



Youth, Families, Community

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Investing in community development

Advancing the growth of communities, multiple land-grant universities are providing vital programs to help with finding employment, opening a business and offering essential services for those in need. Research and Cooperative Extension experts are making a difference in the communities they serve.

Successful examples include:

- In **Alabama**, 1890 Extension professionals are “Promoting Readiness for Employment Possibilities,” educating 595 participants about issues related to employment, including basic job search and the importance of soft skills in 2021. Results showed that among 140 respondents, 79% (111) increased their knowledge of soft skills. In addition, the evaluation revealed a 34% increase in their beliefs and skills related to basic job search skills, such as job searching, interviewing, resume building and soft skills.
- Black, Indigenous and people of color (BIPOC) individuals have disproportionately low levels of business ownership in **Wisconsin**. The Food Entrepreneurship Ecosystem Development program supports BIPOC food-based startups with training in business fundamentals, marketing strategies and access to a business planning tool.
- In 2022, the **Georgia** Initiative for Community Housing (GICH) hosted spring and fall retreats to more than 220 participants. Community housing teams leveraged key funding, created affordable housing units and delivered critical housing services. Several communities were awarded DCA funding through successful Community Development Block grant and Community Housing Investment Program (CHIP) applications in 2021. As a result of these efforts, the Georgia Department of Community Affairs invested just more than \$53.6 million into GICH communities in 2022.

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- A **Wisconsin** Extension effort aims to address challenges facing entrepreneurs of color, female-owned businesses, rural and remote businesses and others in need of targeted business development assistance. Additionally, entrepreneurship training is being offered to formerly incarcerated adults.
- In **Puerto Rico**, there is limited infrastructure to provide services and support to the deaf population. The lack of resources has created barriers to accessing essential educational, social and health services. Through the Puerto Rico Agricultural Extension Service, 4-H created initiatives to empower youths' voices. The project so far has 12 young people and six certified Extension workers at different levels of sign language.
- A **Pennsylvania** study is focusing on what communities can do to prepare when large economic disruptions affect critical seasonal industries such as the fishing season in Bristol Bay, Alaska. Surveys and modeling efforts allowed local community stakeholders to make informed decisions, and outcomes may inform future cost-benefit analysis for communities facing similar decisions.