



Youth, Families, Community

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Community and Economic Development

Strong businesses help create thriving communities. Extension professionals from across the United States help spur on new and expanding businesses to enhance community vitality.

Here are some examples:

- Thanks to *Preparing Your Business for Small Business Administration (SBA) Loans During COVID-19*, 92 **Texas** entrepreneurs and small business owners learned how to tap into the second round of CARES funding, garnering a total of nearly \$500,000 of loans and grants.
- In **Minnesota**, Extension professionals provided 1,700 business owners with information to help them explore strategies for business retention and recovery soon after a COVID-19 stay-at-home order was issued.
- In **West Virginia**, Opening Soon Inc. piloted a 10-week business and product development program for start-ups and micro-enterprises that helped 23 entrepreneurs in various stages of business development. Five entrepreneurs registered a new product or service, two opened new consulting businesses and one is completing a business plan with hopes of opening in 2021.
- In **Kentucky**, Extension collaborated with community partners to enhance tourism experiences. Through the First Impressions program, a local city identified issues to improve their downtown, expand their marketing reach and improve tourism experiences.
- Extension agents and directors in **Kansas** evaluated the business environment in their counties and districts to better address needs and concerns during the COVID-19 pandemic. Through the Kansas PRIDE program, they shared external grant announcements and partnered with a health and human services professor to present a webinar on crowdfunding.
- In **Wyoming**, more than 90% of 177 participants between 2014 and 2019 reported agreement with becoming a more effective leader through the Extension Volunteer Organization for Leadership, Vitality and Enterprise program. And 85% reported increasing their comfort level in working with groups to tackle issues and using their skills, network and drive to benefit the community.

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- Researchers and Extension educators in **17 states** are studying unique challenges of living in rural America, such as declining population, few work and education opportunities, insufficient health care and limited social services. They have conducted and analyzed 444 interviews with rural families, including those who speak Spanish, to gather data to guide local, state and federal programs aimed at improving rural life.
- A multistate team comprised of research and Extension personnel from **18 land-grant universities** along with several other institutions has spent the past three years studying social, environmental and economic changes in rural areas. As the COVID-19 crisis has unfolded, the group has provided policymakers crucial information on how the pandemic is affecting rural populations and what response strategies would work best for those areas.