve and protect water quality.

The Academy is presented at two levels. Both levels are designed to be highly interactive, with attendees being active participants in their learning. Face-to-face instruction is also supplemented with online training resources. To date, Level I of the *Soil and Water Conservation Leadership Academy* has improved the knowledge, skills, and abilities of 337 conservation leaders in North Dakota. The addition of Level II has allowed 191 of these leaders to continue their training even further. These *Academies* have been presented in communities across the state and have reached participants from 52 of North Dakota's 54 Soil and Water Conservation Districts. Based on the most recent pre- and post-*Academy* self-assessments, participants in Level I training reported an average 60% increase in their understanding, confidence, and abilities. Level II participants reported increases averaging 37%.

Promoting inclusion and improving diversity of participants have been key focal points in the development and implementation of this project. We have worked to ensure that both participants and instructors of the *Academy* are representative of the demographics of our state. To this point, approximately 39% of *Academy* participants have been women, and we continue to encourage more diversity within our district boards. We believe that these *Academies* are and will continue to play an important role in diversifying conservation leadership in North Dakota.

Learn more: <https://www.ndsu.edu/agriculture/extension/programs/soil-and-water-conservation-leadership-academy>

Empowering Leadership for North Dakota's Future

Over twenty years, *Rural Leadership North Dakota* (RLND) participants have completed over 175 community and industry projects, showcasing our steadfast dedication to improving North Dakotans' quality of life. *RLND* has been instrumental in driving positive change, fostering community development, and contributing to the overall well-being of our state's residents.

In North Dakota, a pressing challenge emerges as 1 in 13 individuals are needed to fill 7,933 leadership roles statewide. This demand emphasizes the importance of equipping individuals with essential leadership skills and establishing a strong network to cultivate capable leaders. These leaders, in turn, can collaboratively undertake diverse projects to benefit communities throughout North Dakota.

RLND's ethos centers on action-oriented leadership. Through its comprehensive curriculum encompassing personal skills development, in-depth leadership studies, and location-specific subject matter, *RLND* stands out in leadership education.

In 2023, *RLND* Class IX participants made significant strides:

- They gained a deeper understanding of the North Dakota legislative process, enabling them to actively engage in local governance.
- They developed a heightened awareness of the state's economic landscape, facilitating informed decision-making in their roles as community leaders.
- Participants experienced personal growth, reporting increased self-confidence and enhanced self-awareness.
- Additionally, they successfully completed 13 community leadership projects, further solidifying *RLND's* impact on North Dakota's communities.

Through *RLND's* efforts, we are fostering generations of capable leaders poised to address the challenges and opportunities facing our state with determination and expertise.

Quotes from Stakeholders:

- "RLND gave me confidence as a leader within my community and my workplace. Being able to observe different leadership styles helped me understand how diverse groups can work together and that everyone has their individual strengths."
- "The *RLND* experience has been life-changing for me. It not only helped me grow personally but professionally as well. I learned a lot about myself since this program made me step out of my comfort zone. I am now more confident to speak in public and to step up to more of a leader."
- "*Rural Leadership ND* has given me the bravery and connections necessary to execute [my] monumental project from start to finish."
- "*RLND* has widened my perspective of how rural North Dakota is a team effort between farms and small communities to bring a high quality of life to our rural state."

OHIO



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Impact Statement Key

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

THE OHIO STATE UNIVERSITY

Impact Indicators

Total program participants	33,398
BIPOC* participants	4,952
Number of participants reporting new leadership roles and opportunities undertaken	223
Number of business plans developed	6
Number of community or organizational plans/policies developed	26
Number of community or organizational plans/policies adopted and/or implemented	72
Number of businesses created	9
Number of jobs created	233
Number of jobs retained	2,222
Dollar value of volunteer hours leveraged to deliver programs (Independent Sector value)	\$48,249
Dollar value of organization and/or community-generated volunteer hours (based on Independent Sector hour value)	\$31,787
Number of volunteer hours for community generated work	1,544
Dollar value of efficiencies and savings	\$272,447
Dollar value of grants and resources leveraged/generated by communities	\$28,265,475
Dollar value of resources leveraged by businesses	\$707,203

* Black, Indigenous, and people of color

2023 Impact Statements

■ Survey Helps Communities Keep Track of Business Well-Being

A healthy and vibrant local economy depends on the well-being of local businesses. Local business health can be fostered via a community-led *Business Retention and Expansion (BRE) Program* led by Ohio State University Extension, Community Development.

A *BRE* program involves a dialogue with local businesses to better understand their issues and concerns. Such efforts can show the community's appreciation for business contributions and enable local leadership to identify economic development strategies informed by local business as well as inform the community at large about individual and community-wide business concerns. Another aspect of the program is the *Business Retention and Expansion* survey.

In 2023, Ottawa County, Wisconsin, engaged with OSU Extension to conduct the *BRE* survey and learned the following:

- 24 of the 75 businesses who responded to a *BRE* survey reported that they plan to expand, modernize, or renovate their businesses and/or equipment with most firms (54%) planning to add jobs within the next 1-3 years.
- The number of new employees expected to be added is estimated to represent 222 new full-time equivalent jobs (FTE). The addition of 222 new jobs is estimated to contribute \$12,110,988 in personal income to the local economy. Jobs are projected to be added in the hospitality/tourism, retail, healthcare, financial, construction, transportation, warehouse, and education service sectors.
- As a result of the *BRE* survey, the community has learned that 75 businesses plan to retain between 1,031 -2,143 FTE jobs and create an estimated 222 new FTE jobs. The retention of 1,031 – 2,143 FTE jobs is estimated to contribute between \$56,245,174 and \$116,909,222 in personal income to the local economy.

■ Strategic Planning Provides Path for Future

Strategic planning can offer businesses and organizations informed, well-considered goals and actions to help better manage their resources more effectively, understand and achieve their priorities, and create a cohesive, strongly supportive vision of the future.

In 2023, the Citizens National Bank (CNB) of McConnellsville worked with OSU Extension Community Development to develop strategic priorities focused on technology, employee training and professional development, and capital investment.

While many small community banks are joining larger financial institutions, CNB is proud of its rural community roots and is moving into the future with a new mission and vision that includes exciting, cutting-edge technologies to better serve their customers, flexible financial solutions designed to compete with larger institutions, and a commitment to continue to foster building community assets and connecting people to the things that matter most. These goals and the actions that support them are a result of a months-long process of strategic planning.

■ Addressing Plastic Pollution in Ohio Waterways

Plastic pollution is wreaking havoc on the natural environment. To help reduce the issue of plastic pollution, Ohio State University Extension, Community Development is piloting two trash removal technologies, BeBot and Pixie Drone.

The equipment is used to remove trash from coastal and inland waterways and sandy beaches and support workforce development opportunities for underserved youth. Through media, waste characterizations, trainings, and outreach and education events, this project has garnered \$313,000 in funding, removed 808 pieces of trash – primarily small microplastics, used 142 volunteer hours with 70 volunteers, and educated 404 people during 13 outreach events.

OHIO



CENTRAL
STATE UNIVERSITY

Extension

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Wilberforce, Ohio
1890 Land Grant Institution
<https://www.centralstate.edu/academics/science/extension>

CENTRAL STATE UNIVERSITY *2023 Impact Statement*

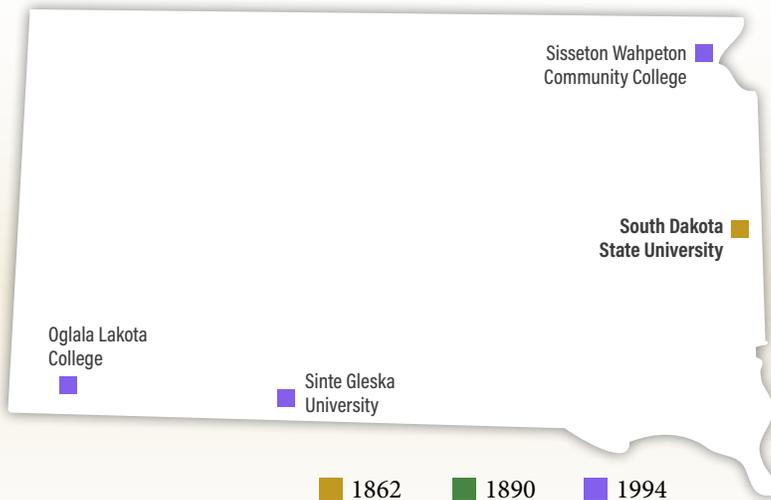
FY 2023 Highlights

The Community and Economic Development team works to create pathways to success by empowering communities, organizations, and individuals through education and technical assistance.

With a focus on agriculture and economics in both urban and rural areas, the primary aim of this program is to address community development and revitalization, small business development, and personal achievement.

In FY 2023, CED implemented five programs: Beginning Farmer; CED Office Hour Live; Agribusiness Development; and Step-Up Workforce. The programs offered 102 activities and engaged 710 participants. Education was provided to meet the needs of the targeted audience including small business owners, agribusiness owners, and local community members. Topics included small-business development and entrepreneurship, agricultural entrepreneurship, farm financial management, community planning and development, criminal record expungement, money management, and workforce development.

SOUTH DAKOTA



SOUTH DAKOTA STATE UNIVERSITY

Impact Indicators

Total program participants	1,256
BIPOC* participants	29
Number of participants reporting new leadership roles and opportunities undertaken	28
Number of business plans developed	29
Number of community or organizational plans/policies developed	9
Number of community or organizational plans/policies adopted and/or implemented	9
Number of businesses created	2
Number of jobs created	3
Number of volunteer hours for community generated work	930

* Black, Indigenous, and people of color



SOUTH DAKOTA STATE UNIVERSITY EXTENSION

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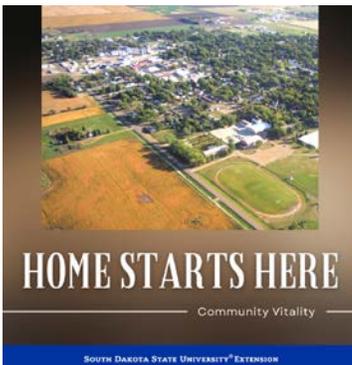
Impact Statement Key

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

2023 Impact Statements

Podcast Seeks to be a Catalyst for Positive Change in South Dakota Communities

The *Home Starts Here* podcast, developed by SDSU Extension's Community Vitality team, provides insight, inspiration, and empowerment in the realm of community development. Through its carefully curated content, this podcast was designed to be a catalyst for positive change, creating a deeper understanding of the intricate dynamics that shape our homes and communities.



Home Starts Here episodes:
<https://extension.sdstate.edu/home-starts-here>

By delving into topics ranging from a vinegar museum to music festivals, the podcast serves as a vital resource for individuals, families, and organizations seeking to enhance the vitality of their rural communities. Its diverse array of guests, including experts, policymakers, and community leaders, offer valuable perspectives and practical strategies for addressing the challenges and seizing the opportunities that lie ahead.

The *Home Starts Here* podcast serves as a bridge between academia and the broader community, translating research insights into actionable knowledge that can drive real-world impact. By disseminating best practices and innovative approaches, it empowers listeners to become agents of change within their own communities, fostering a culture of collaboration and resilience.

Beyond its immediate audience, the podcast has the potential to ripple outwards, influencing regional, national, and even global conversations around community development and sustainability. Through strategic outreach and partnerships, its reach can extend far beyond the borders of South Dakota, inspiring individuals and organizations across the world to embark on their own journeys toward building vibrant, resilient communities.

Home Starts Here information / listen to episodes:
<https://extension.sdstate.edu/home-starts-here>

2023 Energize! Exploring Innovative Rural Communities Conference

Wessington Springs hosted the state's 2023 *Energize! Exploring Innovative Rural Communities Conference* facilitated by SDSU Extension's Community Vitality Team. Nearly 120 community leaders from across South Dakota gathered to gain new perspectives and share ideas in revitalizing rural communities.

Energize aims to re-energize communities with populations smaller than 5,000. Breakout sessions were led by people from rural communities who shared stories of overcoming challenges and finding success. Resource partners serving rural communities provided exhibits and attended sessions.

The *Energize* conference brought an estimated \$20,222 to the Wessington Springs economy during the two-day event. The economic impact was distributed in a variety of ways; local food vendors catered meals, lodging establishments housed attendees, and attendees shopped in local businesses.

Dacia Mitchell, a Wessington Springs resident, wanted to open her own store but wasn't sure how. She attended *Energize* in May and by August, she opened her boutique. She credits stories and resources shared at *Energize* as the final boost she needed to create a business plan and open her store.



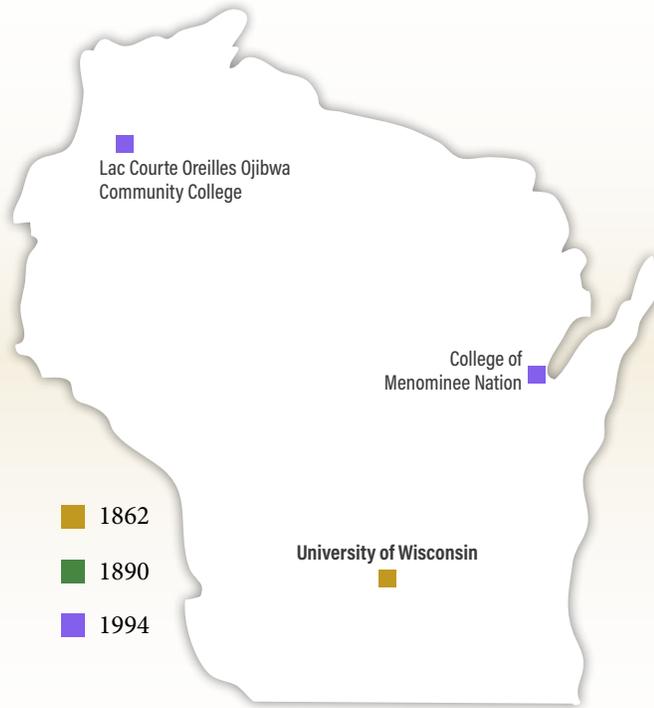
Dacia Mitchell opened Modest Moxie, a clothing boutique, in Wessington Springs, SD after attending the 2023 Energize conference. (Photo courtesy of Dacia Mitchell)

Lyssa Bruzelius, Missouri River Tourism, said *Energize* is one of the most beneficial conferences she has ever attended. She walked away from the conference feeling energized and excited.

Of those who completed post conference surveys,

- 100% reported that *Energize* provided opportunities to build relationships,
- 100% reported increased knowledge of business and community resources,
- 100% reported that *Energize* inspired new and creative ways their community can foster economic growth, and
- 100% reported they will make changes based on what they learned at the conference.

WISCONSIN



Extension
UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN-MADISON

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UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN-MADISON

Impact Indicators

Total program participants	17,313
BIPOC* participants	1,379
Number of participants reporting new leadership roles and opportunities undertaken	187
Number of business plans developed	12
Number of community or organizational plans/policies developed	69
Number of community or organizational plans/policies adopted and/or implemented	33
Number of businesses created	9
Number of jobs created	14
Number of jobs retained	1,400
Dollar value of volunteer hours leveraged to deliver programs (Independent Sector value)	\$96,866
Dollar value of grants and resources leveraged/generated by communities	\$60,000

* Black, Indigenous, and people of color

Impact Statement Key

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

2023 Impact Statements

Multiple Organizational and Leadership Development Programs Provided in 2022

Wisconsin Extension colleagues worked alongside Indigenous and Latine community members to co-construct leadership programs that center culture and language. These new programs blend Extension's experience delivering leadership development, with community members' knowledge of the needs, leadership concepts, and cultural teachings that have relevance and meaning for them and other members of the Indigenous and Latine communities.

The first of these programs, *Tribes Lead!*, is a multi-state and multinational effort. Program partners include the University of Wisconsin-Madison Division of Extension, Michigan State University, and a Wise Council. The Wise



Participants in a Tribes Lead! program

Council included members of several different Tribal Nations. Recognizing that cultural teachings and Indigenous knowledge provide an interconnected pathway for systems of governance, combating social and economic inequities,

and addressing critical issues, the partners shaped a unique leadership development program. Participants in *Tribes Lead!* explored cultural teachings and Indigenous methodologies with the goal of preparing to make positive changes in their community. *Tribes Lead!* was initially delivered in the summer of 2022 and had 20 participants.

The second program is *Elevando Wisconsin*. This bilingual leadership program was co-constructed with Latine leaders. The program aims to foster leadership skills and expand participants' networks. The eight-session curriculum includes content on practicing equity and inclusion, and keeping cultures alive. Every session is delivered in Spanish and English simultaneously and includes participant exploration and discussion of the day's topics. *Elevando Wisconsin* has been delivered four times since the Fall of 2021, reaching 86 individuals. The majority of participants identify as Latino/a, Latine, Latinx, or Hispanic. *Elevando Wisconsin* was delivered twice in 2023, reaching 27 individuals from 13 Wisconsin counties. In 2023, approximately 44% of participants indicated Spanish as their preferred language. Five members of the Latine and Hispanic community served on the co-construction team, and eleven community members served as guest speakers/instructors.

UW-Madison Extension Responds to Address State's Broadband Disparities

Many Wisconsin communities face below-average access to broadband, reflecting insufficient infrastructure and barriers for underserved households. Extension responded to the broadband disparity through a series of strategic efforts focusing on broad-based education. Key among these efforts was a series of 2-day workshops in various regions across Wisconsin, educating community leaders on broadband planning and providing a platform for meaningful discussions on addressing broadband access barriers and gaps. These workshops brought together representatives from nearly all of Wisconsin's 72 counties, including participants from strategic state and regional partners such as regional economic development organizations, regional planning commissions, and internet service providers (ISPs).

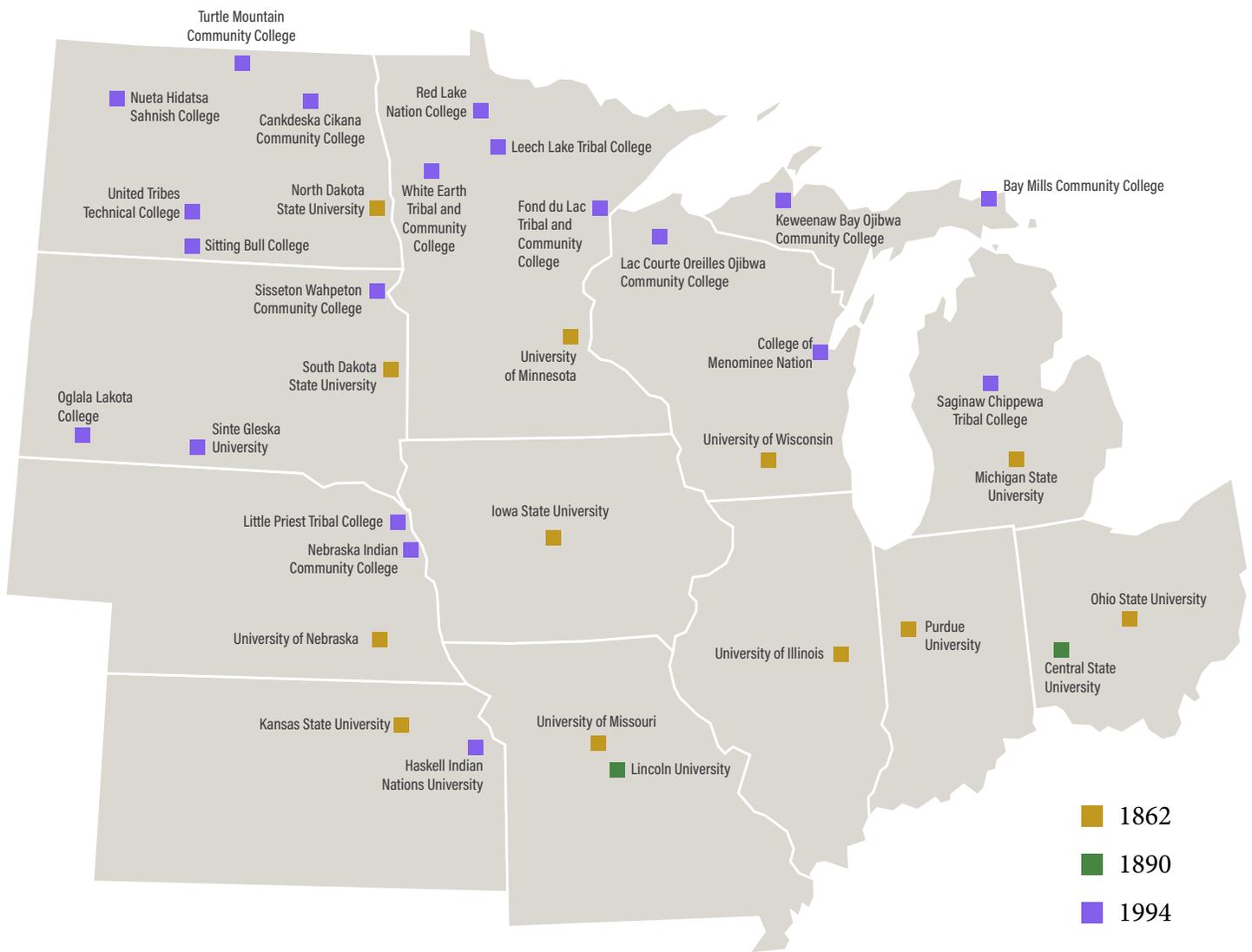
In the early part of 2023, Extension worked with the Public Service Commission's (PSC) Wisconsin Broadband Office (WBO) to administer county and tribal surveys to better understand broadband in the state. These surveys were an attempt to gather critical data on existing broadband access, serving as the foundation for targeted broadband expansion strategies and informing strategic, targeted outreach efforts for a newly formed Extension broadband team.

Over this same period, Extension hosted a series of eight webinars, facilitating knowledge sharing and collaboration among various stakeholders involved in the 'Internet for All' initiative. These sessions covered topics ranging from financing and funding to the use of the newly launched Broadband Toolkit, a valuable resource for communities, ISPs, and organizations involved in broadband expansion efforts including challenges of data and mapping, funding, planning, and public-private partnerships.

Working with the WBO digital equity team to gather insights and stories from various unserved or underserved populations and communities, Extension explored how Wisconsinites use the internet and what barriers they experience, and identified community assets that are valuable for internet access, affordability, and adoption.

These collaborative efforts, spanning virtual meetings and workshops, toolkit modules, and research, have been fundamental in maximizing broadband investments across the state. These activities are also laying the foundation for Extension to support broadband deployment throughout Wisconsin in the years to come. Extension will continue to provide broad educational opportunities across the state and will provide targeted, place-based support that ensures Wisconsin communities can increase broadband access and achieve Internet for All in the state.

Land Grant Colleges and Universities in the North Central Region



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Michigan

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Minnesota

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Missouri

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Nebraska

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Ohio

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