Community Leadership and Organizational Development

General Information

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Situation or Issue

Situation Description

Communities face a host of issues that demand leadership in the midst of increasing complexity. Community organizations and political subdivisions such as cities, school districts, library boards, and counties struggle to find qualified residents to serve as council, board and commission members, and it is critical that leaders understand external forces that affect the community. These include the devolution of authority for action and service delivery to the
community; the double bind created by trying to maintain quality and services with fewer resources; expectations for sharing power and responsibility; interdependence, diversity, collaboration, and communication; and displacement of the developmental paradigm with the globalization paradigm. Research indicates that building leadership capacity among community leaders and elected officials is critical to community viability and sustainability. Through public and private nonprofit organizations, communities achieve their objectives and increase or maintain the quality of life for all residents.

The quality of information available to community decision makers and public and private non-profit organizations has a significant effect on the vitality of communities. Increasing the capacity of local decision-makers through Extension programming will enhance community vitality and improve the quality of life in rural and urban areas. Addressing issues that are critical to organizational development occurs through various Extension programs, including facilitation, skills training, managing projects, and understanding data.

Stakeholder Input

Stakeholder Description

Stakeholders who responded to the “Together We Can...Tell Us How Survey” overwhelmingly report that they would appreciate information and education on “enhancing your local community’s quality of life.” Fifty five percent of respondents indicated that they had little or no knowledge of the issue, but are interested. Another 35.7% indicated that they are well informed on the issue, but would like to keep current. When asked about specific quality of life issues, 38.7% were interested in gaining information on leadership recruitment and skill building for adults; and 46.2% in expanding leadership opportunities and skills for youth. When this response is coupled with the 84.6% of respondents who believe there is a need for greater involvement of residents in local planning and decision-making to address complex community issues, a strong case is made for programming in Community Leadership and Organizational Development across the state.

The Multi-County Extension Advisory program planning results rated "Community Leadership and Organizational Development" as a priority. The Multi-County Unit Council held needs assessment meetings in the fall of 2012 in Ottawa, Princeton and Henry. Local concerns for leadership development and the need for education for youth and adults were discussed. The Multi-County Unit Extension Council is very involved in providing local input regarding programming and related volunteer programs. Council members are represented on other committees to gather input. At their council meetings in 2014, 2015, and 2016, the council approved "Community Leadership and Organizational Development" as a priority focus.

University of Illinois Extension cooperates locally with the following stakeholders in regard to community leadership and organizational development including workforce preparation: North Central Regional Betterment Coalition; Business Employment Skills Team, Inc./NCI Works; Illinois Valley Community College; Starved Rock Associates for Vocational and Technical Education; Starved Rock Advantage/Work-based Learning (Carus). Extension also has a Task Force to support youth workforce preparation and STEM learning opportunities. The County
Director serves on the NCI Works Board as a “youth organization” representative since fall of 2015. Extension is also a part of the area coalition, “The Illinois 60 by 2025 Network”, which is an ever-emerging network of communities in Illinois that are committed to the goal of ensuring that 60% of all adults have a college or career credential by 2025. This network is designed to meet the needs of communities that are working together to provide rigorous, real-world learning in and out of the classroom. North Central Regional Betterment Coalition (NCRBC) is seeking to have our community, covering the IVCC district territory, named as a 60 by 25 Network Leadership Community. Illinois students should be graduating high school ready with the knowledge and skills necessary to be successful in life after high school—college and career.

Today all high school graduates need some postsecondary education and/or training if they are to have options and opportunities in the job market. In Illinois, 8 of 10 employers say they need employees with some postsecondary education. Currently only 40% of Illinois residents have a high-quality post-secondary college or career credential. These realities in Illinois have driven communities to look for broader solutions to what are increasingly seen as systemic problems in the education-to-employment continuum. ACES 2015 Summer Intern, with support of Extension staff, completed Key Informant interviews with local leaders in the ag industry, high school ag instructors and more, regarding the need to connect and expand 4-H and FFA collaborations for “Growing Futures in Agriculture”, a newly developed Extension/4-H curriculum taught by Teen Teachers (High School FFA Students) to 6-8 grade students. The program benefits all participants and provides workforce preparation information and skills as well as exploring the vast career opportunities in the field of agriculture. Extension, in their partnership with IVCC, has conducted needs assessment/round table discussions with key leaders and producers in the Ag community to determine pressing issues, needs and concerns and potential gaps in educational programming. High School Ag Instructors have been included in the needs assessment. The findings from the series of meetings were reviewed and a plan of action for developing agriculture education programming at IVCC and through Extension is underway.

Through our internal civil rights compliance review, we identified seven communities for outreach: Mendota, DePue, Streator, Spring Valley, LaSalle, Ottawa, and Marseilles. Mendota and DePue have a high percentage of Latino families. As a result, Extension will implement the state 4-H Latino Families grant in both Bureau and LaSalle counties as well as SNAP-Ed programming. In 2015, part-time Extension Program Coordinators were hired for Bureau County and LaSalle County reaching 1st Generation 4-H Latino Families through a grant supported by the State 4-H Office.

Interdisciplinary programming between the 4-H Youth Development Program, Nutrition and Wellness Education Program, Illinois Nutrition Education Program and Agriculture and Natural Resources Program (including Master Gardeners and Master Naturalists) will be implemented throughout all the counties in our Unit. In 2015/2016 the Unit initiated new programs in cooperation with Small Farms and Local Foods Program including programming with local area farmers markets, Master Gardeners and University of Illinois Educators. These efforts continue.

In 2015, Extension's Master Gardeners, with the leadership of Marshall-Putnam Master Gardeners, initiated a Healthy Gardening project reaching 469 families in Marshall and Putnam Counties through the local food pantries. There are plans to expand this project in Bureau and
LaSalle Counties in 2015-2016. Safe food preservation education was also provided through this programming. The Marshall-Putnam Master Gardeners were recognized at the 2016 State Extension Master Gardener Conference for their outstanding leadership and teamwork on this special project.

In 2015/2016, Nutrition and Wellness was added to the Unit's Programming and Services. A Nutrition and Wellness Educator was hired in August, 2015 and began providing research-based information regarding Chronic Disease Management, Food Safety and Preservation and Nutrition and Wellness Education classes. The educator has reached out to diverse at-risk audiences to address chronic disease, local obesity rates and health concerns facing residents. Using local health department IPLAN statistics, this program provided healthy lifestyle education to residents.

A Visiting Extension Educator was added in 2015/2016 under the Illinois Nutrition Education Program: SNAP-Education. Hired in June 2016, this Unit Educator will work to enhance the multi-layering effect and expand SNAP-Ed programming where eligible families live, eat, play, learn, and shop by focusing on creating and sustaining policy, systems, and environmental changes. The Unit Educator will operate in SNAP-Ed’s six key focus areas: K-12 Schools, Early Childhood, Community-based Youth, Emergency Food, Food Retail, and Community-based Adults.

Extension will continue to work with our three area Farm Bureaus and other agriculture agencies in assessing needs and planning and hosting local educational programs for farmers and agribusinesses. We will also coordinate with the IDOA for hosting a regional program in our Unit's area. Extension will continue to provide educational programs to area crop and livestock producers, agri-business and other ag leaders to meet targeted program needs. Education of youth relative to this program area continues through 4-H project work.

University of Illinois Extension is partnering with Illinois Valley Community College to provide youth development, healthy lifestyle education and agriculture and natural resource education as a part of the new Educational Partnership Initiative. Extension's Nutrition and Wellness Educator will be offering programming in Chronic Disease Management, Food Preservation and Food Safety across the Unit's four county service area. Extension is working with IVCC to assess educational needs and work with local producers involved in small farms/local foods and commercial agriculture to develop plans for a formal education program at IVCC. A community steering committee was developed and the first meeting was held on August 24, 2015. Work continues in this area.
Outcomes/Impacts

Condition Change

Condition Change Outcomes

Communities and organizations will involve skilled leaders who use best practices in their approach to organizational decision-making, leadership, collaboration, and sustainability. Ultimately, Illinois communities will become more vital and sustainable, with populations which are stable, adequate community resources, and active civic groups.

Action Changes

Action Change Outcomes

Program participants will use best practice approaches to leadership, decision-making, and building collaborative approaches to address community issues through institutions and organizations. Participants will increasingly take on leadership roles in their communities and organizations.

Learning Changes

Learning Change Outcomes

There are a wide array of program opportunities in this programming area that will enhance the knowledge and skills of individuals around a particular topic. Topics include using data to make more effective decisions, facilitating groups, managing conflict in community groups, understanding the role of elected and appointed officials, visioning and strategic planning, understanding generational differences, and understanding Illinois government. Leaders will gain knowledge regarding: how to involve others, interpret data, manage projects, and facilitate decision-making for the good of the organization and the community.

Outputs/Learning Opportunities

Learning Activities

Local Government Education

A series of programs, including webinars, designed to strengthen the skills and leadership capacity, as well as address current topics relevant to community leaders, county and township officials and staff, and others serving on boards, councils, and in elected or appointed positions.
eLearning Modules

Online self-study modules for community leaders and nonprofit staff; topics include introduction to applied research, beginning a project, logic model development, budget management, project management, data management, introduction to statistics and SPSS, data visualization, acquiring and working with secondary data, and communicating results.

Leadership Education

Includes leadership academies – locally organized educational sessions designed to teach basic leadership skills and applications to community objectives; and the Illinois Leadership Academy, which offers an opportunity for county elected and appointed leaders to build skills, learn more about leadership theory, and network with one another.

Data for Decision Makers

Extension staff assists local government officials, businesses, non-profits, and community leaders with using and understanding secondary data to make decisions. Data, when used properly, can improve informed decision-making. Participants will learn how to navigate and use databases to enhance their planning. Resources include county profiles, education indicators, employment and economic indicators, environment and natural resources, growth and housing indicators, health indicators, infrastructure, social indicators, and local information resources On the Front Line. This program is designed for groups, organizations, and businesses working directly with the public to develop employee skills in customer service. Participants gain a more complete understanding of the importance of customer service in any environment.

Organizational Development

Educational activities include use of community surveys, image studies, regional project facilitations, and development of plans to position non-profits as building blocks to achieve social change within a community and/or within the organization.

Hennepin Canal State Trail Demonstration Project

University of Illinois Extension serving Bureau County is a supporter/partner of the "I-Leveraging: Illinois’ Tourism & Economic Development Project" coordinated by the Department of Recreation, Sport & Tourism, the Office of Recreation & Park Resources and University of Illinois Extension serving Henry and Rock Island Counties. University of Illinois Extension is dedicated to enabling people to improve their lives and communities through learning partnerships that put knowledge to work. The primary goal of the "I-Leveraging: Illinois’ Tourism & Economic Development Project” to leverage the assets and skills of the region to retain and attract tourists that are utilizing the Hennepin Canal recreation corridor. The University of Illinois Extension serving Bureau, LaSalle, and Putnam Counties will support the work of project collaborators to coordinate volunteers and help to organize I-Leveraging Workshops that are representative of all community stakeholders. The program designed will help to attract and retain tourists of the Hennepin Canal State Trail. This demonstration project
around the goal of rural tourism development will target the communities alongside the western portion of the Hennepin Canal State Trail (Milan, Colona, Geneseo, Atkinson, Annawan, Sheffield, Wyanet, Tiskilwa, Bureau). The Hennepin Canal is listed on the National Register of Historic Places, and spans 104.5 miles across five Illinois Counties (Bureau, Henry, Lee, Rock Island, and Whiteside). To date, however, the communities along the Hennepin Canal State Trail do not benefit from rural tourism to the degree of other comparable recreational corridors. On August 10, 2015, University of Illinois Professors led by Dr. Laura Payne, met at the Hennepin Canal State Park Visitor's Center. Extension's County Director arranged the local visit including the Extension staff from Henry County who are a part of the project. Local input was gathered by Dr. Payne and her students in 2015 with to assist with development of a rural marketing plan. This project will be conducted again in 2016.

**Regional Stronger Economies Together (SET) Grant**

Extension is a part of the new Regional Stronger Economies Together (SET) Grant which includes Marshall, Putnam and Stark Counties. In September 2015, a community forum was held at Henry High School to gather needs and information to input into a regional plan. The local SET Team will continue to work with Extension and USDA over the 2015/2016 year to finalize a document for application to funding sources that can help to enhance the economic viability of the area. The SET Team, with guidance from USDA and Extension, completed 5 sessions with community input from the three counties in 2016. A comprehensive SET Plan is being finalized and will be used to secure funding to enact work in years 2016-2022 toward the SMART Goals identified.

**Starved Rock Advantage/Workforce Learning & North Central Regional Betterment Coalition 60 x 2025**

On March 23rd, 2015 a seminar entitled "Developing Local Talent" was held with the following groups: University of Illinois Extension, IVCC, the regional workforce board, the economic development resources (IVAC), and NCRBC. Extension had a lead role in planning the event with the chairperson, Blouke Carus. The group looked to answer the following questions:

- How can we combine all our local resources to become more efficient in “Developing Local Talent”?
- Can you help in reaching out to other employers in our IVCC/Starved Rock Country area who would benefit from a more efficient workforce training system? We are especially interested in the smaller employers, less than 50 employees, who don’t have a separate HR department: professional groups like physicians, lawyers, engineers, government, etc. (If more employers are involved we will have better quality with lower costs.)
- Can you hire a few interns this summer? If so, how many?
- What are the specific needs of local employers? (So the schools and IVCC can refocus their efforts on the needs of employers.)

“The Illinois 60 by 2025 Network”, is an ever-emerging network of communities in Illinois that are committed to the goal of ensuring that 60% of all adults have a college or career credential by 2025. This network is designed to meet the needs of communities that are working
together to provide rigorous, real world learning in and out of the classroom. North Central Regional Betterment Coalition (NCRBC) is seeking to have our community, covering the IVCC district territory, named as a 60 by 25 Network Leadership Community. Illinois students should be graduating high school ready with the knowledge and skills necessary to be successful in life after high school—college and career. Today all high school graduates need some postsecondary education and/or training if they are to have options and opportunities in the job market. In Illinois, 8 of 10 employers say they need employees with some postsecondary education. Currently only 40% of Illinois residents have a high-quality post-secondary college or career credential. These realities in Illinois have driven communities to look for broader solutions to what are increasingly seen as systemic problems in the education-to-employment continuum.

**Educational Partnership Initiatives with Illinois Valley Community College**

Extension and IVCC are partnering to enhance programming in the areas of Youth Development, Nutrition and Wellness and Healthy Lifestyles and Agriculture and Natural Resources. Extension, in their partnership with IVCC, has assisted in the development of a Community Agriculture Education Steering Committee and in conducting needs assessment/round table discussions with key leaders and producers in the Ag community to determine pressing issues, needs and concerns and potential gaps in educational programming. High School Ag Instructors have been included in the needs assessment. The findings from the series of meetings are being reviewed and will result in a plan of action for developing agriculture education programming at IVCC and through Extension. Work continues in this area with marketing of the current ag program with U of I College of ACES in fall 2015 and new programming to be identified and planned in 2016/2017. Nutrition and Wellness and Youth Development programming will also be enhanced and promoted for the residents of the college district. Nutrition and Wellness programming and Continuing Education discussed several curricula highlighting food safety and preservation for youth, adult and senior audiences. Extension’s Nutrition and Wellness can also provide as needed the Food Safety Sanitation Manager classes through the Illinois Department of Public Health, providing curriculum from University of Illinois Extension and also proctoring exams.

**Program Development with High School FFA**

ACES 2015 Summer Intern, with support of Extension staff, completed Key Informant interviews with local leaders in the ag industry, high school ag instructors and more, regarding the need to connect and expand 4-H and FFA collaborations for “Growing Futures in Agriculture”, a newly developed Extension/4-H curriculum taught by Teen Teachers (High School FFA Students) to 6-8 grade students. The program benefits all participants and provides workforce preparation information and skills as well as exploring the vast career opportunities in the field of agriculture. The Extension Youth Development Educator is continuing these programs with targeted schools in each county.

**Bureau County Economic Development Partnership Program:**

Continued assessment and development with local partners: Bureau County Board, City of Princeton, City of Spring Valley, to develop and promote regional opportunities for Bureau
County in economic development including, educational programs, website presence for county, collaboration of communities and support of Regional Economic Development Council for multi-county area.

Expanded Programming with Farmers Markets and Programming in Local Foods and Small Farms

Continued Support of the U of I RMED (Rural Medical Education) Program with Local Intern(s)

Support and Work on Program Development with NCI Works and the Business Employment Skills Team, INC. /Serve on the Youth Committee and Partner on Identified Programs

Coordinate with and Support the new (2016) “Economic Development Corporation of North Central Illinois” serving the counties of Bureau, LaSalle and Putnam

Target Audiences

Define the Audience

- Community and Organizational Leaders
- Agency Leaders
- Non-Profit Staff
- High School Students
- County and Township Officials and Staff
- Board and Council Members

Inputs

Resources

Program requirements include staff time (to organize and build partnerships which identify educational needs, identify external resources, and provide access to audiences; and to develop, manage and deliver educational programs), telecommunications equipment, access to technology, travel and expenses for professional development as new programs are developed, support staff to manage program participation and materials, etc. Program budgets are developed based upon program requirements.
Outcome/Impact Indicators

Identify Outcomes

Increased leadership diversity:

- Number of community members taking on leadership roles in the community (either as elected officials or serving in a community organization).
- Variation in age, ethnicity, gender, and culture among involved community members.

Increased civic engagement:

- Number of community members joining community organizations

Increased leadership capacity:

- Number of officials achieving CCO (Certified County Officials).
- Number of community members completing leadership education programs. Increased sense of self-efficacy among community members.

Increase ability of community to manage change:

- Number of plans developed to address community issues

Increased community capacity:

- Number of organizations (with a community mission) which are active.
- Community commitment to action in response to reports or plans. Number of times organizations join with others for a common purpose

Strong non-profit sector:

- Increased role of nonprofits in community-level decision-making.
- Increased number of nonprofits contributing to community plans.

Better management practices used in the nonprofit sector:

- Portion of nonprofits with written goal and mission statements.
- Portion of nonprofits which have identified stakeholders and stakeholder interests.
- Portion of nonprofits using a plan to guide investments and programming.
- Portion of nonprofits and community organizations using a written policy to address generational and cultural differences.
- Successful recruitment and retention of employees with varying ages, ethnicities, and cultures.
Identifying the Evaluation Methods to be Used

Impact Evaluations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Learning Activity (Title, etc.)</th>
<th>Audience(s)</th>
<th>Evaluation Method</th>
<th>Date To Be Conducted</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Leadership Academies</td>
<td>Government officials, community leaders, neighborhood associations, community development organizations</td>
<td>End of meeting Follow-up survey six months after program</td>
<td>End of program Periodic contact with participants</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E-Institutes: Local Government Programming</td>
<td>Government officials, community leaders, neighborhood associations, community development organizations</td>
<td>Email online survey link</td>
<td>A few days after the program</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organizational Development</td>
<td>Non-profit organizations, community leaders</td>
<td>End of project &amp; Follow-up survey one year after program</td>
<td>End of program, periodic contact with participants</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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Inclusion Plan

Inclusion Plan

University of Illinois Extension provides programming to people of all communities. Working with local partners we aim to reach limited resource audiences in racially and ethnically diverse communities. The locations for programming are located where participants can attend: local schools, local community centers, etc... We strive to make reasonable accommodation to reach out and break down any barriers to class/programming attendance.

- Promote programming through the public schools to increase awareness of opportunities available.
- Seek home-schooled audiences and offer programming opportunities.
- Provide programming to Circuit Breaker and the Juvenile Detention Home, a school for students with behavioral issues in LaSalle County and Special Schools in Bureau County.
- Collaborate with Youth Service Bureau to provide programming to underserved youth/families.
- Provide financial assistance to underserved youth to encourage participation in 4-H programming.
- Continue to promote all youth and adult programming through media releases, radio PSAs, posters in communities with at-risk populations and through contacts with agencies and community groups that serve the targeted audiences.
• To work with the Hispanic/Latino populations in DePue and Mendota to promote youth and family involvement in 4-H and Extension programming.
• Collaborate and build partnerships with local community groups to provide nutrition and wellness education programming in Chronic Disease Management, Food Safety and Food Preservation, Worksite Wellness and Training, School Nutrition Programs and Nutrition Topic presentations.
• Provide nutrition and wellness education programming to residents in Bureau, LaSalle, Marshall and Putnam counties.