



NORTH CENTRAL REGION COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT EXTENSION IMPACT REPORT 2025



**SOUTH DAKOTA
STATE UNIVERSITY**



SOUTH DAKOTA



**SOUTH DAKOTA STATE
UNIVERSITY EXTENSION**

Location: Brookings, SD
[https://extension.sdstate.edu/
community](https://extension.sdstate.edu/community)



3,528



**EDUCATIONAL
CONTACTS**



**\$130
THOUSAND**

**GRANTS & RESOURCES
generated by communities**

526



**Participants completed
SKILL DEVELOPMENT
TRAINING**

IMPACT INDICATORS

Educational Contacts	3,528
Number of community or organizational plans/policies developed	6
Number of community or organizational plans/policies adopted or implemented	3
Number of participants reporting new leadership roles and opportunities undertaken	10
Number of volunteer hours for community generated work	350
Dollar value of organization and/or community-generated volunteer hours based on Independent Sector hr value	\$12,177
Dollar value of grants and resources leveraged/generated by communities	\$130,000
Number of participants completing skill development training programs offered through Community Development Extension	526
Dollar value of grants and other resources received by Community Development programs	\$16,000
Number of Community Development full-time equivalents (FTEs) — i.e., FTEs funded by Extension specifically for Community Development Extension programming.	4.0

IMPACT STATEMENTS

2025 Energize! Exploring Innovative Rural Communities Conference – South Dakota

The 2025 [Energize! Exploring Innovative Rural Communities Conference](#) reaffirmed its role as a powerful driver of rural vitality South Dakota. Hosted May 6–7 in Platte, South Dakota, the seventh annual event convened 150 community leaders, volunteers, and local champions to exchange ideas, strengthen networks, and gain practical tools for advancing local development efforts.

Keynote speaker Rebecca Udem, founder of Growing Small Towns, alongside South Dakota-based presenters, delivered sessions grounded in real community experience. Breakouts highlighted actionable strategies in areas such as rural tourism, fundraising, volunteer engagement, and leadership development. Survey responses — 66 total, with 54 fully



2025 Energize! attendees

completed — showed strong appreciation for the conference's practical, energizing content. Participants emphasized the value of peer learning, noting that the opportunity to share successes and challenges sparked new ideas and renewed motivation.

The conference also generated measurable benefits for the host community. Attendee spending contributed an estimated \$56,916–\$68,850 to the local economy, supporting hotels, restaurants, retailers, and service businesses.

Energize! continues to demonstrate lasting impact. Forty-five percent of attendees had participated in previous years, and many credited past conferences with helping them launch arts initiatives, support youth entrepreneurship, secure grants, and organize community events. Nearly two-thirds of returning participants reported that insights gained from Energize! directly contributed to bringing new funding into their communities.

The 2025 conference strengthened this momentum. As participants return home equipped with new ideas, connections, and resources, the ripple effects of Energize! continue to expand — building local leadership, enhancing community capacity, and fueling rural innovation across South Dakota.

Growing Local Opportunities Through Grant Writing – South Dakota

Community grant writing workshops held in Arlington and Rapid City equipped 30 participants with practical skills to pursue competitive funding and strengthen local initiatives.

The [Beginner's Guide to Grant Writing workshops](#) covered the fundamentals of strong grant proposals, including narrative development, SMART goals, scope-of-work planning, use of data and community evidence, and strategies for identifying appropriate funding opportunities. Participants also heard directly from funders, gaining insight into how applications are reviewed and what makes proposals stand out.

Of the 30 attendees, 25 completed a post session survey. Respondents reported significant gains in their ability to locate grants, navigate databases, and apply core writing techniques. One participant noted learning “how to write SMART goals, identify a team, define a scope of work, write narratives, and research grants,” while a community organizer described the workshop as “very informative” and valuable for their organization. More than two-thirds of participants rated each topic as very informative, and all others indicated they learned something new. Nearly all respondents (95%) planned to apply the skills in future proposals, and 90% said they would recommend the workshop to others.

A follow up survey conducted several months later demonstrated early, measurable impact. All respondents had actively searched for grants since the workshop; six had submitted applications, and four had successfully secured funding. These awards totaled \$120,000, with individual grants ranging from \$8,000 to \$65,000. These outcomes show that the workshops not only increased knowledge and confidence but also directly contributed to new funding for community projects, strengthening organizational capacity and expanding local opportunities.



Participants attending a South Dakota State University Extension's Grant Writing Workshop.