



**NORTH CENTRAL  
REGIONAL CENTER**  
FOR RURAL DEVELOPMENT

**NEWS RELEASE**  
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**Contact:** Mary Breidenbach  
mabreide@purdue.edu

## **New NCRCRD Fellow Addresses Region's Childcare System**

*North Central Regional Center for Rural Development's newest Fellow brings an innovative approach to address the region's fragmented and complex childcare system for children aged 0 to 5.*

*West Lafayette, Ind.* – The North Central Regional Center for Rural Development (NCRCRD) recently awarded their second 2024 Fellowship to Sarah Kennedy, an Extension Field Specialist in Community Development specializing in Early Childhood Impact with University of Missouri Extension.



Sarah Kennedy, MPH

The purpose of the Center's Fellow program is to allow awardees to collaborate with the NCRCRD and pursue research and/or outreach projects that benefit the North Central Region (NCR). Drawing on her early childhood Extension work, Kennedy's Fellow project seeks to create a toolkit of strategies for NCR communities to utilize in addressing their early childcare system.

Kennedy will build the strategic toolkit by leveraging the survey results of the [NCR-Stat: Caregiving Survey](#) and transforming the data into action. Developed by previous NCRCRD Fellows, the NCR-Stat: Caregiving Survey, whose primary focus is understanding caregiving dynamics and their impact on economic development in the NCR, will serve as a foundation for Kennedy's research, development, and pilot of the childcare toolkit across NCR communities. Through this effort Kennedy is also seeking to establish a model for communities of practice, collaborative learning, and knowledge-sharing among stakeholders throughout the region.

Kennedy began her one-year Fellowship with the Center in September and as with all NCRCRD Fellows will share her findings upon completion with the broader North Central Region in an NCRCRD-hosted webinar.

For more information about Kennedy's project, please visit <https://ncrcrd.ag.purdue.edu/funding-opportunities/current-fellows/>

### **About NCRCRD's Fellows Program**

The NCRCRD Fellows Program supports approximately two Fellows each year. Only faculty or staff from Land Grant Institutions in the North Central Region are eligible for the program. NCRCRD Fellows collaborate with the NCRCRD (in person or virtually) to pursue research and/or outreach that benefits the North Central Region. The normal period of appointment is one year. An NCRCRD Fellow is awarded \$25,000 which can include salary, fringes, and travel.

NCRCRD is now accepting Fellow proposals for 2025 (start date September 2025) and encourage others to submit projects. If interested, please read the Fellow proposal guidelines (PDF):

<https://ncrcrd.ag.purdue.edu/wp-content/uploads/2024/05/NCRCRD-Fellow-RFP-2025.pdf>

All NCRCRD Funding Opportunities:

<https://ncrcrd.ag.purdue.edu/funding-opportunities/grants-and-fellowships/>

NCR-Stat: Caregiving Survey:  
<https://ncrcrd.ag.purdue.edu/ncr-stat/>

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*The North Central Regional Center for Rural (NCRCRD) is one of four Regional Rural Development Centers in the United States. NCRCRD's work links the research and educational outreach capacity of our region's 34 land-grant universities with our region's communities, local decision-makers, entrepreneurs, families, farmers, and ranchers to help address a wide range of development issues unique to our 12-state region. NCRCRD promotes regional collaboration by elevating the research and extension programs in our region; offering grant opportunities to support new and ongoing regional research, extension, and integrated activities; establishing a North Central Region dataset to encourage regional exploration; and creating networking opportunities through webinars, sponsorships, and making introductions between our partners. For more information, please visit <https://ncrcrd.org/>.*

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