

## Community Capitals Framework-Based Programming

### The Situation

Kansans are increasingly concerned about community vitality. Ongoing concerns in Kansas communities include a lack of employment opportunities, food access, declining per capita income, lack of leadership, and population shifts resulting in concentration in some locations and decline in others (Kulcsár, 2007). As Extension professionals involved in community vitality programming, we realize the needs of communities across the state are varied and therefore the approach to address these needs must include multiple opportunities as well as a method to evaluate programming success.

The *Community Capitals Framework*, developed by Cornelia and Jan Flora and used by Extension across the United States, can serve as a guideline for program needs identification, where a program effort fits into a community's development, and provide an approach to analyze community development efforts, including community vitality programming (Mattos, 2015).

Communities that are successful in supporting healthy, sustainable community and economic development focus on seven types of community capital (examples included):

- Natural – environment, rivers, lakes, wildlife, soil, weather
- Cultural – traditions, history, values, celebrations
- Human – population, education, skills, health, diverse groups
- Social – trust, networking, leadership
- Political – access to government officials, influence and enforcement of rules and regulations
- Financial – taxes, savings, philanthropy, poverty, investments, incoming and outgoing money
- Built – housing, streets, utilities, buildings, internet access

This framework can be used by Extension professionals to analyze current community development and vitality efforts, including programs, and to identify needs within a specific community or region (Flora).

The intended outcomes of investing in a community's capitals are to attain a vital local and regional economy, social well-being, and a healthy ecosystem (Mattos, 2015). Investments in one or more capital areas can boost other capital areas that may be lacking (Example: investment in social capital by providing leadership training can bring about a boost to political capital with an increase in those choosing to run for political office, or an increased human capital with the creation of new, diverse civic groups or increased membership in current groups in the community).

Current K-State Research and Extension Community Vitality programming aligns with the components of the *Community Capitals Framework*, helping communities by providing training and resources via Extension to assist in meeting community needs:

- Board Leadership Series: Human, Social
- Entrepreneurship Education: Financial, Human
- Master Community Facilitator: Social, Human, Political
- Kansas PRIDE Program: All
- First Impressions: All
- Grant Writing: Financial, Social, Human, Built, Natural, Cultural
- Gold Standard of Customer Relations: Social, Financial
- Disaster Education: Human, Political, Financial, Natural

The above list of programs is not all-inclusive. Future state-level and locally developed programs can easily be associated with one or more of the capital areas to determine capital impacts.

### Short-Term (Knowledge)

Participants in K-State Research and Extension's Community Vitality programming increase knowledge and skills in one or more of the seven community capital areas.

Agents and directors are knowledgeable about Community Vitality programming and resources available to them, their local communities, businesses, and organizations.

Communities have tools and opportunities to assess their needs and develop plans of action to address those needs, with assistance from Extension, government resources, the formation of partnerships, and/or volunteer efforts.

Extension professionals and communities have opportunities for creative networking.

#### Indicators

- Number of participants (individuals, communities, organizations) in K-State Research and Extension Community Vitality Programming.
- Number of new businesses started in communities.
- Number of events and projects in communities.
- Number and variety of Community Vitality programming offered by local Extension units.
- Population numbers.
- Number of new, effective board members in communities.
- Amount of grant and donation dollars coming into communities.
- Number of engagements of and by local units, agents, and state specialists relating to Community Vitality programming areas.

### Medium-Term (Behavior)

Communities assess their needs with assistance of K-State Research and Extension and work to address identified needs.

Communities have the resources to be successful.

Communities have strong social interaction via networking and leadership.

#### Indicators

- Number of new Kansas PRIDE communities.
- Number of new First Impressions community participants.

- Number of new community improvement projects.
- Number of networks and cross-disciplinary programs.
- Increased civic engagement.

## Long-Term (Change in Condition)

Strong, vibrant, sustainable communities.

### Indicators

- Change in identified local or regional community needs.
- Number of communities with stable or increased population.
- Number of communities with stable or increased businesses.
- Number of communities with increased tourism.
- Increased capital improvement due to investment in community capitals.
- Increased quality of life.

## Public Value

K-State Research and Extension Community Vitality programming increases the knowledge of local residents, youth through adult, to become entrepreneurial, increase their leadership capacity, and improve conditions within their communities by providing education, resources, and facilitation support.

### References:

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## Outputs

- Community PRIDE Programs
- Board Leadership Series
- Facilitative Leadership
- Building Entrepreneurial Ecosystems
- Master Community Facilitator
- First Impressions
- Grant Writing Workshops
- Civic Engagement