

What is Community Development?

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Community development is an important component of county Extension education. To successfully incorporate community development into their programs, county agents and their supervisors need to be able to recognize and define what is (and what is not) encompassed in community and economic development.

There are many possible definitions of community development. In 2017, the National Association of Community Development Extension Professionals (NACDEP), part of the Joint Council of Extension Professionals (JCEP), adopted the global definition of community development proposed by the International Association for Community Development (IACD). NACDEP also adopted a statement describing extension professionals' role in the community development process (see box). Both the definition and the Extension statement are consistent with the Extension Professionals' Creed. Agents and specialists encourage broad participation as communities define and implement improvement strategies. They may also provide technical assistance, including industry knowledge, data analysis, networking, or evaluation.

Definition of Community Development: Community development is a practice-based profession and an academic discipline that promotes participative democracy, sustainable development, rights, equality, economic opportunity and social justice, through the organization, education and empowerment of people within their communities, whether these be of locality, identity or interest, in urban and rural settings.

Statement of Extension professionals' role in community development: Community Resources & Economic Development (CRED) Extension Professionals work WITH communities to support activities that encourage broad participation and result in social, environmental, and/or economic improvement as defined by the community.

<http://www.nacdep.net/what-is-community-development->

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Clearly, there are many avenues for extension agents to address community development in the course of their assigned program areas. Figure 1 provides a practical definition of community development for local programming. This definition was formulated to be generally accepted from an academic perspective and *at the same time* be understandable and useful to county Extension agents and their supervisors.

The figure outlines three primary types of resources available in a community:

- Economic resources—businesses, jobs, etc.
- Human resources—the skills and other contributions of the people living in the community
- Physical, natural and cultural resources—the resources of the natural environment as well as those that are man-made, such as streets and hospitals

Extension educational programs could be created in a community to *develop* resources in one or more of these categories. In addition, many Extension programs overlap two or more resource categories. For example, a vegetable growing program might include business training related to cottage foods, finances, or marketing. Many youth programs include job skills training.

Agents can also facilitate discussion of community issues by bringing together groups representing different resources. For example, a new playground would not only be an addition to a community's physical, natural, and cultural resources, but when put into use for recreation, it would also be an enhancement for the area's families, or human resources.

These types of multiple-resource community development issues are shown in the sections divided by dashed lines in Figure 1. The dashed lines indicate that the focuses for any specific issue are not rigid. For example, in a specific county, entrepreneurship could have a more environmental focus than a people focus, but in all cases, it will likely involve both to some extent. Furthermore, programming should be tailored to fit the needs of a community's racial, ethnic, and class composition. The critical point is that this definition can help agents associate community issues with outcome-oriented (goals/objectives) programming.

Examples of possible goals and objectives for each resource and focus area are listed in Table 1. Once a community's issues have been defined and goals set, Extension professionals may use Table 2 to identify possible resources for help in reaching those community development goals.

From this perspective, in Extension educational programming, human resources and their development are a constant. The differences occur in emphasis and focus on the other resources in various combinations for community development. These differences reflect a community's various issues and programming possibilities. Therefore, goals and objectives are not specified in this area in Table 1.

An example of an issue that could be addressed in a community development program is the economy (jobs, income). A goal for addressing the issue could be to increase the number of high-quality jobs in a community. A locally practical way to achieve this goal may be to retain and expand existing businesses. As Table 2 indicates, there are Extension educational resources (such as *Business Retention and Expansion* publications) that can be employed to help reach the goal.

However, as is indicated in Figure 1, other strategies could also be used to achieve the goal, including workforce development, entrepreneurship or ecotourism programming. Goals and strategies can also be adapted to, and consistent with, the agency's strategic plan.

Figure 1: Community Development

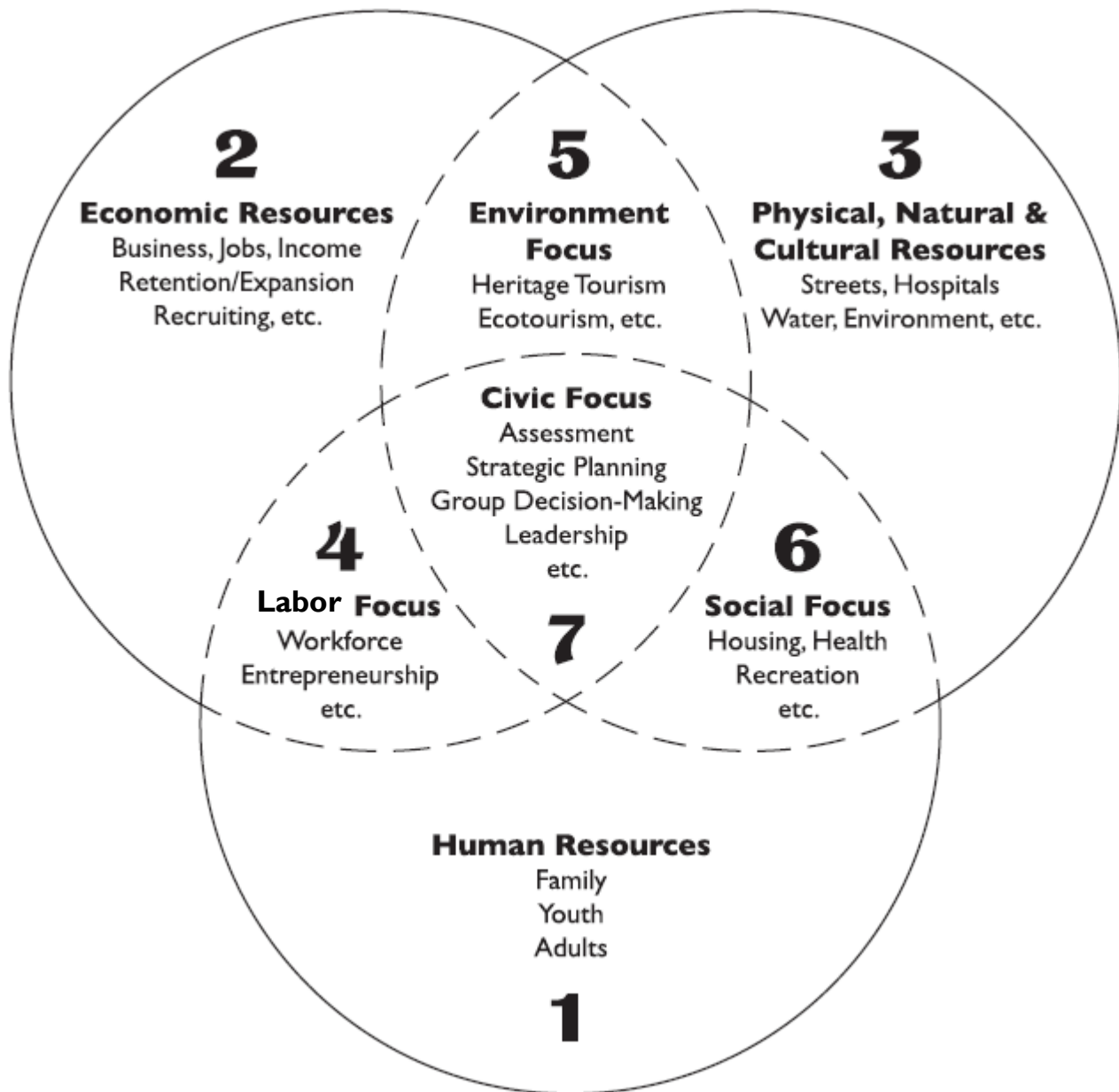


Table 1: Community Development Goals and Objectives.		
Focus/Resource	Goals	Possible Objectives
Human	Develop self-efficacy, knowledge, and interpersonal skills in youth and adults	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cultivate healthy living habits • Develop leadership skills • Stimulate youth interest in science • Create family disaster preparedness plans
Economic	Sustain existing levels and create additional economic activity (jobs, businesses, income streams)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Retain and expand existing businesses • Recruit new businesses and industry from elsewhere • Plug the leaks that cause capital and profits to leave the community
Physical, Natural and Cultural	Connect the community with distant markets Ensure public health and safety Preserve and enhance the natural, cultural and historic environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure adequate water, sewer and other utilities • Provide transportation and telecommunications services to link the community with distant markets • Build community consensus on appropriate land and environmental uses
Labor	Create a high-skill, high-value workforce and enterprising, knowledgeable entrepreneurs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Upgrade the skills of adult workers and keep them at competitive levels • Provide under-skilled adults with strong, job-specific skills, linking training and work • Develop new value-added business enterprises • Promote entrepreneurship
Environment	Create economic enterprises using locally appropriate management of natural, historical and cultural resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop heritage, cultural and ecotourism opportunities • Consider the environmental consequences of development activities
Social	Ensure strong human and social services to support working people, families and those in need	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide for adequate child and elder care • Provide recreational outlets for all ages • Foster the development of affordable housing
Civic	Build a visionary, accountable and inclusive culture of civic decision making and problem solving	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure open, competent and accessible governmental and civic institutions • Deepen and broaden the leadership pool across ethnic, class, and age groups • Promote participation in civic affairs by all sectors of the community

Capitals framework adapted from: Emery, M. & Flora, C.B. (2006). Spirling-Up: Mapping Community Transformation with Community Capitals Framework. *Community Development: Journal of the Community Development Society*, 37, 19-35 (Spring).

Table 2: Community Development Programming Resources

Focus	Resources
<p>General</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Community and Economic Development: http://communities.tamu.edu • Regional Rural Development Centers: http://rrdc.info/ • Southern Rural Development Center: http://srdc.msstate.edu • National Association of Community Development Extension Professionals: http://www.nacdep.net/ • Appropriate Technology Transfer for Rural Areas: https://attra.ncat.org/ • Texas Economic Development Council: http://www.texasedc.org/ • USDA Rural Development: http://www.rd.usda.gov • Texas Department of Agriculture – Rural Economic Development: https://texasagriculture.gov/GrantsServices/RuralEconomicDevelopment.aspx • Texas AgriLife Extension Service Educational Resource Center: http://agrilifebookstore.org
<p>Human Resources</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Family & Community Health: https://agrilifeextension.tamu.edu/programs/family-community-health/ • Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Financial Management: http://fch.tamu.edu/programs/financial-management/ • Texas 4-H & Youth Development: https://agrilifeextension.tamu.edu/programs/texas-4-h-youth-development/ • Robert Wood Johnson Foundation County Health Rankings: http://www.countyhealthrankings.org/
<p>Economic</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Rural Communities: http://ruralcommunities.tamu.edu • Small Business Development Centers—regional universities and community colleges: https://www.sba.gov/about-sba/sba-locations • U.S. Small Business Administration: http://www.sba.gov/ • Business Retention and Expansion: http://www.brei.org and https://communities.tamu.edu/community-and-economic-development-programs/cred-business-retention-and-expansion/business-retention-and-expansion-visitation-program/ • Economic Opportunity Maps: https://communities.tamu.edu/economic-opportunity-maps/ • IRS Small Business: https://www.irs.gov/businesses/small-businesses-self-employed • Minority Chambers of Commerce: https://www.minoritychamber.net/ https://www.nationalbcc.org/ https://ushcc.com/ https://uspaacc.com/ • Women’s Business Center: https://www.sba.gov/tools/local-assistance/wbc • U.S. Economic Development Administration: https://www.eda.gov/programs/eda-programs/ • Stronger Economies Together: http://srdc.msstate.edu/set/
<p>Physical, Natural and Cultural</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Urban and Municipal Parks: http://agrilife.org/urbanparks/ • Texas A&M AgriLife Water Education Network: http://water.tamu.edu/ • Texas Extension Disaster Education Network: http://texashelp.tamu.edu/ • Onsite Wastewater Treatment: http://ossf.tamu.edu • EPA Smart Growth: https://www.epa.gov/smartgrowth • Texas Historical Commission: http://www.thc.state.tx.us/ • BroadbandUSA: http://www2.ntia.doc.gov/about • Teleliteracy Assistance for Businesses and Communities: http://aces.nmsu.edu/specialprojects/ecommerce/ • National eCommerce Extension Initiative: http://srdc.msstate.edu/ecommerce/index.html

Table 2 continued: Community Development Programming Resources

Focus	Resources
Labor	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Texas Workforce Commission: http://www.twc.state.tx.us/ • Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Food Handlers Training: http://foodsafety.tamu.edu/ • Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Child Care Training Courses: http://infanttoddler.tamu.edu/ • Texas Friendly Hospitality Training: http://agrilife.org/texasfriendly/
Environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Recreation, Parks, and Tourism Sciences: https://rpts.tamu.edu/ • Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Coastal Watershed: http://tcwp.tamu.edu/ • Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Texas Water: http://texaswater.tamu.edu/ • Texas Commission on Environmental Quality: http://www.tceq.texas.gov/ • Resource Conservation & Development: http://www.narcdc.org/, in Texas: http://www.texasrcd.org/ • Michigan State University Extension–Tourism: http://msue.anr.msu.edu/topic/info/tourism
Social	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Texas Event Leadership Program: http://telp.tamu.edu/ • Texas Department of Housing and Community Affairs: http://www.tdhca.state.tx.us • HUD Office of Community Planning and Development: https://www.hud.gov/program_offices/comm_planning
Civic	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Texas Rural Leadership Program: http://trlp.tamu.edu/ • V.G. Young Institute of County Government: https://agrilifeextension.tamu.edu/programs/v-g-young-institute-of-county-government/ • Coming Together for Racial Understanding: http://srdc.msstate.edu/civildialogue/ • Turning the Tide on Poverty: http://srdc.msstate.edu/tide/ • Building a Foundation for Community Leadership: Involving Youth in Community Development Projects: http://srdc.msstate.edu/publications/archive/199.pdf • Heartland Center for Leadership Development: http://heartlandcenter.info/ • Public Conflict: Turning Lemons into Lemonade: http://srdc.msstate.edu/trainings/educurricula/lemons/ • Public Deliberation: http://srdc.msstate.edu/civic/publicdeliberation/ • National Center for Deliberative Dialog: http://ncdd.org/ • Warm Cookies of the Revolution: http://www.warmcookiesoftherevolution.org/

Resources and web addresses sometimes change. For the most current version of this list, see <http://communities.tamu.edu>.