

New Generation Partnerships

The mission of the Center for Rural Entrepreneurship is to help communities build a prosperous future by supporting and empowering business, social and civic entrepreneurs. Our work is place-based in hundreds of communities and regions. Our New Generation Partnerships team works with local leaders, youth and young adults to engage meaningfully in the leadership and economic development of their community.

The Center creates value by bringing **empowering research and analysis** together with **effective community engagement** to advance **community-driven strategies for prosperity**.

Empowering Research and Analysis: *Listening to Young People*

Research with young people must start and end with listening to them. Piloted in Nebraska 10 years ago, the Center has created a student survey easily administered in partnership with local school systems. The survey provides insights into youth attitudes and preferences regarding education and career interests, community engagement opportunities and the desire to live in their hometown area in the future. Young people can imagine living and working in rural communities if those places are really open to youth and their ideas. The Center's impressive archive of both data and stories from young people and community leaders de-bunks many myths about youth engagement.

Effective Community Engagement: *Committing to YES*

The Center's Youth Engagement System (YES) interconnects education, real world experience and community support to **engage** entrepreneurial youth, **equip** them to succeed, **support** their business, social and civic entrepreneurial endeavors and **invite** their continued and return engagement in the life of the community. Community leaders and young people decide and work together to build on local assets by applying YES. The Center creates windows to peer into other innovative communities to accelerate your community's learning and impact.

Community-Driven Strategies for Prosperity: *Changing Communities for the Better*

By applying YES, teams of young people and adults from your community develop trust and true partnerships. Together they plan and implement a variety of strategies such as youth entrepreneurship, youth leadership development and young adult engagement and networking. The Center supports the implementation process, helps them tell their story, and connects your team to others for peer support and learning.

One of the biggest rural challenges for the last 70 years is the loss of the best, brightest and risk takers from their hometowns. Bringing back even a small percentage of your high school graduates can have a measurable positive impact on your economy. Returning grads often bring a spouse and even a child into the community, multiplying their impact. And they help create places that become magnets for their New Generation peers.



The Center delivers value through a range of services:

<p>Empowering Research and Analysis</p>	<p>Youth Survey. The Center has developed a unique web-based survey that can be administered to youth from middle school to high school ages in partnership with local school officials and other youth-serving organizations. It can also be used with college-age students when appropriate. The survey produces quantitative data on attitudes and preferences regarding education and career interests, community engagement opportunities and the desire of young people to live in their hometown area in the future. Your community’s data can be compared to the Center’s database of more than 40,000 survey responses to date.</p> <p>Youth Focus Groups. Center staff helps you listen to youth by conducting focus groups, often with the support of local school districts or youth-serving organizations within the community. Participants include high school student leaders, young entrepreneurs and middle school or junior high age youth. Summaries of youth attitudes and preferences are shared with community and youth leaders to guide future planning.</p> <p>Young Adult Focus Groups. Center staff also conducts focus groups with young adults including life-long residents, returnees and newcomers to the community. Data and stories about their attitudes and preferences are shared with community and young adult leaders to guide future planning.</p> <p>Evaluation. Center staff can conduct informed yet objective third-party evaluations of youth programs using YES as a lens or as a way to consider how a specific program functions within the YES context.</p>
<p>Effective Community Engagement</p>	<p>Working Group Organizing. The Center can help local champions, on-site or remotely, assemble and organize a team of youth-serving organization leaders, educators, economic developers and community volunteers to support youth engagement activities.</p> <p>Asset Mapping. Center staff helps Working Group members, on-site or remotely, effectively use YES to map specific programs and resources associated with its three major elements: entrepreneurship education and career development, youth leadership and community service, and adult mentoring and local investment in youth enterprises. This process identifies gaps and how best to address them. Key organization partners are identified to help mobilize a youth engagement strategy.</p> <p>Planning. The Center helps Working Group members and youth work in teams to create a game plan that connects resources identified through asset mapping with youth priorities identified through the survey and focus groups. The result is a master plan for youth engagement connecting organizational partners to offer a continuum of youth programs from elementary age to young adulthood.</p>
<p>Community-driven Strategies for Prosperity</p>	<p>Youth Projects. Community leaders facilitate, with technical assistance from Center staff, an activity to address a youth priority (e.g., youth entrepreneurship camp, community celebration). This initial activity builds the relationship between youth and adults and provides concrete evidence to youth that adults are serious about acting on their ideas.</p> <p>Implementation. Organizations may contract with the Center to support implementation of a youth engagement action plan or a specific youth development project within their plan. Typically, assistance is provided remotely in the early stages (6 to 18 months) of community work to help ensure partners and activities stay on track with accomplishing the larger goal of effective youth engagement.</p> <p>Resources. The Center provides interactive training on youth engagement via webinars, on-site workshops and conferences. This training includes participant activities leading to action plan implementation. The Center is a partner with the Heartland Center for Leadership Development in the HomeTown Competitiveness® initiative and provides collateral training for communities.</p>

For More Information

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