

The National Community Resource and Economic Development Indicators Team

Collaborating to share compelling stories about the collective impacts of our community and economic development work, at local, state, regional and national levels.

Accomplishments:

Impact on the identification of NIFA indicator for CRED programs.

Cross-regional sharing is occurring and we are assisting each other.

Presentation at CDS 2014 and two at CDS 2015; three presentations/posters at NACDEP 2015 to build capacity with focus on public value and economic value of CRED programs.

Focus on Excellence in Extension

Note: RRDCs are critical partners in every region and part of the national team.

North East Regional Update:

- Identified 7 high-potential impact indicators (drawing from 2013 survey).
- Training by Dr. Scott Chazdon to implement Ripple Effect Mapping to capture perceived direct and indirect impacts of a specific program on target audience.
- Hired the inaugural NERCRD Evaluation Fellow
- Re-invigorated NE Evaluation working group and initiated pilot indicators project with 6 states (PA, VT, NY, NH, WV, ME).

North Central Regional Update:

- Compiled the 6th year (FY2014) of collective impacts report for the region (June 2015). For several years, all states have reported on at least one or two indicators.
- State extension directors continue to support an aggregated report.
- State extension directors support use of vignettes and quantitate impacts for use in Excellence in Extension Impacts.
- The NC Report is being used within NIFA and with Congress to build support for CRED programming as well as for RRDCs.

Southern Regional Update:

- Extensive refinement of indicators for second year of data collection now in progress (August 2015 completion).
- 29 universities (1862s and 1890s)
- Have limited indicators to ones we feel are real impacts and more quantitative, but have also developed vignette instructions to give greater detail and nuance.

Western Region Update:

- New survey instrument developed and distributed to 36 active NACDEP members in Western Region: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/Extension-Indicators-Survey>
- Team of 5 agents and specialists formed to collect, analyze and refine common indicators.

Challenges

- Collaborating and coordinating across multiple states and regions.
- Determining whether data can spur cross-state transfer of impactful programs, helping new program leaders understand the history and importance, and determining additional critical non-economic impact indicators.
- Many different reporting systems that do not collect the determined critical data. Some states with little to no county CRED educators are only collecting state level work.
- States define and program CRED very differently across the region (and country for that matter) and therefore finding consistent and widely shared metrics is a slow process requiring a substantial time commitment and buy-in from administration in each state
- Varied processes and systems for collecting impact data of all kinds across states makes aggregating impact data a challenge that we will have to continue to work through
- There remains limited common understanding of the language, tools and methods for collecting long-term impact data in the field and over time across the region. There is very little in the way of a widely shared clearinghouse of information and best practices.

Opportunities:

- We have learned you don't wait until you have it perfect, you collect what you can and it's better to stand firm on numbers you have, knowing they are low and underreported.
- We recognized we raise the tide for all of us by preparing a collective report, and it's appropriate to indicate how many states reported a specific indicator.
- We do need national dialogue about what are the most appropriate indicators of social and community change beyond economics, where is the research base and how might we create measures that work for assembling meta data.
- We need to work around limited capacity to do something, not matter how small.

FY 16 Goals:

- Influence extension directors to agree on regional/national indicators to collect - and get these put into the state reporting systems.
- Focus on evaluation tools used in states and disseminating tools for national use to make is easier for data collectors – seek best practices.
- Work to get key numeric impact indicators that aggregate on the public side of Excellence in Extension
- Keep focus on public value - maybe do something at NACDEP next year on CRED and Excellence in Extension
- Promote national learning and dialogue about multi-state reporting systems.
- Build capacity: Continue outreach efforts and increasing visibility of work to continue its forward momentum
- Add to website tools and articles
- Develop and deliver ongoing webinars

For more details and access regional reports, tools, etc.:

http://srdc.msstate.edu/measuring_impact/index.htm