



COMMUNITY AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS

Illinois Extension's Community and Economic Development team develops and delivers programs across Illinois to address current issues and community needs. Community and Economic Development educators help community leaders, residents, and communities build capacity to make timely and effective decisions, to use information wisely, and to engage the entire community in working together better.

COMMUNITY ASSESSMENT AND PLANNING

Community Food Systems: Extension staff work to strengthen food systems across the state, so families have the food they need. From growing to access, communities can only be as strong as their access to food. We provide the tools for conducting surveys, assessing opportunities and defining clear paths forward to connect residents with the essential food services they need to be healthy.

Community Matters: Many communities are experiencing planning issues related to growth or decline in population, transportation issues, green space preservation, pollution control, need for housing assessment, and infusion of new industry. To help municipalities and citizens address these issues, we offer you *Community Matters*, a partnership between the [Department of Urban & Regional Planning](#) and University of Illinois Extension. Using a collaborative team process, participants from both the community and university learn from each other to develop and use best planning practices to enhance community livability and sustainability. By planning, designing and implementing, residents can develop a place where people want to stay and will maintain the community they are proud to call home. Through this program, faculty and students engage with team members on community research initiatives.

Community Recreation: Just as water, sewer, and public safety are considered essential public services, parks are vitally important to establishing and maintaining the quality of life in a community. Well-planned parks and recreation systems can serve as a catalyst for economic development. Access to parks and recreation facilities and active transportation infrastructure can increase property values, foster job creation, and provide a foundation for place-based economic development. In partnership with the University of Illinois Department of Recreation, Sport and Tourism community recreation planning class, Illinois Extension can bring together the brain power to plan and implement your community recreation dreams.

Community Survey: Having a well-developed survey process and appropriately designed questionnaire can help shape decision-making and project outcomes that are effective and transparent. Illinois Extension's [Community Survey Tool](#) offers a comprehensive framework for developing and conducting surveys in your community.

Community SWAP: Through the Community Swap program, a team of local residents visits a similar community, incognito and unannounced. During their visit, team members use an assessment guide to take notes that will help them to provide honest and constructive comments about the community to the people who live there. A reciprocal visit takes place by the partner community. The information these teams gather, and the impressions they form, will be the basis for a series of community meetings. The Community Swap process is organized by University of Illinois Extension Educators and Unit Leaders, who help community members address topics such as downtown revitalization, community development, leadership and volunteer development, tourism development, small business management, and economic development.

Customized Planning Process: Illinois Extension can facilitate important strategy sessions to enhance community engagement to get the results you need. Using effective meeting processes and multipurpose tools, we can help people work together in positive and productive ways. Our trained facilitators will help your group voice all ideas, reach consensus, and organize information and ideas for action planning, project implementation, and decision-making. Facilitator training offers participants tools, hands-on practice, and skills to take back to their organization and community. We also provide facilitation services for strategic, comprehensive, organizational or community planning meetings and public hearings.

Disaster Mitigation Planning: As a community leader, we know you juggle many day-to-day responsibilities. Are you prepared for the unexpected? Illinois Extension has been helping communities plan for and recover from disaster for years. Let us help you carry the burden by helping you create a plan that protects emergency workers and residents. Illinois Extension is a founding member of the [Extension Disaster Education Network](#). This collaborative multi-state effort by Extension programs across the country improves the delivery of services to residents affected by disasters. EDEN's mission is to reduce the impact of disasters through research-based education.

ENTREPRENEURSHIP AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Developing Resilient Downtowns: Developing Resilient Downtowns provides a variety of learning experiences that inform successful downtown business development initiatives, with special emphasis on partnerships between public and private organizations.

International Trade for Business Development: Illinois Extension is equipped to gather experts from state and federal agencies to teach business owners and managers about the international trade process. With this programming, Illinois' business owners can prepare to compete - and succeed - worldwide to benefit the local economy.

On the Front Lines for Customer Service: Today's customers are smarter and more discerning than ever. They demand great service. As a result, the people on the front lines of our local businesses, agencies and organizations must stand ready to meet customer needs. Effective customer service helps to ensure the health of an organization, and healthy organizations keep our community thriving. This 10-part educational workshop is designed to help people see the importance of delivering excellent customer service for their individual development as well as for the success of their business and their community.

Small Business Education: One of the goals of Extension's Community and Economic Development team is to help local leaders and would-be business owners build local capacity to successfully create and operate small businesses. To this end, we provide programming and tools which can, among other things, help you assess your small business development needs.

Technical Assistance for Grant Writing: Extension offers a variety of educational materials and workshops to assist local organizations. Resources like the Beginners Guide to Grant Writing workshop, checklists, and NOFO guides help individuals and organizations build competitive, community-focused grant proposals. Introductory guides and consultations are generally free, though a sliding fee scale may apply for intensive technical assistance depending on the size of the organization and the type of grant being pursued.

LEADERSHIP AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT

Age Matters: A participative program that examines the Silent Generation, Baby Boomers, Generation X, and Millennials, and the respective life influences, their varying characteristics and values, and issues that they typically feel strongly about. Discussions and activities during the program help guide your group to understand the different generations regarding your organizational goals. This program helps groups to discover the life influences, values, and purchasing habits that define people from each generation and learn how to use this information to engage customers, employees, and volunteers. Several versions of this program are offered: Age Matters, Workplace Age Matters, Consumer Age Matters, and Volunteer Age Matters.

Connecting Generations: Connecting Generations is a mentoring program that pairs middle and high school students with adults who wish to learn technology (computer basics, internet, e-readers, cell phones, et cetera). Connecting Generations is offered through local libraries. High school students are training senior citizens on computer usage throughout the area. The students receive community service hours and a nice addition to their résumés. The seniors are obtaining education on computers, helping them connect with family and important programs. The library staff is getting relief from doing the training. Win-Win-Win.

Leadership Academy: Created in 1995, the Leadership Academy for County Officials was developed by the University of Illinois in partnership with the United Counties Council of Illinois (UCCI) to provide leadership skills training on issues which are important to county elected and appointed officials. For anyone seeking to manage and lead more effectively, the academy offers a learning network and connection to cutting edge information. The curriculum is designed for county officials who want to explore new ideas and learn practical methods that are relevant to current issues, challenges and opportunities across the state. The interactive sessions are structured to allow participants to learn, share, and apply on a variety of topics both cutting edge and practical.

Poverty Simulation: The Missouri Community Action Network (MCAN) poverty simulation addresses the challenges of living with limited resources and an abundance of stress. The program is designed for 40-88 participants, who will experience a month in poverty as four 15-minute weeks. During that time, they must provide for their family, securing food and shelter. They will interact with community institutions and resource providers to do this. The simulation requires 3-4 hours.

Real Colors: Everyone has a distinct personality spectrum. Real Colors is a fundamentals workshop, where participants will learn about: their personal strengths; the strengths of others; how to build instant rapport with people; effective methods of speaking to different people; how to hear what people are really saying; the different ways individuals process information; and appreciating and valuing the viewpoints of others.