

FY 10 11 Awards

Grant Archives

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Contribution of Youth Engagement to the Development of Community Social Capital

April 26, 2011

PI: Calvert, M. (University of Wisconsin)

Co-PIs: Blyth, D. (University of Minnesota), Allen, R. (Hubert H. Humphrey Center Minneapolis), Wise, G. (University of Wisconsin)

Award: \$18,000

Project Abstract: Interest in community youth development and civic engagement is growing. From the community economic development (CED) perspective, we see more and more community change strategies that encourage youth engagement. At the same time, many 4-H and other Extension youth development programs include service learning components and create opportunities for young people to play an important role in community improvement strategies. Yet, CED educators and 4-H educators rarely interact about how youth engagement can support successful community change. We propose to create a bridge between these communities of interest and strengthen the evaluation of youth engagement strategies. We will build on the existing work of the NCERA215 integrated project which emerged from conversations about how 4-H builds individual and community social capital. Prior to our convening, five or more states will collect data on the impact of 4-H community involvement by engaging young people in mapping the impact at the community level using the Community Capitals Framework. Selected states will also pilot triangulation strategies, including interviews and social capital surveys. We will analyze data and the methodology, identify indicators and formulate follow up research designs; explore how strategies from CED might be incorporated in 4-H programming and vice-versa; and expand our understanding of how youth engagement contributes to the community capitals, particularly social capital.

Collaborative Proposal Development for Connecting Farm and Community

April 26, 2011

PI: Conley, D. (University of Nebraska-Lincoln)

Co-PI: Francis, C. (University of Nebraska-Lincoln), Wells, B. (Iowa State University)

Award: \$19,000

Project Abstract: Teams from the neighboring states of Nebraska and Iowa propose to come together in face-to-face meetings and by conference calls for the purpose of developing a funding proposal which builds on our complementary strengths in applied research and Extension programming connecting small and medium sized farms to community. The proposal we develop, will be submitted to the Agricultural Prosperity for Small and Medium-sized Farms competition of the USDA Agriculture and Food Research Initiative will fund work that bridges the social and biophysical sciences and engages staff with Extension, research and teaching appointments. A two-day meeting will include field trips to sites in the geographic area of focus for our proposal: the Omaha-Council Bluffs urban area and surrounding rural counties. Provide time to become better acquainted and to generate a detailed plan of work for proposal development. Our work and subsequent proposal will support rural development in the North Central Region by strengthening the economic, ecological and social foundations for rural development in the food and agricultural sector.

Preparing Youth for an Increasingly Diverse World

April 26, 2011

PI: de Guzman, M. (Univ. of Nebraska-Lincoln)

Co-PIs: Fairchild, P., Potthoff, K., and Cervantes-Guzman (University of Nebraska-Lincoln), Randall, B. and Vetter, R. (North Dakota State University), Becker, J. and Witkoske, T. (Purdue University), and Taylor, J. (University of Missouri)

Award: \$2,000

Project Abstract: With the increasingly globalized workplace, as well as the rapidly shifting ethnic demography of the country, youth today need to develop cultural competency skills that will allow them to think in more global ways and be comfortable with people of different backgrounds. For youth in rural communities, there is an additional challenge of diminishing economic opportunities – prompting many to move outside of their communities as soon as they are able. This planning grant will be used so that project team members can plan a long-term collaborative partnership that will focus on helping youth think globally (e.g., cultural competency) but also to explore and develop opportunities in their own communities (e.g. entrepreneurship). The team will meet; explore potential programs to pursue, and plan and develop funding proposals for future activities.

Great Lakes Land Grant Institutions Tribal Water Resources Summit

April 26, 2011

PI: Robinson, P. (University of Wisconsin)

Co-PIs: Cook, M. (College of Menominee Nation), Zak, D. (University of Minnesota),
and Power, R. (University of Wisconsin)

Award: \$15,000

Project Abstract: Water resources are central to the sustainable growth and development of rural communities across the Upper Midwest. Tribal communities and 1994 land-grant institutions have unique needs and contributions to make to the science and art of water resource management. Given the diversity of needs across the Upper Midwest, we propose planning and hosting a Great Lakes Land-grant Institutions Tribal Water Resources Summit to assess and prioritize tribal water resource issues across the upper Great Lakes Region. The assessment would focus on Michigan, Minnesota, and Wisconsin and would provide a valuable context for enhancing and encouraging integrated water resource research, education, and extension collaborations among 1862 and 1994 land-grant institutions and other partners in the Great Lakes Region. Enhanced collaboration among the 1862 and 1994 institutions on water issues will contribute to both the Sustainable Communities and Leadership Development priorities of NCRCRD. Priorities that emerge from this summit will be woven into larger coordination proposals, such as USDA NIFA Tribal Colleges Research or Extension Special Emphasis grants.

Challenges Facing Small and Medium Sized Entrepreneurs in Emerging Cool Climate Wine Regions

April 26, 2011

PI: Ross, B. (Michigan State University)

Co-PIs: Chaddad, F. (University of Missouri), and Gómez, M. (Cornell University)

Award: \$20,000

Project Abstract: In the last decade we have observed the rapid establishment of new small- and medium-sized wineries in non-traditional, cold-climate wine regions. These rural entrepreneurs include grape growers that have decided to vertically integrate into winemaking and also non-farmer investor-entrepreneurs who have opted for a rural lifestyle. As a result of this entrepreneurial activity, wine clusters are emerging in nontraditional regions such as Michigan, Missouri and northwest New York. These wine clusters might become economic vectors of rural development as they have the potential to foster the development of related industries (e.g., tourism) as is the case of established wine regions such as Napa Valley.

We seek to identify the challenges faced by rural entrepreneurs in these regions with particular focus on economic, business and marketing challenges at two interrelated levels – the firm (i.e., the winery) and the cluster (or region). We are also specifically interested in exploring how collective action by small and medium- sized wineries might assist them in overcoming common challenges and establishing successful wine clusters. Our approach is to conduct an exploratory comparative analysis of the three emerging cold climate wine regions. This analysis will follow a multi-method research design that will include an extensive literature review, a multi-state survey, and mini case studies of small- and medium-sized wineries.

Establishing a Knowledge and Organizational Infrastructure for Rural Design

April 26, 2011

PI: Kinney, T. (University of Minnesota)

Co-PIs: Thorbeck, D. (University of Minnesota), and Borich, T. (Iowa State University)

Award: \$10,000

Project Abstract: Design is a potent tool to help rural communities address existing problems and a powerful aid to help communities prepare for the new economic and social challenges presented by climate change. However, the design and planning fields have historically ignored rural communities. In January 2010, researchers, practitioners, and extension professionals from the Midwest attended the First International Symposium on Rural Design to create a new field to address the challenges above: rural design.

Attendees identified that an organizational infrastructure is needed to nurture this new field and its potential to improve rural quality of life. The PIs propose creating a web-based social networking site to continue the symposium's success in constructing rural design's foundation. The proposed web site will facilitate continuing discussion among attendees, the sharing of resources and research, and collaboration on major grant proposals.

Public Talk, Public Action: Professional Development Community of Practice

April 26, 2011

PI: Wright, W. (Michigan State University)

Co-PI: Hodge, S. (University of Missouri)

Award: \$10,000

Project Abstract: The goal of this initiative is to strengthen the capacity of Extension professionals to work in partnership with the public to design, implement, and learn from citizen-centered approaches that focus on current and emerging contested public issues. We propose to organize a professional development community of practice (PDCoP) to broaden Extension educators' partnership work with local governments, public agencies, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and citizens. This will help to ensure that the collective resources of the community are tapped to address and manage tough public issues. The practical outcome is to make "dialogue and deliberation" (D&D) a common offering—and prominent feature—in Extension educational offerings. We will do this by developing a community of practice among Extension educators across the nation with the use of the web-based Extension educational platform. This effort can help Extension Educators develop the skills to assist communities as they struggle with difficult and controversial public issues such as land use, zoning, health care, bioenergy or economic development. Addressing contentious issues where the public may be divided will require that future Educators have knowledge of and skills in community-based deliberation strategies – ones that are intended to empower citizens to share their voices and to pursue action on the difficult issues having important impacts on individuals, families/households, and communities. The intent of this PDCoP is to help Extension educators gain the set of skills, competencies, and experiences needed to effectively employ citizen-centered approaches as a core part of their Extension engagement activities.

The Impact of Invasive Plant Species on Ecosystem Goods and Services

April 26, 2011

PI: Young, S. (University of Nebraska)

Award: \$5,000

Project Abstract: Invasive plant species can establish in diverse environments and with the increase in human mobility, they are no longer restricted to isolated pockets in remote parts of the world. Cheat grass in rangelands, purple loosestrife in wetlands and common reed in riparian areas are invasive plant species examples common to the U.S. and can be found in monocultures and patches covering many thousands of hectares. Across the world, invasive plant species like water hyacinth, cogon grass, and mile-a-minute weed have choked waterways, altered fire regimes or caused the abandonment of farmland due to their dominating and persistent presence.

Invasive plant species' contribution to ecosystem services is controversial because of the mostly negative relationship that these species have with the native flora. However, their continued dominance in many regions warrants a more thorough evaluation of their impact, both positive and negative, on the ecosystem (see Hershner and Havens, 2008). The use of technology to identify and quantify ecosystem services across the landscape will help in determining their value and the management strategy policies, particularly in areas that include invasive plant species.