

## Economic and Community Development Program Areas of Emphasis

**Planning and Visioning.** Communities, neighborhoods and regions need to create their own road map for the future in today's fast paced world of change. Extension can help facilitate these efforts by mobilizing local resources to help plan for the future and by engaging in applied research and providing educational programs and resources that focus on community and regional priorities. Two areas of high priority in many communities and regions are economic development planning and land use issues.

**Leadership and Civic Engagement.** A rapidly growing body of research indicates that a strong civic infrastructure is a precursor to economic development and in the creation of strong and vibrant communities, neighborhoods and regions. Extension can help build strong communities, neighborhoods and community-based organizations through a variety of leadership programs. Some programs include conflict resolution, facilitation training, board development, diversity education, grant writing workshops, the Myers-Briggs and Real Colors personality assessment programs, and youth leadership development. Extension educators can serve as facilitators for community meetings and dialogues as well.

**Workforce Development.** Extension works in partnership with Purdue University and its affiliate campuses, technical resource centers, and community learning centers around the state to meet local educational needs. Workforce development initiatives aim to improve the quality of life and the economic opportunities of local residents through lifelong learning and skill development. Extension provides free and low-cost trainings and educational programs to meet a wide range of needs and interests.

**Entrepreneurship.** Economic development strategies have shifted from industrial recruitment to the retention and expansion of existing firms and the creation of new businesses. The Purdue Extension Means Business website [www.ces.purdue.edu/extbusiness](http://www.ces.purdue.edu/extbusiness) provides educational resources and referrals designed to help existing and potential entrepreneurs enhance their prospects for success. Specific areas of emphasis are small businesses, especially in rural areas; new opportunities in entrepreneurial agriculture and natural resource enterprises; and the strong and growing interest in entrepreneurship among youth and young adults, women, ethnic minorities, and new immigrants.

**Community and Public Policy Engagement.** Training and resources are available to help communities manage controversial public issues. Public policy analysis and applied research by Purdue faculty can serve a critical function to support informed decision making throughout Indiana. Areas of potential emphasis include land use, energy policy, agricultural and environmental policy and a variety of issues related to state and local government taxation and finance. Advanced information systems and communication networks are available to enhance the participatory community-based problem solving approach that often accompanies such needs and opportunities.

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*Purdue Extension serves as the county's front door to all of Purdue University. When community and regional needs arise at the local level which cannot be addressed by an existing Extension program, Extension personnel can help identify and access specialized resources at Purdue University that may be helpful in addressing the need or issue.*