

2025 Southern Region Indicators

Southern Region Community Development Extension Impacts



\$54,069,323

Dollar value of grants or other resources accessed by communities or organizations



\$31,036,078.32

Dollar value of grants and other resources received by community development programs



1,663

Participants reporting new leadership roles or opportunities



3,865

Businesses or organizations with increased access to financial resources



1,385

Program participants reporting new or deepened connections with people



1,495

New or deepened alliances or networks formed at the community level



10,992

Jobs created, obtained, or retained



111

New or expanded collaborations formed within Extension



231

Community- or organizational-level plans developed



430

Number of individuals taking on a leadership role in the community for the first time



592

Entities that have applied decision support tools



8,840

Contact hours in programs offered through Community Development Extension



2,306

Participants reporting new or deepened community engagement



789

Plans implemented



106,144

Hours contributed by community partners



140.3

Community Development FTEs



21,400

Participants indicating improved quality of life



1,000

Businesses or organizations created, retained, or expanded



20,524

Entities that have developed practices or improved practices to protect natural resources



602,885

Participants completing the skill development training programs offered through Community Development Extension



The Arkansas APEX Accelerator, funded in part through a cooperative agreement with the Department of War, provides training and one-on-one counseling to help businesses enter and navigate federal, state, and local procurement systems. This helps strengthen Arkansas' economy by reducing the outflow of contracting jobs and dollars to out-of-state companies and by bringing outside dollars into the state. In 2025, clients received 2,793 contracts valued at nearly \$431.6 million in government contracts.



FAMU Cooperative Extension strengthens communities by celebrating local culture, preserving heritage, and fostering community pride. Through participation in the Apalachicola Emancipation Day Celebration, the groundbreaking of the Apalachicola Museum of African American History, and numerous community festivals and cultural events throughout its service area, Extension connects residents with educational resources while honoring local traditions. These partnerships promote social and economic development, reinforce community identity, and demonstrate FAMU Extension's commitment to empowering Florida communities through outreach and engagement.



Through the Florida Navigator Program, UF/IFAS Extension helped nine Southeast Florida Community Disaster Resilience Zone communities begin implementing local resilience plans and projects. An Extension Agent worked with local leaders to assess needs, connect with technical providers, and pursue assistance. As a result, five Florida cities secured FEMA technical assistance awards, and at least five resilience plans or projects began implementation, including stormwater, wastewater, park resilience, and resilience hub improvements.



During FY2025, FVSU Cooperative Extension's Community Development Program advanced digital inclusion, workforce development, and community resilience across Georgia. The program delivered 900+ hours of workforce technology training, established three Senior Tech Hubs expanding digital access, hosted the inaugural Cultivate AI Conference, and partnered with the Georgia Agricultural Wellness Alliance to host the Change, Progress, and Restoration Mental Wellness Workshop, engaging more than 45 farmers, agricultural professionals, Extension, and Head Start personnel.



KENTUCKY STATE UNIVERSITY
Cooperative Extension Program

KSU's Community Resource Development Program advanced community resilience through a \$12,000 award to expand heirs' property and estate planning education statewide, aiming to help more than 50 participants complete wills and clear two heirs' property titles. The team also led disaster recovery efforts following Kentucky's historic April 2025 floods by assisting residents with recovery resources, while launching new preparedness initiatives, hiring state specialists, and piloting weather station and drone training programs.



Blueprint Kentucky designed and facilitated 21 community engagement sessions and industry-specific focus groups as part of Kentucky's EPA-funded Solid Waste Infrastructure for Recycling (SWIFR) initiative. More than 310 stakeholders shared regional and statewide challenges, priorities, and potential solutions. Their input is shaping new Sustainable Materials Management and Circular Economy plans, helping ensure Kentucky's future waste and recycling systems reflect the needs of those most affected while becoming cleaner and more efficient.



The LSU AgCenter Community and Economic Development (CED) program was relaunched in 2025 and achieved significant first-year milestones. The team delivered Heirs Property Workshops and launched a grant-writing training program impacting a combined total of over 50 participants. Through Community Vitality programming, technical assistance from the team helped local organizations secure more than \$150,000 in funding. CED also initiated Healthy Community Design projects by facilitating community meetings, building coalitions, and developing local planning documents.



SU's Digital Literacy Ambassadors Program engaged four current college students as trained facilitators, providing meaningful workforce development through hands-on experience in Extension education, leadership, and community engagement. The ambassadors delivered digital literacy instruction to over 150 senior adults in East Baton Rouge Parish, helping participants strengthen skills in smartphone use, email, online safety, Zoom, and accessing digital services. This intergenerational approach increased seniors' confidence with technology while preparing student ambassadors with transferable skills for future employment.



Alcorn
State University

The Alcorn State University Extension Program delivers an individualized workforce development program grounded in social work principles to identify and address barriers that hinder skill development and employment success. The program recognizes each participant's unique strengths, challenges, and goals while providing targeted support to build workforce readiness. Participants engage in soft skills workshops focused on communication, conflict resolution, team building, time management, problem-solving, and workplace readiness before advancing to career development training that promotes economic self-sufficiency.



MISSISSIPPI STATE
UNIVERSITY™

The MSU Extension Service Community Development team strengthens MS communities through applied research, leadership development, and education for local and state officials. The team offers energy education for elected officials and professional certification programs for MS tax assessors and collectors. Their work includes educating clients on innovative tourism initiatives such as the Cities of the SEC project developed by a member in the Excellence in Tourism Leadership program and running a statewide study of MS Main Street communities to inform policymakers about the economic contributions of Main Street programs and downtown revitalization.



Agriculture is more than an industry. It's a legacy. FRSAN-South is strengthening farm resilience to ensure future agricultural success. By cultivating strategic partnerships, collaborating with the National 4-H GIS Team to map a comprehensive regional resource clearinghouse, and hosting a 24/7 Concern Line, we bridge the gap between rural isolation and life-saving support. Together with our partners, we ensure those who feed our nation have the strategic resources, connection, and care they need to thrive.



CENTRAL
STATE UNIVERSITY

CSU Extension's Community and Economic Development (CED) program advances the University's 1890 Land-Grant mission by delivering science-based education that strengthens Ohio communities. Through programs focused on financial literacy, growing equity, small business development, workforce readiness, and farm and business management, CED provides practical education and technical assistance that support long-term economic stability. Educators delivered 359 activities and engaged 5,039 participants across 13 counties in the past year, helping individuals, families, businesses, and organizations build stronger and more resilient communities.



LANGSTON
UNIVERSITY

The LU Sherman Lewis School of Agriculture: Building Better Forward: Oklahoma Small Towns Strategic Planning Initiative creates a foundation for long-term economic growth by helping communities identify development priorities, align resources, and establish realistic implementation strategies. Through stakeholder engagement, data-driven assessments, and roadmap development, town leaders gain the tools needed to pursue investment opportunities, strengthen local infrastructure, support business development, and attract new partnerships. The resulting strategic plans position communities to increase economic resilience, enhance quality of life, and advance sustainable growth.



COOPERATIVE EXTENSION
College of Agriculture, Forestry and Life Sciences

To complement their ongoing educational outreach and cooperative resource development services, Clemson Extension specialists recently participated in a dynamic one-day conference called "Growing Connections: Cultivating Partnerships for Controlled Environment Agriculture (CEA)." This USDA-NIFA-sponsored project brought together industry stakeholders, university researchers, secondary school science/agriculture teachers, and other scientists to foster collaborative innovation in CEA. It represents a successful example of building bridges across academia, applied science, extension, and classroom instruction for a resilient agricultural future.



TRANSFORMING LIVES,
INSPIRING GREATNESS

The SCSU 1890 Community Economic Development Program successfully delivered its Rural Small Business Plan Boot Camp to 32 entrepreneurs across the Pee Dee, Coastal, and Upstate regions. Through hands-on training in business planning, financial management, and workforce development, participants strengthened their capacity to launch and grow sustainable enterprises. The initiative awarded \$30,000 in Workforce Development Investment Grants to three regional winners, helping rural businesses expand operations, create employment opportunities, and contribute to long-term economic vitality within their communities.



Universidad
de Puerto Rico

UPR Agricultural Extension Service implemented a support program to strengthen the leadership of volunteers in the municipalities of Camuy, Hatillo, and Quebradillas. Through 31 workshops, 23 leaders built strong support networks, positively impacting 575 students. This effort boosted mental health, increased community entrepreneurship, and created a solid foundation for ongoing, long-term shared leadership and collective action, as participants expressed that "the group was there for me when even my family was not."

Mississippi

North Carolina

Ohio

Oklahoma

South Carolina

Puerto Rico



UT Extension, in collaboration with other land-grant universities in the Southern region, secured a \$30,000 grant from the National Center for Higher Education Management Systems that led to the development of Community Economic Development 101 (CED 101) curriculum. The CED 101 curriculum was used in trainings delivered to 136 community development professionals from over 14 states and 4 countries at National Association of Community Development Extension Professionals and Community Development Society meetings.



PVAMU's Community & Economic Development Unit advances household stability through the CED Furniture Assistance Program. In partnership with the Houston Furniture Bank, the program provides free furnishings, including beds, sofas, dining tables, and chairs, to families, alongside financial literacy education that builds long-term resilience. From 2025 to 2026, the program served 352 participants, many of whom had experienced homelessness, low income, domestic violence, or mental health concerns, while strengthening their skills in budgeting, credit management, savings, and consumer protection.



Texas A&M AgriLife Extension's Green Infrastructure team introduced the step-by-step, user-friendly guide, Green Infrastructure Toolkit for Texas Communities. It guides selection and implementation for green infrastructure (GI) with multiple design sets providing siting and design elements, calculations, vegetation recommendations, permitting, construction, maintenance strategies, and technical drawings. Designed for engineers, community planners, developers, and local government officials, it supports integrating GI solutions to enhance infrastructure resilience, sustainability, and ensures GI projects start with the right approach.

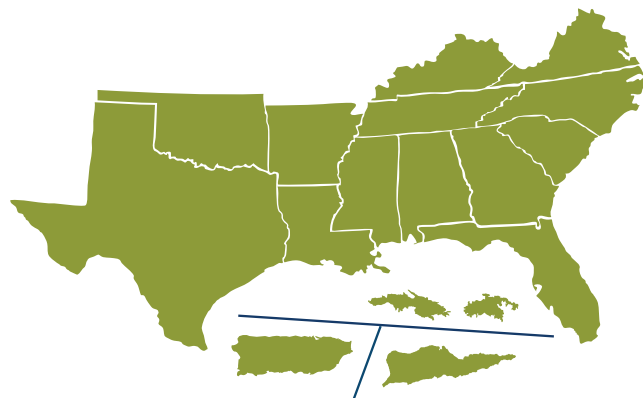


Virginia Tech • Virginia State University

The joint Virginia–Ohio BRIDGE2Health project addresses community health and mental health challenges through intergenerational mentoring and community-based programming. Teens and older adults participated in mentoring, healthy living, stress management, and life-skills activities while helping identify and address local needs. The project also contributed to workforce development by strengthening communication, leadership, teamwork, and problem-solving skills. Participants reported improved self-efficacy, social connections, and positive intergenerational relationships, enhancing individual well-being and community capacity.



WVSU Extension's Marketing and Brand Development Program helps entrepreneurs, farmers, and small business owners strengthen their online presence through practical workshops on Google Business Profile, digital marketing, and social media. Participants gain the knowledge and tools needed to increase visibility, reach more customers, and grow their businesses with confidence. By building digital marketing skills, the program supports local economic development and helps communities across West Virginia thrive through Extension education.



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