



**NCRCRD**

North Central Regional Center  
for Rural Development

**Extension**

**Makes a  
Difference  
2019**

# North Central Extension Community Development Programs Full Report

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, so the impacts of our educational programs reported here, while impressive, are conservative estimates.

**More than \$267M+  
of impacts and  
43,279 jobs  
created or saved**

The value of volunteer hours, as well as dollar efficiencies and savings, brings the total impact to \$267M. Details 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.

## Businesses and Jobs

1,058	422	4,494	38,785
Business plans developed	Businesses created	Jobs created	Jobs retained
10 states reporting	9 states reporting	8 states reporting	8 states reporting

## Dollar Value

\$702,746	\$2,820,937	\$6,202,165
Volunteer hours leveraged to deliver programs	Organization and/or community generated volunteer hours	Efficiencies & savings
8 states reporting	9 states reporting	6 states reporting
\$25,699,786	\$232,277,200	
Grants & resources leveraged/generated by communities	Resources leveraged by businesses	
11 states reporting	7 states reporting	

## Participation

2,061	1,635	1,355	121,402
New leadership roles and opportunities undertaken	Community or organizational plans/policies developed	Community or organizational plans/policies adopted/implemented	Volunteer hours for community generated work
11 states reporting	12 states reporting	10 states reporting	10 states reporting

States reported the value of volunteer hours, as well as dollar efficiencies and savings, bringing the total impact to \$267M. 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.

# Extension programs that make a difference



## [Waunakee Housing Task Force Results in Proposed Subdivision and Apartment Building Serving Lower to Moderate Income Households](#)

The Waunakee Housing Task Force was a community-led study group that collected and analyzed data, hosted subject matter experts, evaluated local needs and made policy recommendations that were adopted by the Village of Waunakee Board of Trustees, and that resulted in the proposal of affordable rental housing development and affordable owner-occupied subdivision

In the Summer of 2018, and after several decades of rising home prices and increasingly higher median household incomes, the Village of Waunakee found itself in the crossfire between a developer seeking to demolish a block of modest homes for a luxury apartment building, and residents who aimed to preserve their working-class neighborhood. The controversy raged over the course of the summer, exposing tensions between residents who favored continued high-end development and those who favored controls on development and home prices.

Over the course of one year, Kristin Runge and Sharon Lezberg led a citizen advisory group in an extended data-focused study of affordable housing in the Village of Waunakee. They drew on a number of subject matter experts from the Division of Extension (Kures), Department of Agricultural and Applied Economics (Deller), Department of Planning and Landscape Architecture (Marcouiller), and Applied Population Lab (Veroff), campus faculty without extension appointments (Paulsen & Landgraf), as well as community experts in cooperative housing and land trusts. Additionally, they conducted two surveys—one of the community members and another of commuters to Waunakee—in order to determine the perceived need for housing among residents and commuters, and to measure attitudes related to affordable housing. The data and subject matter information was used for a series of guided decisions that resulted in a Task Force Report to the Village of Waunakee Board of Trustees.

As a result of this work, there has been a major shift in housing priorities in Waunakee. Veridian Homes used the final report as a basis to propose a mixed-income housing development designed to provide “missing middle” housing options, targeting homeowner households with incomes at 60-80% and 80-100% of area median income as described in the Task Force’s final report. A second developer, Cohen-Essey, has also begun planning the redevelopment of a property on Main Street as a subsidized rental building, targeting residents with incomes at 20-60% of area median, which was a group also identified in the Task Force report. Both projects will break ground in 2021.

The village has institutionalized the work accomplished by the Housing Task Force by disbanding an economic development committee and creating in its place a Community Development Authority charged with addressing issues related to both housing and economic development in a more holistic manner.

## **Building Multicultural, Multigenerational Networks for Vibrant Community Events: Brodhead’s Dia de los Muertos Community Celebration**

The Green County Extension office runs a Youth in Governance (YIG) program that provides youths with an opportunity to develop practical leadership and problem-solving skills, to increase community awareness, and to participate in representative government. The overall goal is to include the youth voice in community issues and concerns while fostering the development of confident, independent, and motivated youth leaders.

In early 2019 Solomon learned that alumni of Green County’s YIG program had hopes of a Dia de los Muertos community celebration in downtown Brodhead. Knowing that concerns existed about declining participation/attendance rates in Brodhead’s downtown Autumn Fest, Solomon connected these YIG alumni with community stakeholders. As a result, in fall 2019 Brodhead held the first Dia de los Muertos community celebration in Green County.

According to one-on-one evaluations, “without extension [the Brodhead Dia de los Muertos celebration] would not have happened.” The connections Solomon initiated expanded networks, engaged a previously disengaged segment of the community, and built volunteering and leadership capacity. New people stepped up who wanted to be a part of the event. It’s estimated that between 50-75 people stepped up to volunteer (in a city of approximately 3,300). Typically, community members wait before getting involved. After this event,

proactive steps were taken to ensure a similar event happens in the future. Additionally, organizations that were not previously involved with downtown events stepped up and contributed.

The young adult leader who proposed the event reported that the Hispanic community in Brodhead valued their involvement in the event and, as a result, felt more involved with the community. Additional feedback from other Hispanic community members confirmed they felt more included and more confident about their future involvement in community events. Additionally, the Dia de los Muertos event increased awareness of how the community is diversifying culturally and linguistically. Non-Hispanic community members reported that the event was a great way to interact with and learn about Hispanic culture.

At this time, there are no specific numbers regarding the economic impact of the event. Anecdotally, attendance rates stayed strong (as compared to previous downtown events), and event participation was diversified. The event brought people new to Brodhead to the downtown area and attracted people who had never visited the city before—individuals who spent money in downtown.

Finally, coaching from the extension's Language Access Team led to multilingual marketing for the event. Lessons from this coaching have had positive ripple effects, including creating more multilingual event marketing and information about the county.

### **[UW-Madison-based Farm2Facts toolkit fuels data-driven approach to farmers market outreach increasing market participation of SNAP participants](#)**

Quality data is essential for assessing the impact and identifying programmatic strengths and opportunities. Alfonso Morales, an extension specialist and professor in the University of Wisconsin – Madison Department of Planning and Landscape Architecture led the team that developed the Farm2Fact (F2F) toolkit to help farmers' market organizations and managers understand how their markets are performing across a variety of indicators, including average years in farming per vendor, average number of visitors per market day, and total dollar amount of sales through incentive programs such as the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), the Women Infants and Children Program (WIC), and the Senior Farmers' Market Nutrition Program (SFMNP) (USDA AFRI grant 2014-68006-21857). The resulting information can be used to inform decision-making about vendor recruitment, market siting and scheduling, farmers' market outreach, and other factors important to a market's success.

Market managers can also use the information from the F2F Toolkit to better understand the audiences they are serving and their impact on the local economy more broadly. For example, in 2018, Morales' lab and F2F Toolkit was subcontracted on a USDA-funded farmers' market promotion grant to collect baseline data on indicators such as economic impact and nutrition incentive program participation rates for nine farmers' markets in Wisconsin. Of the nine markets, local partners in Brown Deer showed the greatest interest and capacity in using the baseline data to guide future farmers' market outreach efforts.

Morales' team subsequently obtained a grant from the Wisconsin-based company American Family Insurance to determine whether local strategic relationship-building could increase the use of federal nutrition program benefits at the Brown Deer farmers' market. Through the grant from American Family Insurance, administered by UW Madison, the Village of Brown hired a Brown Deer resident to serve as market access coordinator to build relationships in the community and promote the use of nutrition program benefits at the market. Morales and his students provided training, site visits. The regular project calls to support the market access coordinator in identifying outreach priorities, such as daycare centers, the Department of Public Health, and other locations where mothers collected SNAP and WIC checks, as well as community events and senior citizen facilities to spread awareness of the market's Senior Farmers' Market Nutrition Program. The market access coordinator visited a total of 32 unique locations within the community, including schools, senior facilities, government committees, food pantries, laundromats, and apartments.

As a result of these targeted outreach efforts, SNAP sales at Brown Deer Farmers Market increased from \$512 to \$4,397.75 between 2018 and 2019. In other words, after the implementation of the pilot program, participation in the most common incentive program increased by over 750%. Additionally, using F2F and the Local Foods Impact Calculator (<https://calculator.localfoodeconomics.com>) allowed the Morales lab to estimate the overall economic contribution of the market on the local economy.

On sales of \$22,450, the local economic impact is estimated to be approximately \$35,000. In 2020, Morales plans to apply for new funding to expand the market outreach coordinator model to other markets in the Milwaukee metro area.

The Brown Deer Farmers' Market Community Outreach story exemplifies how UW-Madison Division of Extension initiatives can incorporate data-driven tools developed by integrated faculty with place-based projects rooted in relationships to effect positive changes in communities, such as enhancing the affordability and availability of fresh food, which are key components of household food security. Specifically, the Morales Lab and the Farm2Facts Toolkit made it possible to benchmark farmers' markets' performance so as to inform the implementation of targeted interventions, and to measure their impact. As this case demonstrates, targeted outreach to incentive program participants in Brown Deer, WI resulted in an increase in purchases of fresh, local farmers' market products among SNAP, WIC, and SFMNP recipients, and by extension, increased sales for the farmers' market vendors.

## **I** ILLINOIS

Extension

COLLEGE OF AGRICULTURAL, CONSUMER  
& ENVIRONMENTAL SCIENCES

### Local Government Education Webinars

County, township, and municipal employees, agency staff, as well as officials elected and appointed to local offices across the state of Illinois, need timely and relevant information, as well as easily accessible professional development opportunities, to effectively lead and serve their communities and counties. In 2019, University of Illinois Extension provided programming on issues such as state and federal legislative updates, fiscal planning, food systems, small business development, economic development, disaster preparedness, the 2020 census, minimum wage, economic diversification and renewable energy for rural coal communities, broadband infrastructure funding, and policy/management issues relating to climate change. Each session includes a presentation and time for questions and answers. More than 1600 participants attended programs in 2019. Information about upcoming webinars and archived webinars is available at <https://go.illinois.edu/LGE>

## **K-STATE**

Research and Extension

Non-profits, educational, and government organizations struggle to find the resources they need to fund priority projects. According to The Foundation Center, foundation dollars available for all subjects in Kansas increased 462% from 2009 to 2015. [Grant writing workshops](#) were created to help communities and funders with the same priorities to find each other to create change. Individuals and organizations in every Kansas community want to make a difference; when they come together in grant writing workshops, they discover shared goals and untapped resources to make miracles happen.

From November 2016 to October 2019, local agents hosted 44 grant writing workshops in all four quadrants of the state to 1,258 people. Participants ranged from the Perry Volunteer Fire Department to Pratt Public Schools, from Norton Public Library to the Humboldt Humanity House. Participants learn about new sources of data to document their community's needs, sources of grant funding, how to develop a grant budget, and how to evaluate and report their success. By working together in groups they gain new support networks, lose their fear about asking for money, and get feedback to sharpen their skills. Fifty percent of grant workshop participants have never written a grant before; 29% have written local grants; 14% have written federal grants, and 7% identified as "other experience." In 2019, 27 workshops were scheduled; we expect to continue as long as there is interest.

Participant reports at grant workshops:

- 95% have greater confidence to write a successful grant.
- 99% discovered new sources of data to document community needs.
- 99% learned new sources for finding grants.
- 93% have greater confidence to evaluate and measure their grant success.
- 89% gained confidence in writing a grant budget.



Of the participants who responded to the survey 6-12 months after their grant workshop (32% response), \$11.9 million of grants were written—\$6.7 million (56%) of which were successful—to fund leadership, education, prevention, emergency assistance to low-income families and non-profits, art programs and exhibits, health and nutrition programming, culture of health, parenting classes, rent assistance, park improvements, and recovery classes. To put that into perspective, one grant expert predicted that "An organization should expect a success rate of between 50 and 60 percent if submitting

applications to a combination of existing and new funders. This will be much lower if it is funding to a new source or an organization with less structural or fiscal soundness.”

## Success Stories

After attending a grant writing workshop in Shawnee County, two participants reported their success:

Juliet Swedlund, the director of the Topeka Doula Project, wrote four grants for \$60,000 and was fully funded for all four. Swedlund said, “The workshop contributed to my ability to speak about my cause and give a compelling narrative.” Using the same skills, Juliet applied for two scholarships and received \$1,550 of free training. She said, “The grant writing workshop gave me all I needed to take the next step forward with confidence.” The Topeka Doula Project offers volunteer, evidence-based doula support to teen mothers, incarcerated and reintegrating mothers, and low-income mothers and their families.

Dorothy Bryan is the president of the Auburn City Council. She said, “Auburn has been stagnant for so long; my sister and I decided to change that. Coming to the grant workshop spurred me on. I thought, ‘I can do this!’ ” She wrote her first grant for fitness park equipment at the park and received \$55,000 from Momentum 2022. The process included making a presentation to a seven-member panel. At the end of the presentation, the panel chair said, “It was your passion that got you the grant. We knew you could do it.” Bryan said, “That equipment is busy morning, noon, and night.” Next, she went to Free State Electric. She knew that every household in Auburn gets their electricity from Free State and could see from her research that they’d never given any money to an Auburn project. Bryan saw the largest grant Free State had ever made was for \$5,000, but she said, “I just went for it. I asked for \$14,500, and I got it all.” That will buy playground items for the younger kids so that they can play nearby. In the last report, Bryan said, “We were able to do more with the grant than we promised. We squeezed in a drinking fountain with a dog waterer.” These successes are causing others to contribute their ideas and resources to make the park better. Bryan has her eye on two more grant possibilities and says, “I’m just getting started!”

## MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY | Extension

As part of the federal Tax Cut and Jobs Act, states across the country designated Opportunity Zones (OZ) to spur investment in targeted economically-distressed communities. To maximize individual benefits, investors had to invest in a qualified Opportunity Zone by the end of 2019. At the request of Michigan’s state housing and economic development agencies, MSU Extension (MSUE) quickly developed a three-hour interactive workshop that was delivered to six regional locations across rural Michigan. Nearly 700 elected officials and business leaders attended the trainings which included customized local Opportunity Zone maps for the attending communities. Participants also received a sample marketing piece, which included demographic data, for communities to use in attracting investments. MSU Extension’s rapid response was lauded by state agencies who further used MSUE OZ information to populate a state website on the program.



UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA  
**EXTENSION**

### [Changemakers for Opioid Recovery](#)

Like other states, Minnesota has experienced an alarming increase in drug overdose deaths. The crisis impacts rural Minnesotans across income and educational divides. Recovery research highlights the importance of an ecological approach to recovery which ensures that individual behavior changes are supported by their broader family, community, and work environments.

Extension programming is mobilizing rural Minnesotans to create more supportive communities for those who are trying to recover from addiction and are vulnerable to relapse. With opioid-focused education grants from NIFA and the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, the University of Minnesota Extension programming reached four northeast Minnesota counties and two tribal communities in 2019. Leadership and civic engagement educators utilized the recovery capitals framework to build and sustain a recovery-friendly community. They conducted changemaker retreats for community members who are willing to make their communities more supportive of people in recovery. These retreats strengthened leadership confidence and competence and made \$1,000 mini-grants available to support the implementation of projects.

Changemaker retreats moved willing community members from knowledge and intention to ideation and action. Sixteen ideas received mini-grants. Here are some of these locally-driven projects:

- Projects are changing local systems. For example, one changemaker is changing the child protection system to allow parents to stay connected to their children during recovery. Another is changing emergency room protocols so that medical staff provide safe, informed, and non-judgmental treatment of people who present with opioid addiction. Other changemakers are creating therapeutic foster homes for children of addicted parents, a school-based curriculum that focuses on self-discovery and wellness, and mobile client services that meet addicts wherever they are located.
- Projects are creating safe and welcoming spaces in which those in recovery can find support. For example there are arts-focused events, celebrations for recovering addicts and their children, a sober house, a yoga class, and a car repair shop that repairs cars for those in recovery free of charge.
- Other initiatives will expand community education about addiction and recovery.

### [Making it Home](#)

Southeast Minnesota is taking an all-hands-on-deck approach to the region's workforce shortage. The University of Minnesota Extension supports those efforts in many ways, including managing Making it Home initiatives in regional small towns like Spring Valley.



Young professionals are finding welcoming homes in vibrant rural communities where they can raise families and remain through retirement. Extension Community Vitality educators guided Spring Valley through the Making it Home program, hosting local discussions to create a community-wide vision for attracting new residents. They trained six facilitators for local study circles. Those facilitators brought together school children, retirees, teachers, newcomers, and others to talk about what's great about Spring Valley, and how assets can be leveraged to attract more residents.

After a final action forum, the community got to work. They're creating a dynamic website featuring Spring Valley's assets and amenities. The site will give newcomers all the information they need when they move. The new Downtown Alliance is mobilizing to promote downtown as a destination. The town is also brainstorming ideas for a downtown lot that was left empty after a fire years ago.

Making it Home programs are being implemented throughout Minnesota. The program is an adaptation of the Marketing Hometown American program created by extension teams in Nebraska, South Dakota, and North Dakota. Evaluations of these programs showed that projects created because of the program consistently strengthen community capitals across the board, leveraging new social capital, generating financial capital, creating built capital, and supporting local, natural, and cultural assets.



### [Helping Missouri Businesses and Communities Grow and Prosper](#)

The University of Missouri Extension collaborates with 18 other universities and organizations to manage the Small Business Development Center program and to provide support to small businesses across the state. Over a three-year period (2017 through 2019) a \$29.9 million investment resulted in

\$354 million in capital funding, \$1.06 billion in procurement awards, and a \$1.3 billion increase in sales for the 38,693 clients who participated in the programs. In addition, their efforts helped more than 700 new businesses get started.

Two new curricular programs were piloted in 2019 focused on increasing the capacity of communities to effectively organize themselves around key issues, engage the broader community in developing a broad-based community understanding of that issue, develop plans, and to identify specific programs in extension that can help them reach their goals. "Passport to the Arts" is focused on developing and understanding the potential of the local arts community and developing a framework for growing the arts in a way that enhances placemaking and community and economic development. The process

engages the community around an arts event or festival that involves the community with local artists and seeks community input into the development of a vision and plan for the arts in that community. Missouri EATS is a similar process that helps a community better understand its local food system and uses a community meal as a forum for developing a vision and plan for their local food system. It provides a road map for additional extension programming that can help a community meet their goals.



### [Latino Small Business Education Program](#)

University of Nebraska Extension's Livable Communities Issue Team conducted a series of programs for Latino small business owners in coordination with the state department of revenue, SBA, non-profits and financial institutions. The program included developing educational materials, delivering workshops and webinars, and tapping into social media. A total of 436 learners attended workshops, including 63 sessions over 161 hours. A Facebook group grew participation from 383 to 466 participants, and programs were highlighted in Spanish-speaking TV, radio, and newspapers.

### [Rural Grocery Store Development](#)

Loss of community grocery stores in rural communities has become a nagging issue in many small towns, and Nebraska is no exception. In the village of Stapleton, Nebraska Extension coordinated a development project for the community's Cooperative Market and Deli. A \$10,000 market research grant provided by a faith-based group was matched with a \$1,050,000 co-op membership campaign to save one grocery store and to help the owner consider purchasing another store in a nearby community. A Nebraska Extension Community Vitality Educator helped the owner with deal-flow considerations and market research and put the owner in touch with other resources that were useful to business and market development.



### [Technical Assistance and Training for Community Facilities](#)

The University of Nebraska Extension partnered with a county economic development group and a non-profit to help Gage County communities assess needs and plan improvements related to community facilities. Rural communities in the county are working on 20 community facility improvement projects, according to a survey of 100 leaders from eight communities. The project has included a significant emphasis on youth engagement. A survey of 859 students in grades 6 through 12 indicated that 81% plan to attend college, yet 55% could see themselves living in the area in the future. Among student respondents, 72% said they would volunteer if asked, but only 15% said any adult had ever sought their input on how to make their community better.



### [Keokuk Community Child Development Center](#)

On September 28, 2018, the largest licensed childcare center in Keokuk, Iowa, closed its doors, leaving more than 100 families with nowhere to take their children for daycare. According to Iowa Child Care Resource and Referral, of the estimated 1,400 children under the age of nine living in Keokuk, only 15% were served by a registered childcare slot. Statewide, there is a shortfall of more than 350,000 childcare slots across the state.

In response to the sudden closure and the already severe shortage of childcare slots in the area, Shelley Oltmans, executive director of the Keokuk Area Chamber of Commerce and ISU Extension and Outreach community development specialist, convened a group of community leaders and consulted with existing childcare providers to identify a strategy to increase access to affordable, quality childcare. This effort resulted in the establishment of a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization with the mission of opening a new licensed center. The non-profit was able to secure \$90,000 through grants and partnerships to fund the Keokuk Community Child Development (KCCD) Center, which opened on April 22, 2019.

In addition to alleviating the shortage of childcare slots in the area, the opening of the KCCD Center inspired Iowa Women's Foundation, partnered with Iowa Child Care Resource and Referral, and an

architect to design a “child-care center in a box,” a six-part kit modeled after the Keokuk experience.

During listening sessions conducted by the Iowa State University Vice President for Extension and Outreach John Lawrence, the lack of quality, affordable child care was identified as one of the top five problems affecting the ability of communities in Iowa to thrive. The economic impact of the dearth of childcare providers is a workforce shortage: Parents either don't enter the workforce, or they leave it because of childcare issues. In addition, 45% of working parents miss approximately nine days per year because of childcare problems, affecting productivity.

### [Leading Communities](#)

To assist Iowa communities in building their leadership capacity, ISU Extension and Outreach Community and Economic Development created a new community leadership program in 2018. Leading Communities: A Place-Based Leadership Program is designed to help residents develop, increase, and sustain the local leadership efforts that are necessary to address community issues. A highly interactive and hands-on program, Leading Communities is taught over six sessions with each session covering a key competency for promoting community leadership and engagement:

- Understanding your community
- Identifying local issues and opportunities
- Making community decisions
- Building social capital for community development
- Working together effectively
- Making it happen—mobilizing resources for community action

Sessions are designed to provide participants with skills to bring community members together in order to create change for the good of the community. Educational materials are learner-centered, and structured to create a more collaborative learning environment that actively involves participants in the learning process. Program evaluation strategies are embedded in each session. In FY19, Leading Communities was taught to 231 individuals in 12 communities (11 counties and 1 city).

### [Gateways for Growth](#)

During the summer and fall of 2019, Iowa State Extension worked with the City of Cedar Rapids and key partners to develop a local Gateways for Growth Welcoming Plan. The purpose of this effort is to ensure that foreign-born residents have the education, preparation, and connections necessary to reach their ultimate potential. Nearly 50 individuals took part in the creation of this plan serving on the steering committee or in one of three working groups.

Their work was supported by secondary data as well as focus groups and interviews conducted by Iowa State University Extension and Outreach. These focus groups engaged with immigrants living and working in Cedar Rapids, as well as business owners, human resource professionals, and other service providers. The final plan is the outcome of cross-sector collaboration, including representatives from local government, business, education, faith-based and non-profit entities, as well as other community leaders. The plan details specific action steps that the community can take to increase the attractiveness of Cedar Rapids to an increasingly global workforce.

### [Rural Housing Readiness Assessment](#)

ISU Extension and Outreach Community and Economic Development Program developed the Rural Housing Readiness Assessment (RHRA) for communities focusing on education, technical assistance, and action planning around community housing. It is designed to help communities struggling with the fundamental question, “Where do we start?” when seeking to address issues of housing affordability, quantity, and quality.

The RHRA is designed to be a useful program for any community wrestling with housing challenges. For communities that have recently conducted their housing needs assessment, the RHRA can help them define priorities, build necessary networks, and generally transition to proactive

implementation. For communities without housing needs assessments, the RHRA provides a ground-up process for reaching actionable results. The Iowa Economic Development Authority is providing financial assistance to a limited number of communities who wish to participate in the program over the next two years.

### **Latino Community Assessment – Council Bluffs, Iowa**

ISU Extension and Outreach Community and Economic Development conducted an investigation into the needs of the Latino community in Pottawattamie County for Centro Latino of Iowa. The goal of the study was to aid the Centro Latino of Iowa in planning and developing programming, as well as strategically being able to assist their clients and the community with emerging issues in the county. CED prepared a report to guide the Centro Latino of Iowa in directing resources as the organization explores pathways for growth and sustainability.

The report focuses on four key themes: Community belonging, housing, workforce development and entrepreneurship, and education. Understanding the Latino community's sense of belonging and attachment to their home in Pottawattamie County is the crucial foundation to understanding the context of the successes and challenges they face in the other three areas of emphasis.

Homeownership rates can provide a picture of one of the main indices of population stability and community investment. Housing quality and access, on the other hand, reflect to what degree the broader community is welcoming Latinos. Availability of employment, coupled with the low cost of living in Iowa, are the primary forces that have driven Latinos to choose Pottawattamie County.

However, barriers such as transportation and child-care access hamper fuller participation in the workforce. Finally, Latino parents have difficulty navigating the educational system, communicating with the school district, and understanding the steps required to help their children graduate to post-secondary education. The report recommends that the Centro Latino of Iowa formalizes and strengthens its role by considering three areas of growth: Expansion of facilities, implementation of a service navigator role, and being a base for community organizing.

### **Early Childhood in Iowa**

Early Childhood Iowa contracted with ISU Extension and Outreach Community and Economic Development (CED) to gather input from parents and service providers about the quality, accessibility, and collaboration of services for children from birth to age five. CED staff facilitated 22 parent and service provider focus groups throughout the state, analyzed transcripts of the focus groups to identify key takeaways and themes, and surveyed additional parents and service providers for their input.

The final report was written and submitted to ECI in August 2019. Key takeaways from the focus groups are: 1) access to child-care services is the most significant problem cited by participants, 2) parents have left or lost jobs due to childcare issues, and 3) childcare is too expensive for families, particularly those with more than one child. Early Childhood Iowa used the information from the CED report to inform its 2019 – 2022 strategic plan.



SDSU Extension Community Vitality offered its ["Energize! Exploring Innovative Rural Communities"](#) conference for the second year in a row, this time in the low population region of northwest South Dakota, in a town called Lemmon.

It is rare to find a conference focused on rural community strengths and challenges held in a rural community. People working in rural places tend to wear many hats, and often have small budgets for travel. This causes feelings of isolation and burnout. The ENERGIZE! Conference offers a local feel, with most speakers working on real-life issues easily relatable to rural professionals and volunteers. Nearly all ENERGIZE! speakers live and work in rural communities of under 5000 residents. The Conference inspires leaders, energizes organizations, and enhances local businesses.

In 2019, a survey conducted by the Black Hills Knowledge Network was distributed in conference folders as well as electronically. Thirty-nine of 111 attendees completed the survey for a response rate of 35%. The survey measured conference satisfaction, offered space to list ideas for the future, and

targeted questions in help measure the economic impact of the conference on the host community.

It is an established fact that networking opportunities lead to meaningful relationships. Nearly 40% of respondents to the survey mentioned networking in their positive comments and 84% agreed that the conference gave them opportunities to build relationships with others outside of their organizations.

Respondents agreed that the conference gave them implementable strategies they could use in their community:

- 67% of respondents agreed that ENERGIZE! inspired new and creative ways for community economic growth.
- 58% agreed that the Conference increased their knowledge of community development tools and resources.
- 56% of respondents agreed that the Conference increased their knowledge of business tools and resources.

The total economic benefit for the community of De Smet was \$24,785 in 2018, and the impact for Lemmon was \$35,907 in 2019. This was calculated through participant responses to surveys and finding an average.



### [Ohio State University: Solar Electric Investment Analysis for Small Farms](#)

#### **Objective**

As a strategy to control or reduce electricity costs, many small farms are considering investments in solar electric projects to power their farms. An overarching goal for the Solar Electric Investment Analysis for Small Farms project is to increase farmers' knowledge of solar development in order to guide informed decision-making with future energy investments. To achieve this goal, our team will train and educate extension educators, Natural Resource Conservation Service, USDA Rural



Development, rural lenders, and accountants servicing small farms on best practices for conducting a solar electric investment analysis, helping farmers make investment decisions that offer the greatest overall benefit for their farm operation.

#### **Outcomes and impacts**

The first-year webinar series offered 12 webinars with 746 registered participants from nine separate states, including six states from the north central region. The program evaluation suggested that participants felt the webinar series was valuable to them, as 77% of evaluations indicated they were "extremely satisfied" with the webinar series. In addition, when asked to place a dollar value on the new knowledge learned from the webinar, several participants suggested \$1,000, while the combined average value was \$521. A summary of short- and medium-term impacts includes:

- Responses from program evaluation data indicates that program participants estimate they will share the information with an average of 290 farmers each. Based on this estimate, programming resources from this professional development series could reach over 84,000 farmers nationwide.
- Program evaluation and survey data from our first-year webinar series reported about the actions of program participants and the farmers they have advised. Program participants indicated that farmers they consulted had taken action on solar decisions, with 41 farmers installing systems, 142 receiving quotes, 157 planning to take action soon; with six deciding that solar was not right for them.

### [Rural Leadership North Dakota](#)

The 18-month Rural Leadership North Dakota program is designed to prepare and develop effective leaders to strengthen rural North Dakota. The program consists of 10 seminars that include leadership study and location-related subject matter. In addition, each participant must complete a project demonstrating their leadership skill development in their community. One of the participants of Rural Leadership North Dakota (RLND) took on the major task of restoring and renovating a historical building in the rural community of Belfield, North Dakota. This restoration of the Belfield Theater and Performance Center helped to enrich, entertain, educate, and engage the community through exceptional cinema and performing arts. The RLND participant wrote grants and solicited donations to put on a new roof, update the projection equipment, add safety measures, and make sure the facility was ADA compliant.



Ultimately, the revitalization of the historic theater created a regional cultural center and gathering place for community connectivity. The Rural Leadership North Dakota program has a profound ripple effect and is making a difference in rural communities across North Dakota.

### [Building Tomorrow's Leaders](#)

Building Tomorrow's Leaders is a comprehensive program geared for high school students, which aims to strengthen leadership skills, build confidence in youth adults, and empower students for involvement in school and civic organizations. Over 600 students participated in the eight-module program in 2019 and increased their confidence in public speaking, learned to collaborate better with others, and they now understand how to see things from a leader's perspective. They were also required to complete a project that would benefit the school or community. One school administrator wrote in the final evaluation, "The Building Tomorrow's Leaders program has been an integral tool for helping us to cultivate leadership amongst our students. By utilizing this program with our Student Ambassador Club, we have empowered an extremely diverse group of students to come together to learn about leadership and then put their knowledge and skill into practice."



### [Enhancing the Value of Public Spaces: Creating Healthy Communities](#)

In Indiana, community leaders make decisions about public spaces such as parks, trails, farmers' markets, schools, and main streets every day that affect the health and wellness of the community. The Enhancing the Value of Public Spaces: Creating Healthy Communities (CHC) Signature Program is conducted by a multidisciplinary team of Purdue Extension professionals from Health and Human Sciences, Nutrition Education Program, Community Development, Agriculture, Natural Resources, and Illinois-Indiana Sea Grant. CHC combines data collection and analysis with inclusive public deliberation to design high-quality action plans for meaningful, sustainable improvements in public spaces. The spaces are focused on community health through community design, coupled with information resources, case studies, and strategies to enhance food access and active living via community-based programs and improvements to public spaces. The goal is to strategically guide policy, systems, and environmental changes relevant to how high-value public spaces promote health. In 2019, several communities prepared with a CHC public spaces action plan were boosting economic development, improving quality of life, and creating a healthier place for individuals and families. For example, in Fayette County and Connersville, their two-year process engaged over 64 community members and representatives from key agencies and stakeholder organizations generating 482 volunteer hours for community work, totaling \$11,631. This group implemented part of the plan in the form of a

community garden known as “the Oasis.” One participant commented, “We can take some pieces from different designs and incorporate them into the lot and make it more visually appealing and more suitable for outdoor activities, not just for growing produce. We want it to be a green space people can use.”

### **[INwork: INnovate. INvest. INspire: Skills for Tomorrow's Workforce](#)**

Purdue Extension developed and implemented INWork – INnovate, INvest, INspire – Skills for Tomorrow’s Workforce, which teaches high school youths life skills for the working world. To increase the number of qualified applicants for Indiana jobs, Purdue Extension joined forces with local educational institutions to offer INWork throughout Indiana. A total of 180 youths completed the program offered in 10 counties. Youths participated in a minimum of six hours of hands-on career readiness activities. Sessions included: SMART goal setting, decision making, personal accountability, professional dress, teamwork, problem-solving, conflict resolution, time management, safe and professional social media, fiscal literacy, career exploration, preparing resumes and cover letters, and interviewing.

As a result of INWork, high school youth recognized the importance of being on time for work (100%), doing their job well (100%), being trusted by their employer (99%), and of respecting others in the workplace (99%). Youths (90%) reported that they understand the importance of having a professional image on social media. For future careers, 87% successfully explored career options, and 81% were able to identify a career they would like to pursue. Looking ahead beyond high school, 79% plan to take a four-year university course the year after high school, 72% identified jumping into the workforce as another viable option within the first year of high school completion, 70% plan to attend a community college, and 52% plan to attend vocational college. By completing INWork, these youths showed positive development, preparing themselves to work after high school with skills that will help them succeed.

### **[Beginner's Guide to Grant Writing](#)**

Many people working in non-profits and local governments find themselves in positions in which they need or want to write grants but have little or no training to do so. Writers who understand the grant writing process and can communicate their ideas clearly to potential funders can leverage funding to improve the quality of life in Indiana communities. In 2019, Purdue Extension’s Beginner’s Guide to Grant Writing (BGGW) was delivered 15 times to 203 participants. Each workshop is hosted by an extension educator and taught by a team of two trainers. Two full days of instruction and activities are geared toward novice grant writers with an idea or a program in mind that will help their community. Participants learned how to write effective grant proposals, navigate the grant process, develop ideas into winning proposals, identify potential funders and understand the full proposal development, submission and review process. Participants bring an idea and leave with a proposal outline and all resources needed to expand the outline into a full proposal. Participants return several weeks later with their full proposal ready for a peer review, and to learn strategies for securing funding. During the workshop, they polish their proposals, get feedback from grant writing professionals, and search for grant funds with a short-term subscription to a grant database. Of the 104 BGGW participant survey, 76 (73%) respondents reported that as a result of BGGW, they had submitted proposals to funders; 51 proposals received funding; \$3,907,459 in grant funding was awarded; 44 participants took on new leadership roles; 10 organizations engaged in strategic planning; 106 partnerships were formed; 25.5 jobs were created, and 695 volunteer hours were completed (\$16,770.35 value, Independent Sector).

## 2019 Indicators by State

	IL	IN	IA	KS	MI	MN	MO	NE
<b>Educational Contacts</b>	40,837	14,038	9,807	54,898	291,933	16,314	51,882	6,418
<b>Number of racial minority contacts</b>	4,855	2,278	196	-	6,836	1,906	7,509	278
<b>Number of Hispanic contacts</b>	1,192	931	600	-	832	343	1,378	161
<b>Number of participants reporting new leadership roles and opportunities undertaken</b>	104	203	5	-	311	149	206	126
<b>Number of business plans developed</b>	62	607	10	-	310	20	3	11
<b>Number of community or organizational plans developed</b>	36	95	12	1,181	27	28	29	13
<b>Number of community and organizational, policies and plans adopted or implemented</b>	10	59	-	1,045	-	10	13	13
<b>No. of businesses created</b>	33	-	39	-	72	1	257	11
<b>No. of jobs created</b>	-	27	5	-	304	-	3,992	11
<b>No. of jobs retained</b>	-	1	54	-	287	-	32,532	11
<b>Dollar value of volunteer hours leveraged to deliver programs (Independent Sector value)</b>	\$36,452	-	\$73,416	-	-	\$310,312	\$97,469	\$18,775
<b>Dollar value of organization and/ or community-generated volunteer hours (based on Independent Sector hr. value)</b>	\$64,104	\$22,368	\$16,199	\$1,852,893	-	\$515,905	\$56,701	\$41,057
<b>Number of volunteer hours for community-generated work</b>	2,951	953	2,887	79,353	-	18,327	4,068	1,710
<b>Dollar value of efficiencies and savings</b>	\$43,000	-	-	-	\$5,318,775	-	\$20,390	\$504,000
<b>Dollar value of grants and resources leveraged/ generated by communities</b>	\$297,600	\$3,913,460	\$9,608,050	-	\$287,430	\$95,500	\$84,947	\$319,000
<b>Dollar value of resources leveraged by businesses</b>	\$205,754	-	\$9,247,405	-	\$64,328,937	-	\$157,687,604	\$538,000

	ND	OH	SD	WI	Totals	Average	States Reporting
<b>Educational Contacts</b>	2,921	6,784	2,028	38,919	536,779	44,732	12
<b>Number of racial minority contacts</b>	306	640	61	2,747	27,612	2,510	11
<b>Number of Hispanic contacts</b>	33	230	-	772	6,472	588	10
<b>Number of participants reporting new leadership roles and opportunities undertaken</b>	402	373	29	153	2,061	187	11
<b>Number of business plans developed</b>	4	7	-	24	1,058	96	10
<b>Number of community or organizational plans developed</b>	59	51	10	94	1,635	136	12
<b>Number of community and organizational policies and plans adopted or implemented</b>	22	104	7	72	1,355	136	10
<b>No. of businesses created</b>	1	3	-	5	422	38	9
<b>No. of jobs created</b>	5	142	-	8	4,494	449	8
<b>No. of jobs retained</b>	5	5,805	-	90	38,785	3,879	8
<b>Dollar value of volunteer hours leveraged to deliver programs (Independent Sector value)</b>	-	\$22,259	\$5,258	\$138,805	\$702,746	\$87,843	8
<b>Dollar value of organization and/or community-generated volunteer hours (based on Independent Sector hr. value)</b>	\$84,809	\$166,902	\$0	\$0	\$2,820,937	\$256,449	9
<b>Number of volunteer hours for community-generated work</b>	3,335	7,578	240	-	121,402	11,037	10
<b>Dollar value of efficiencies and savings</b>	-	\$256,000	\$-	\$60,000	\$6,202,165	\$886,024	6
<b>Dollar value of grants and resources leveraged/generated by communities</b>	\$103,000	\$9	\$80,970	\$10,909,820	\$25,699,786	\$2,336,344	11
<b>Dollar value of resources leveraged by businesses</b>	\$50,000	\$219,500	\$-	\$-	\$232,277,200	\$25,808,578	7

\*Indicator definitions can be found on page 15.

Data for this report collected by extension systems of 1862 land grant universities located in states highlighted in the NCRCD logo. This report is compiled and published by the NCRCD, a federally and regionally funded center hosted by Michigan State University, which is an affirmative action, equal-opportunity employer.

<b>North Central State 2019 Impact Indicators</b>	<b>Definition</b>
Educational Contacts	Persons who received educational services via face-to-face or live distance-enabled sessions. Persons participating more than once should be counted more than once.
Number of racial minority contacts	Contacts (as above) who self-report as non-white racial status.
Number of Hispanic contacts	Contacts (as above) who self-report as Hispanic or Latino.
Number of participants reporting new leadership roles and opportunities undertaken	New leadership roles may include formal (e.g., board member) or informal (e.g., advocate, group leader). Use attribution principle.
Number of business plans developed	Includes formal business plans and informal strategic changes. Use attribution principle.
Number of community or organizational plans developed	Includes formally adopted plans by official agencies as well as strategies. Use attribution principle.
Number of community and organizational policies and plans adopted or implemented	Includes plans (as above) wholly or partially adopted or implemented. Use attribution principle.
No. of businesses created	New business start-ups or firms that moved into the area. Use attribution principle.
No. of jobs created	New jobs in the area as a result of programs. Use attribution principle.
No. of jobs retained	Existing jobs that were at risk, protected by programs. Use attribution principle.
Dollar value of volunteer hours leveraged to deliver programs (Independent Sector value)	Count hours provided by individuals in executing the program (include volunteer hours required for certification).
Dollar value of organization and/or community-generated volunteer hours (based on Independent Sector hr. value)	Count hours indirectly generated by programs. Example: A person receiving training recruits additional volunteers. Use attribution principle.
Number of volunteer hours for community generated work	See above.
Dollar value of efficiencies and savings	Count savings through improved processes and approaches due to programs.
Dollar value of grants and resources leveraged/generated by communities	
Dollar value of resources leveraged by businesses	Includes loans and investments. Use attribution principle.