2.2 Strengthening Capacity for Community and Economic Development FY10

Brief Summary of Program

Changes in the economy have left many of New York’s cities, towns, and villages in a state of decline, but those same communities can work toward being vital, engaging and attractive by building on their strengths and by educating community members on skills and approaches to address their challenges. There is an educational and networking role based on research that offers models and frameworks. For example, the “layer cake” model offers a total development paradigm that embeds economic development within community development and highlights the followings layers: human infrastructure, support infrastructure, physical infrastructure and the economic base. There is an emerging framework being adopted nationally with the Cooperative Extension system called the community capitals approach. Research indicates that communities that invest in all seven capitals fare better than those that focus on two or three capitals and have greater success at achieving social equity, a vital economy, and a healthy ecosystem. The capitals are: financial, political, social, human, cultural, natural and built.

Many local government partners look to Cornell local government programming for perspective and policy knowledge that is supplemented with applied research. Our work has focused on conducting applied research and developing/facilitating approaches for local governments to address public sector problems. University resources in agriculture, environment, and land use have led to focus on local land-use planning and some other areas of local government environmental management.

Situation and Priorities Statement

There are a multitude of challenges facing communities in New York State – and the nation as well – which result in strong need and priority for our educational programming:

- Loss of traditional economic base and current economic slowdown
- Intense competition for service employment
- Flat tax revenues in the face of increasing local government costs
- Unplanned sprawl threatening municipal tax base and family farms
- Changing face of agriculture
- Increasing residential segregation
- Weakening of traditional community based organizations & decreased civic involvement

A broad range of cooperating providers serve local government officials in New York State. Cornell professionals have been working with these groups for over 50 years and continue to coordinate with their efforts. The network of organizations includes: other SUNY units and community colleges, county extension associations, statewide municipal associations, regional and county associations of local officials, regional planning and technical assistance organizations, and state agencies. Many local government partners look to Cornell programming for policy knowledge that is supplemented with applied research.

Assumptions

- The foundation for working with communities points to the following commonalities of successful communities: a well articulated vision; looks for opportunities; risk taking; holistic perspective; a belief in “doing”; find ways for ALL to participate; develop PEOPLE first; builds upon community resources; nothings succeeds like success; good use of knowledge; and trust.
- Local governments in NYS have access to numerous sources of technical assistance for dealing with their fiscal and regulatory environments but lack assistance that requires a base of applied research and identifies policy alternatives. By partnering with local governments in conducting applied research and developing policy strategy, we can enhance capacity of local governments to address public sector problems.
- Local government is an audience or key institution for many faculty that work in other substantive areas. This would include: natural resources, communications, etc. Our approach needs to provide the necessary resources to help the work of these faculty both in the substantive issues of local government and in providing outreach to the municipal audience.
- Local Government and governance extension and applied research is a highly interdisciplinary area of work involving: economics, evaluation, demography, social organization, public administration, human resources, and a variety of other fields of study.
- The institutional capacity and needs of New York’s smaller and rural local governments are far different than is often defined by larger municipal and state government organizations. These smaller organizations are the
The majority of New York’s local governments and addressing their unique needs is an important dimension in our applied research and extension work.

- Management Capacity: When a number of communities have a common goal, but each is unable to pursue it separately, collaboration may be a possible solution. Collaboration provides a critical mass of resources or helps access needed resources.
- Governance Capacity: New perspectives gained through interaction with officials of other local governments often helps all concerned see new alternatives for action. Local governments experience a “boundary problem” when each community operating alone cannot see the problem nor identify what needs to be done because the problem has a multi-jurisdictional nature.

Target Audiences

The educational approach to community and economic renewal suggests multiple audiences and stakeholders working in a partnership mode (elected officials, community leaders, business leaders, not-for-profit agencies, youth-serving agencies, schools, environmental groups, agribusiness leaders, etc.).

Ultimate Goal(s) of the program

Leaders are faced with the task of improving the community and economic vitality of their communities and finding viable options for community sustainability in a changing world. An increasing number of citizens and communities are seeking environmental health, quality of life, and a sense of community. Community goals can be articulated as: high quality of life; social cohesion; ecological integrity; effective decision making; and new economic opportunities.

Note: Only highlighted outcomes are collected in annual reporting.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Outputs</th>
<th>Near-Term Outcomes</th>
<th>Mid-Term Outcomes</th>
<th>Long-Term Outcomes</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>2.2.1 General</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>(2.2.1a) # of residents, community leaders, entrepreneurs, econ. devel. professionals participating in programs re: workforce, entrepreneurial climate, diversification, economic impact analysis, e-commerce, market devel., business planning, partnerships. (no target)</td>
<td>(2.2.1b) # of residents, community leaders, entrepreneurs, econ. devel. professionals demonstrating knowledge/skill gains re: workforce, entrepreneurial climate, diversification, econ. impact analysis, e-commerce, market devel., business planning, partnerships. (no target)</td>
<td>(2.2.1c) # of communities who plan for and implement initiatives re: community based agric. econ. develop., main street revitalization, workforce development, business develop. and assistance, non-profit sector develop. and/or other elements of sustainable growth. (100)</td>
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<td>(2.2.1g) # of residents and/or community leaders, demonstrating knowledge/skill gains about enhancing facilities and/or other community resources or services. (no target)</td>
<td>(2.2.1d) # of businesses initiated, retained, or expanded in a sustainable manner based on individual and community goals. (no target)</td>
<td>(2.2.1e) # of communities establishing an infrastructure and climate to support entrepreneurs, local farms and agribusinesses attributable at least in part to initiatives of the program. (15)</td>
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<td>(2.2.1f) # of communities reporting that their local economies are increasingly diverse and developing in a sustainable manner attributable at least in part to participating in the program. (no target)</td>
<td>(2.2.1h) # of residents and/or community leaders, who plan for and initiate steps to enhance facilities, and/or other community resources or services. (150),</td>
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<td>(2.2.1i) # of communities documenting improvements in facilities and/or other community resources or services. (35)</td>
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### 2.2.2 Workforce

**(2.2.2a)** # of employers establishing or contributing to community-based workforce development approaches. (35)

**(2.2.2b)** # of employers reporting enhanced workforce availability attributable at least in part to participation in the program. (15)

**(2.2.2c)** # of communities reporting increased retention or return of youth in their communities due to meaningful employment opportunities attributable at least in part to initiatives of the program. (no target)

### 2.2.3 Community Capacity Building

**(2.2.3a)** # of community members participating in educational programs related to community decision-making, public participation, planning and monitoring processes, and collaborative approaches. (no target)

**(2.2.3b)** # of community members demonstrating knowledge or skills gains related to community decision-making, public participation, planning and monitoring processes, collaborative approaches, and/or emergency preparedness. (no target)

**(2.2.3c)** # of communities instituting new or enhanced participatory processes related to economic development. (75)

**(2.2.3d)** # of communities developing vision statements and strategic plans and implement steps toward achieving their plans. (no target)

**(2.2.3e)** # of collaborative partnerships established within and across communities for issue resolution and collective action and/or to improve community services. (no target)

**(2.2.3f)** # of documented instances in which a community effectively resolves a need or strengthens community assets attributable at least in part to participation in the program. (35)

**(2.2.3g)** # of communities reporting specific improvements in quality or scope of community services. (no target)

### 2.2.4 “Green” Business Development*

**(2.2.4a)** # of economic developers and/or entrepreneurs participating in educational programs on “green” business opportunities. (no target)

**(2.2.4b)** # of economic developers and/or entrepreneurs demonstrating knowledge gains related to “green” business opportunities. (no target)

**(2.2.4c)** # of new “green” businesses established at least in part due to participation in the program. (no target)

**(2.2.4d)** # of communities that report increased diversification of their local economies attributable at least in part to participation in the program. (no target)