Community Initiatives

Leadership and civic engagement happen in the context of communities where Minnesotans live and are informed by the goals and needs of the people who live there. Extension programming can work to help community residents act knowledgeably, and act together to create the future they choose for their community.

Preparing Minnesota to lead

Leadership Education Cohorts

In long-term cohort groups or training sessions, Leadership and Civic Engagement educators help emerging and existing leaders grow skills, confidence and willingness to lead. Sponsors or steering committees help educators shape programs that address local concerns and integrate leadership education content such as:
- Defining Strategic Direction
- Valuing Diversity
- Ethical leadership
- Motivating Others
- Effective Communication
- Group Dynamics
- Mapping the Environment
- Transforming Yourself and Others
- Questioning Skills
- Decision-making Skills
- Personal Visioning
- Positive Psychology
- Leadership and Followership

Helping communities come together

Civic Engagement Offerings

Because decisions affect community members, better decisions are made when those affected by decisions are engaged. But collecting input is difficult. It often happens in the middle of conflict, and often brings together only those with extreme opinions. Extension’s ResourceFull™ decisions civic engagement model is helping public leaders consider proactive ways to engage the public in decisions that affect the entire community. The model is brought to communities when Extension trains local leaders, consults with them to develop strategies to engage the public in particular public policy options, or design cohort group programs that explore civic engagement.

Bridging Programs

Bridging Programs bring people from communities throughout a county or region together to learn about leadership and civic engagement, and to consider how their communities can be better together. Participants engage in programs over many months, while community forums give the broader community a chance to examine local issues.

Facilitation Training

Effective facilitation of meetings where decisions are made is key to successful leadership and civic engagement. Positive and fair deliberation, even in the midst of potential conflict, helps to bring about changes and decisions communities need to move forward. Through cohort programming, training sessions, and published materials, our educators share their rich knowledge so that organizations and individuals can use skilled facilitation tools in their community work.

Social Capital Education & Assessment

Social capital - the bonds, bridges and links that residents of a community hold - can be leveraged to make a community more vital. Workshops about social capital help communities understand the importance of, and think about ways to, strengthen social capital in their community. Social capital assessments are a way for community volunteers to examine the strengths and weaknesses of bonds, bridges and links among community members.

Visit our website: www.extension.umn.edu/community

Want to develop a leadership or civic engagement education cohort for your community? Our educators help communities design programs that make sense for your community. Call an educator listed in this brochure.

“The program brought out how important it is to work together... and how important each and every person is to the improvement of our community.” — AN EMERGING LEADER
Leadership and Civic Engagement
Helping communities choose their future

MAKING A DIFFERENCE
The Extension Center for Community Vitality makes a difference by engaging Minnesotans to strengthen the social, civic, economic and technological capacity of their communities.

Learn more at: www.extension.umn.edu/community

Here’s what you’ll find on our website:
- Deeper descriptions of the programs highlighted here
- Bios of our educators
- Curriculum materials for purchase from the Extension store
- Feature articles and fact sheets of interest to community leaders
- Video stories of successful communities
- Information about programs that help local leaders strengthen their economy
- Research about "the brain gain in rural Minnesota," the tourism economy, business expansion and more

LOCAL CONTACTS
Educators and specialists are ready to help your community create its future.

EAST CENTRAL MINNESOTA
Lisa Hinz, Farmington Regional Office
hinzx001@umn.edu or 651-480-7734

CENTRAL MINNESOTA
Denise Stromme, Brainerd Regional Office
stromme@umn.edu or 218-828-2680

NORTEAST MINNESOTA
Lori Rothstein
UMD Center for Economic Development
roths040@umn.edu or 218-726-6476

NORTHWEST MINNESOTA
Jody Horvatvedt, Roseau Regional Office
horrt001@umn.edu or 218-463-0296

WEST CENTRAL MINNESOTA
Brian Fredrickson, Moorhead Regional Office
fred0252@umn.edu or 218-236-2120

SOUTHWEST MINNESOTA
Tobias Spanier, Marshall Regional Office
spani001@umn.edu or 507-337-2815

SOUTHEAST MINNESOTA
Barbara Radke, Rochester Regional Office
radke008@umn.edu or 507-995-1631

SOUTH CENTRAL MINNESOTA
Catherine Rasmussen, Mankato Regional Office
rasmu035@umn.edu or 507-389-6749

STATEWIDE PROGRAMS
Mike Liepold, Mankato Regional Office
mliepold@umn.edu or 507-389-6741

PROGRAM STAFF
Eriks Dunens
Alumni Coordinator
dune0007@umn.edu or 612-626-5943

SPECIALISTS
Denise Trudeau Poskas
Community Leadership Development
dtrudeau@umn.edu or 651-480-7704

Ryan Allen
Civic Engagement
Humphrey School of Public Affairs
allen650@umn.edu or 612-625-6270

PROGRAM LEADER
Mary Ann Hennen
St. Paul campus
henne011@umn.edu or 612-624-4226

PUBLICATIONS
These Extension publications support communities as they work for their future. To order, visit shop.extension.umn.edu

Building Leadership Program Management Guide
Committees That Work - Common Traps, Creative Solutions
Facilitation Resources
Weaving Tourism into Communities: Four Stories over Time

Read and subscribe to Vital Connections, a newsletter to help community leaders and engaged community members know, decide and act. Visit at
www.extension.umn.edu/community/news

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