

# 2024 Southern Region Indicators

## Southern Region Community Development Extension Impacts



**60.2 million**

Value of grants or other resources accessed by communities or organizations



**35.9 million**

Value of grants and other resources received by Community Development programs



**22,147**

Participants reporting new leadership roles or opportunities



**578**

New or deepened alliances or networks formed at the community level



**846**

Participants reporting new or deepened community engagement



**2,795**

Participants who completed skill development training programs through Community Development Extension



**1,236**

Contact hours in programs offered through Community Development Extension



**34**

Entities that applied decision support tools



**189**

Community- or organizational-level plans developed



**453**

Plans implemented



**39,804**

Hours contributed by community partners



**9,896**

Businesses or organizations created, retained or expanded



**779**

Businesses or organizations with increased access to financial resources



**25,032**

Jobs created, obtained, or retained



**1,326**

Program participants reporting new or deepened connections with people



**69**

New or expanded collaborations formed within Extension



**14**

Universities that reported indicators



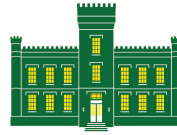
**131**

Community Development full-time equivalents



Alabama

The Upward Alabama Project at Alabama A&M University has driven programmatic innovation to create pathways for economic mobility in the state's urban centers. The project has led to the development of an online self-paced workforce training platform, a virtual statewide business incubator, and a learning management system to support participants. As a result, 135 businesses have been created, retained, or expanded. Over 1,100 individuals have participated in CRD programs to gain additional workforce and small business skills.



### KENTUCKY STATE UNIVERSITY

Cooperative Extension Program

KSU's Extension and Research provided disaster mental health workshops for 148 residents across 10 counties mostly affected by the 2022 Eastern Kentucky flooding. Additionally, mental health training was provided for 217 professionals from 41 counties. This initiative was led by Alethea Bernard, Gill Finley, and Chinonso Etumnu, in collaboration with the Kentucky River Regional Prevention Center Region 12 and the University of Florida. Funding was provided by the 2023 NIFA Rapid Response grant.

Kentucky



Arkansas

The Public Policy Center provides voter education on all statewide ballot measures. For the November 2024 election, Extension distributed 48,415 printed voter guides, had 371,867 web page views and 18,020 YouTube views, and reached many other Arkansans through presentations, social media, displays, yard signs, and other program delivery methods. In the words of one Arkansan, "Great document. I check the CES GUIDE each election cycle. I know it will be factual with no political twist."



With \$112K in funding, Blueprint Kentucky launched a statewide arts preparedness initiative, the Kentucky Heritage Emergency Response Network (KHERN). KHERN trained students and supported 51 organizations through regional workshops on cultural emergency response, recovery, and planning across 13 partner agencies. UK's inaugural National Arts Crisis & Disaster Preparedness Conference drew 126 leaders. As a result, KY counties are adopting new plans and forging partnerships between arts and emergency management to strengthen local response efforts.



Florida

FAMU Cooperative Extension leads a network of community gardens throughout the state to address food insecurity and foster resilience. It provides an opportunity for young people to acquire agricultural skills, elders impart traditional knowledge, and veterans discover a sense of purpose. These gardens increase access to fresh produce, promote environmental stewardship, and build sustainable communities. The gardens cultivate more than food. It provides a space for nurturing skills, preserving legacies, and creating measurable impacts across Florida.



The University of Florida Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences' First-Time Homebuyer Program provides residents with HUD-approved education on affordability, credit, and mortgage readiness. Offered in 26 counties and statewide online, the program reached 1,097 participants—38% purchased homes within a year, 47% chose to wait and strengthen finances, and 26% accessed purchase assistance. By teaching debt-to-income calculations and guiding buyers through complex decisions, the program empowers Floridians to make informed choices and build long-term financial stability.



### MISSISSIPPI STATE UNIVERSITY

Over the past four years, MSU-ES has partnered with Columbus Main Street, Columbus Visitors Bureau, Farmers Market, and local stakeholders to revitalize downtown Columbus. MSU-ES supported the effort through retail trade studies, surveys, marketing, funding, and workforce training in tourism, leadership, and economic development. These collaborative efforts provided capacity for stakeholders as they worked to create a thriving destination with 96% downtown occupancy, demonstrating the power of strategic planning and local investment in community vitality.

Mississippi



**NORTH CAROLINA  
AGRICULTURAL AND TECHNICAL  
STATE UNIVERSITY**

Cooperative Extension at N.C. A&T hosted Grassroots Leadership Academy workshops on civic engagement, organizational development, and emergency preparedness, reaching 120 participants. Agents who attended the academy sessions organized preparedness fundamentals sessions in Robeson/Bladen, Harnett, and Duplin/Sampson counties, engaging 62 citizens. Pre- and post-evaluations showed significant knowledge gains: namely, estate planning scores rose from 2.1 to 4.2, disaster preparedness from 2.3 to 4.2, and heirs' property understanding from 2.1 to 4.1, all on a 5-point scale.

## NC STATE UNIVERSITY

Funded by the North Carolina Tobacco Trust Fund Commission, the Healthy Farm for a Strong North Carolina Agriculture Community Project upholds a core belief: a thriving farm community begins with healthy people. By preventing injuries and diseases, the project maximizes production, stabilizes labor, and enhances the overall well-being of the agricultural community.



**COOPERATIVE EXTENSION**  
*College of Agriculture, Forestry and Life Sciences*

Clemson Extension provides educational outreach and cooperative resource development services via business planning, feasibility studies, and related technical assistance. The SC Center for Cooperative and Enterprise Development (SCCED) and the Freshwater Coast Center for Rural Development (FCCRD), serving rural areas statewide, assisted entrepreneurs and communities receive grant funds and awards. SCCED alone helped secure grants totaling \$2,105,000. Similarly, FCCRD received \$66,500 in public and private investments for support of new entrepreneurial and community development activities.



**TRANSFORMING LIVES,  
INSPIRING GREATNESS**

South Carolina State University's Community Economic Development program empowers communities through targeted technical assistance in entrepreneurship, nonprofit development, and leadership. A recent highlight includes the successful pilot of a Small Business Plan Workshop Series and Competition, designed for limited-resource rural entrepreneurs, agricultural producers, and underserved cooperatives. With a special emphasis on creating and sustaining jobs, participants gained tools to build sustainable businesses and local economic impact. The program awarded \$25,000 in grants to support business development.



**Universidad  
de Puerto Rico**

In response to the need for food security, economic development, and resource conservation, the Community Garden Project, a partnership between USDA-NRCS and PRAES, trains communities in gardening, composting, and rainwater harvesting. Since 2016, over 20 communities have built gardens with technical and educational support. In 2024, the project engaged 200 volunteers, produced about 5,000 pounds of food, generated \$5,000 in sales, and strengthened leadership through workshops led by 20 agricultural and family science Extension staff.



**THE UNIVERSITY OF  
TENNESSEE  
KNOXVILLE**

University of Tennessee Extension is working with the Tennessee Department of Environment and Conservation on providing a community-based economic database and indicators to help determine subsidies, interest rates, and match requirements when issuing grants and loans. Economic impact reports will be developed to support water infrastructure improvements, and a rate analysis will be conducted to improve financial sustainability of utilities while ensuring compliance with federal and state water quality standards.



**PRAIRIE VIEW  
A&M UNIVERSITY**

Prairie View A&M University's Community & Economic Development Unit is supporting individuals with prior justice involvement through digital skills training. In partnership with Google's national Grow with Google initiative, this \$4 million program teaches job readiness, online safety, and entrepreneurship. Delivered through the CED Unit, participants gain tools for employment and launching online businesses. Since 2021, over 90,000 people have benefited, helping open new pathways to opportunity, economic empowerment, and long-term success across communities.



**WEST VIRGINIA STATE  
UNIVERSITY**

Extension Service

Since 2016, the Creative Entrepreneur Fellowship (CEF) has hosted seven cohorts with a total of 38 West Virginia artists. Last year, five of the six CEF program participants reported to have reached their business goal set at the start of the fellowship. Sixty percent said they gained entrepreneurial knowledge in finance and marketing that improved their business practice. Post program surveys reported a decrease in isolation, which we have identified as an issue for WV artists.

North Carolina

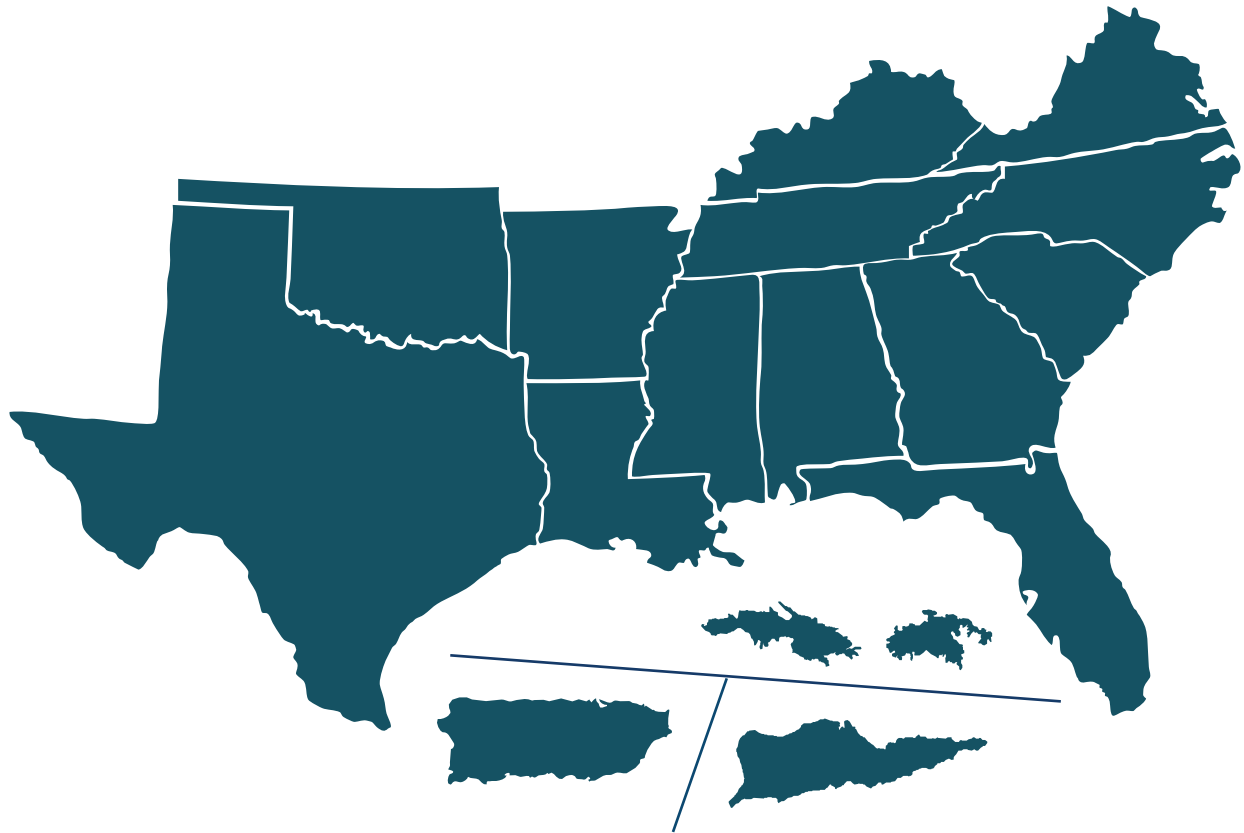
South Carolina

Puerto Rico

Tennessee

Texas

West Virginia



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## CONTACT US:

P.O. BOX 5187

150 LLOYD-RICKS-WATSON • MISSISSIPPI STATE, MS 39762

PHONE: 662-325-3207

[srdc.msstate.edu](http://srdc.msstate.edu)



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