

Community Development in 2020

An extraordinary year in so many ways, 2020 thrust us into working differently and providing programming and assistance in ways we never dreamed of, all while remaining true to our mission, vision, and values.

Ohio State University Extension Community Development is a leader in community development education and an unbiased partner in the implementation of strategies to achieve community and organizational goals.

Our educational and applied research efforts are aligned under these four areas of emphasis:

- Economic Development
- Leadership Development
- Organizational Capacity Building
- Community Planning



73,708
Program
Participants



200
Community
Partnerships



\$3.8 Million
Extramural
Funding



42,214
Ohioline
Fact Sheet
Pageviews



159
Countries
Reached

- **762** educational events held locally, statewide, and nationally – most virtually
- Community partnerships included state, regional, and local government, departments, schools, and agencies; non-profits; and corporations.
- Extramural funding was provided by federal and state government, organizations, and institutions; non-profits; and private businesses.
- Added **6** fact sheets (2 new and 4 revised) for a total of **61** CD fact sheets posted to Ohioline
- **159** countries reached via Ohioline include the **Philippines, India, Canada, and South Africa**
- **14,993** people from **172** countries viewed our website



THE OHIO STATE UNIVERSITY

COLLEGE OF FOOD, AGRICULTURAL,
AND ENVIRONMENTAL SCIENCES

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Critical issues impact:

Economic Vitality



Communities that actively implement an on-going BRE program focusing on the retention and expansion of local businesses will:

- Improve the business climate of the community
- Help to make local businesses remain competitive
- Increase employment
- Stabilize the local economy

In 2020, 4 community surveys and 1 regional survey were conducted. Combined and as a result of the program, **12 new business plans** were developed, **178 fulltime jobs** were created, and over **3800 jobs were retained**.

Participants also indicated an improved working relationship because of meeting more regularly to discuss community and economic development issues.

Environmental Quality and Sustainability



Farmers across Ohio are being approached to lease large tracks of ground for solar development. In order to help, OSU Extension CD produced resources for agricultural landowners faced with decisions about leasing land for solar energy development. Legal and energy experts have developed a technical guide titled *Farmland Owner's Guide to Solar Leasing*.

The guide was made available to the public in August 2019 as a free download on the OSU Extension Farm Office and Energize Ohio websites. To date, **14 workshops** on solar leasing have been delivered reaching **551 participants**. Of the 52 completed program evaluations, **87%** indicated that they **found the workshop valuable** and will use the information presented while making future decisions on utility scale solar development.

In addition, the OSU Extension utility scale solar energy development webpage has drawn **455 unique viewers**. The bulletin has received **478 additional downloads**. Three solar leasing sessions were presented at Farm Science Review, with over **200 additional copies** of the bulletin being distributed.

Food Security and Production



This project was an effective reuse of vacant land planned in collaboration with a dozen stakeholders who reached consensus to develop and implement the South Jackson Community Gardens project. Stakeholders met 37 times between 2017-2020 to reach consensus on the scope, timeline, and continued management of the project. From December 2018 through December 2020, the focus was to implement the project plan.

During 2020, despite the pandemic, stakeholders and community members rallied to complete the garden, including building **12 raised planting beds**, constructing a shed, and planting the first crops. Following COVID safety guidelines, a group of **5-10 volunteers met and worked at the site 17 times** over the course of the 2020 growing season, while building a deeper alliance with the area neighborhood. A unifying event in September 2020 brought city leaders, including the Chief of Staff, food distribution services, and over 30 neighbor and community volunteers together to celebrate the gardens' successful completion and to harvest the vegetables.

The stakeholders continued meeting virtually monthly during 2020 to plan for future sustainability of the gardens. A strategic plan was developed that included transitioning the project to the Chamber Foundation and Activate Allen County, hiring a seasonal site coordinator, and scheduling regular educational events at the site.

CD mission:

We help communities enhance their well-being and create social, economic and environmental conditions in which they can thrive.