A Community Capitals Approach to Extension Networks and Partnerships

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Assess Extension Partnerships

By design, Extension engages with local, state, national, and international partners. These include government agencies, educational institutions, corporations, non-profit and philanthropic organizations, faith-based entities, neighborhood groups, and campus colleagues. Strategically investing in these formal and informal university-community relationships benefits individuals, families, businesses, and communities.

Explore Community Capitals

To better understand, develop, and leverage partnerships, the community capitals provides a framework that values partner reciprocity of financial, political, social, cultural, natural, built, and human capitals (Emery & Flora, 2020). This provides opportunities for clear agreements, mobilizing resources, respectful reporting, and recognition of unique contributions.

Take Action

Engagement with community remains core to Extension's mission. Throughout the year, Extension professionals engage in attracting and collaborating with multiple internal and external stakeholders. Each organization and community leader brings unique motivations, experiences, expectations, and resources to shared interests.

To increase equitable engagement and resource access, teams can

- Use this framework to review interrelated Extension stakeholder relationships and the value exchanged through advisory groups, networks, collaborations, and partnerships.
- Identify gaps in types or partners, opportunities for entrepreneurial networking, pathways for new partnership development, and systems Extension uses for support through all stages of the partner experience.
- Invest in collective impact, with shared commitments to addressing community complexities and creating social, economic, environmental, and other value.
- Conduct network analysis to visually see and understand dynamic multifaceted relationships that contribute to community impacts.

In the spirit of being a "partner of choice," Extension leaders navigate historical, current, and emerging influences in micro- and macro-communities. New and experienced Extension professionals can continue to develop competencies to advance agile relationships, partner communications, and contract management. Success factors focus on levels of partner engagement, satisfaction, retention, and diversification.

Community Capitals Framework from an Extension Perspective

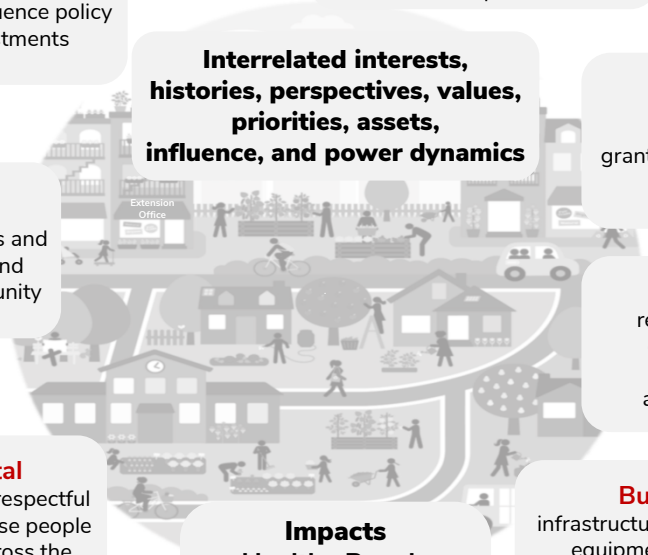
Human Capital
faculty, staff, students, volunteers, and educational partners - advancing workforce pathways and professional development

Political Capital
educational communications with people who influence policy and related investments

Interrelated interests, histories, perspectives, values, priorities, assets, influence, and power dynamics

Financial Capital
grants, contracts, gifts, and fees

Social Capital
engagement with individuals and networks with influence and trust throughout the community



Natural Capital
resources for events and collaborative research, such as land, plants, animals, soil, and water

Cultural Capital
culturally relevant and respectful engagement with diverse people and organizations across the urban-rural continuum

Built Capital
infrastructure, such as facilities, equipment, and supplies for programming, research, and innovation

Impacts
Healthy People
Healthy Communities
Healthy Environments
Healthy Businesses
Healthy Businesses

Resources for leaders to better understand, develop, and leverage community capitals, university-community networks, and partner relationships – visit go.osu.edu/epcc or scan the QR code below.

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