



# Extension Makes a Difference 2017 North Central Regional Center for Rural Development

State 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. The states collectively developed this report based on in-state action. Each partner university selected a subset of the indicators for reporting. The following table presents the most commonly used indicators. Thus, the impacts of our educational programs reported here, while impressive, are conservative estimates.

*More than \$202  
Million  
of impacts and 14,344  
jobs created or saved*

States reported value of volunteer hours, as well as dollar efficiencies and savings, bringing the total impact to \$202M. Full details broken down by state, are available at: [http://ncrcrd.msu.edu/ncrcrd/state\\_extension\\_leader\\_section1](http://ncrcrd.msu.edu/ncrcrd/state_extension_leader_section1). Our impacts stem from innovative, science-based approaches developed in partnership with our stakeholders. The programming associated with these impacts varies according to community needs and the creativity of university-based and other partners. To provide an idea of the types of programming used to generate our impacts, we provide several examples.



**2,474**  
Participants reporting new leadership and opportunities undertaken  
*11 states reporting*



**718**  
Community or organizational plans/policies developed  
*10 states reporting*



**1,192**  
Community or organizational plans/policies adopted and/or implemented  
*10 states reporting*



**746**  
Businesses created  
*7 states reporting*



**615**  
Jobs created  
*10 states reporting*



**1490**  
Jobs retained  
*7 states reporting*



**\$14,578,428**  
Dollar value of grants and resources leveraged/generated by communities  
*11 states reporting*

## Extension programs that make a difference



**Mercer County Better Together (MCBT):** Guided by University of Illinois Extension, focused on civic engagement and organizational development. Throughout the county, Extension worked with community organizations to host 11 community forums, with nearly 800 county residents attending. Community volunteers helped facilitate meetings, raise funds, promote the process, analyze data, and collect stories from residents about their history in Mercer County. Extension helped establish an organizational structure for MCBT that included 501 c(3) certification, the development of bylaws, the establishment of a board of directors, and a plan for a continuing funding mechanism for the organization.



**Community Food Systems:** ISU Extension CED partnered with the ANR Extension Local Foods team to deliver the Community Food Systems program. The Community Food Systems program promotes public interest through engagement with community leaders, leading to a holistic design incorporating community values around food. The program uses agricultural urbanism tactics to promote local food system revitalization in communities. The toolkit has the potential to improve food security, create resilient communities, promote social equity, increase environmental diversity, and build financial sustainability for individuals and communities.



**Beginner's Guide to Grant Writing** program continues to garner interest across the state of Indiana. This program is showing strong signs of helping to deepen connections and build positive relationships among Extension and local governments, nonprofits, and community foundations that can lead to future collaboration and outreach for communities across Indiana.



**Progressive Community Vitality Processes:** K-State Research and Extension has created a strategic approach to help communities help themselves to preserve, create, and improve their future. These programs include: First Impressions (community needs assessment); Kansas PRIDE (community improvement and empowerment); Board Leadership and Grant Writing (community capacity building) and Ripple Effects Mapping (collective impact measurement).



**Government and Public Policy:** When the state of Michigan created policy changes and new enabling legislation allowing communities to more proactively enact fiscal sustainability and local planning initiatives. MSU Extension's Government and Public Policy work team developed and delivered more than 130 separate educational workshops. Nearly 3000 local government officials representing municipalities in 77 of Michigan's 83 counties attended the workshops that were delivered within six months of the legislative changes.



**Strengthening Civic Engagement to Promote Water Quality:** University of Minnesota Extension has worked with Minnesota residents to address water quality concerns such as wastewater and stormwater management, agricultural runoff, and aquatic invasive species. This work focused on technical solutions. In 2011, leadership and civic engagement educators for Extension's Center for Community Vitality began to collaborate with the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA) to help local water quality professionals and volunteers better work with the public on more authentic civic engagement efforts. This effort allowed Extension to test a five-stage Civic Engagement Model recently developed by its leadership and civic engagement team. As a result, water quality civic engagement cohorts formed in several areas of the state.



**Creating Economic Viability:** Many rural communities in Missouri have yet to recover from the recession of 2008. Efforts to improve economic vitality have been focused on developing local and regional economic development collaborations, enhancing the capacity of organizations and communities to make decisions and broaden their base of support, and providing the specific business development education programming that will help business succeed and create local wealth.



**Volunteer Reception Center:** When disasters happen in Nebraska volunteers play a critical role in the clean-up effort. But managing these volunteers is no small task. In partnership with the Nebraska Emergency Management Agency, Nebraska Citizen Corps/Medical Reserve Corps, the Corporation for National and Community Service and Nebraska Extension, a pilot course was delivered in Dewitt, Nebraska that focused on how to plan for and operate a Volunteer Reception Center (VRC) to manage volunteers. The session incorporated a hands-on simulation in setting up and managing a VRC and was designated as a FEMA recognized training.



NDSU Extension provides training for elected and appointed leaders to help them feel more confident to serve on boards, councils, and committees. Last year, multiple community leadership courses were provided, including a one-day Lead Local boardsmanship training, a five-session Growing Leaders series, and an 18-month Rural Leadership North Dakota program. Participants report feeling better prepared and more willing to serve after completing any of NDSU Extension's leadership training programs.



**Community Economics** efforts are designed to inform decision-makers with real local data that enable the development of effective strategies and policies to effect change. Examples of such applied research in 2017 include an examination of Ohio's maple industry, a survey of manufacturing, distribution and service-oriented wages and benefits; and partnerships with community development officials in three communities across Ohio to engage in business retention and expansion survey programs. Such activities help inform employer benchmarking and the direction and focus of workforce training efforts.



**Strengthening Businesses:** Providing opportunities for young people to stay in rural communities experiencing population decline is a priority in South Dakota. Businesses and entrepreneurial ventures provide the job and work opportunities for young people to stay in rural communities. The SDSU Extension Community Vitality program works to strengthen businesses and promote entrepreneurship in South Dakota. "Small Business is Everybody's Business," "Small Business Basics," and "Secrets of Service: Improving Customer Satisfaction".



**Sustaining forestry resources:** As a direct result of Cooperative Extension engagement, the Wisconsin Forest Practices Study (WFPS) generated new knowledge about the forestry sector and challenges faced in the economics of sustainable forestry.



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