

FLORIDA EXTENSION INITIATIVE 6:
SUPPORTING URBAN AND RURAL COMMUNITY RESOURCES AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT
ISSUE AREA #2: COMMUNITY-BASED CAPACITY BUILDING

SITUATION

Today, we live in an increasing complex world. During the last 20 years, Florida's rapid population growth created an economy that was based on tourism, construction, real estate development, and agriculture. Currently we are in a depressed economy, but expectations are that it will rebound in the future. The economic swings present unique challenges and opportunities. Floridians in both urban and rural areas will strive to maintain and expand the local economy, while preserving the state's rich natural resources that enhance the lives of our residents and communities. Often these efforts cause stress and conflict in local communities as they try to balance a strong economy, clean environment and a healthy population. Citizens need the best available science-based information to assist them in making decisions that have implications for themselves, their families and communities. They also require skills to effectively collaborate and/or manage conflict over these complex issues.

Community-based capacity building (CCB) is a process where extension faculty engage citizens to become involved in local issues, and provides the community sound public choices amid uncertainty and conflict. Extension can help local citizens educate themselves about public issues that affect them, and provide citizens with tools to make better informed choices. Extension can also help citizens deal with increasingly complex and controversial issues where there may be no clear solution, or may even have conflicting science. The goals of these programs are to have individuals in the community actively involved in the issues that affect them, and to strengthen individuals and communities by promoting adoption of behavioral changes and decisions that demonstrate economic, environmental, and social resilience.

Current Programs and Activities: Natural Resources Leadership Institute, Sustainable Floridians, Community Matters, Center for Public Policy Education, Designing Green Development, County Water Schools, Healthy Housing and Community Development, Community Flow, Living on the Coast, Turning the Tide on Poverty, Envision Alachua, Community Gardening

PROGRAM OUTPUTS

- **Short-Term Outputs:** Existing extension programs are revised and new programs are developed that will provide citizens with new knowledge and skills to address community and social issues.
- **Short-Term Outputs:** Extension faculty receive the knowledge, skills and evaluation methods of these capacity-based building programs that they can provide into their local communities.
- **Short-Medium Term Outputs:** Trained Extension faculty provide CCB programs to local communities.
- **Long-term Outputs:** Extension faculty are able to document social, environmental and economic impacts in their local communities, based on the community-based programs that they deliver.

PROGRAM OUTCOMES

- **Short-Term Outcomes:** Community clientele participate in extension-led meetings to address local community issues.
- **Medium Term Outcomes:** Community clientele have increased skills that sustain leadership in local community issues.
- **Medium Term Outcomes:** Increased collaborations among individuals and organizations to address community issues.
- **Long-term Outcomes:** Sustained leadership and thriving partnerships within communities to address common issues.

AUDIENCE

Community leaders and decision-makers, members of community organizations, active and engaged citizens interested in local and regional community issues

EDUCATIONAL METHODS

Group learning workshops, webinars, fact sheets, power point presentations, short YouTube vignettes, case studies, curricula, role-playing, reading/writing assignments, blogs for continuing discussions, study groups.

RESULTS

- Decision-makers and active citizens identify Extension as source of information and partner to address community issues.
- Local citizens resolve complex issues based on knowledge, skills and support provided by extension faculty and staff.
- Sustainable, resilient, communities with demonstrated civic engagement.

NEEDS

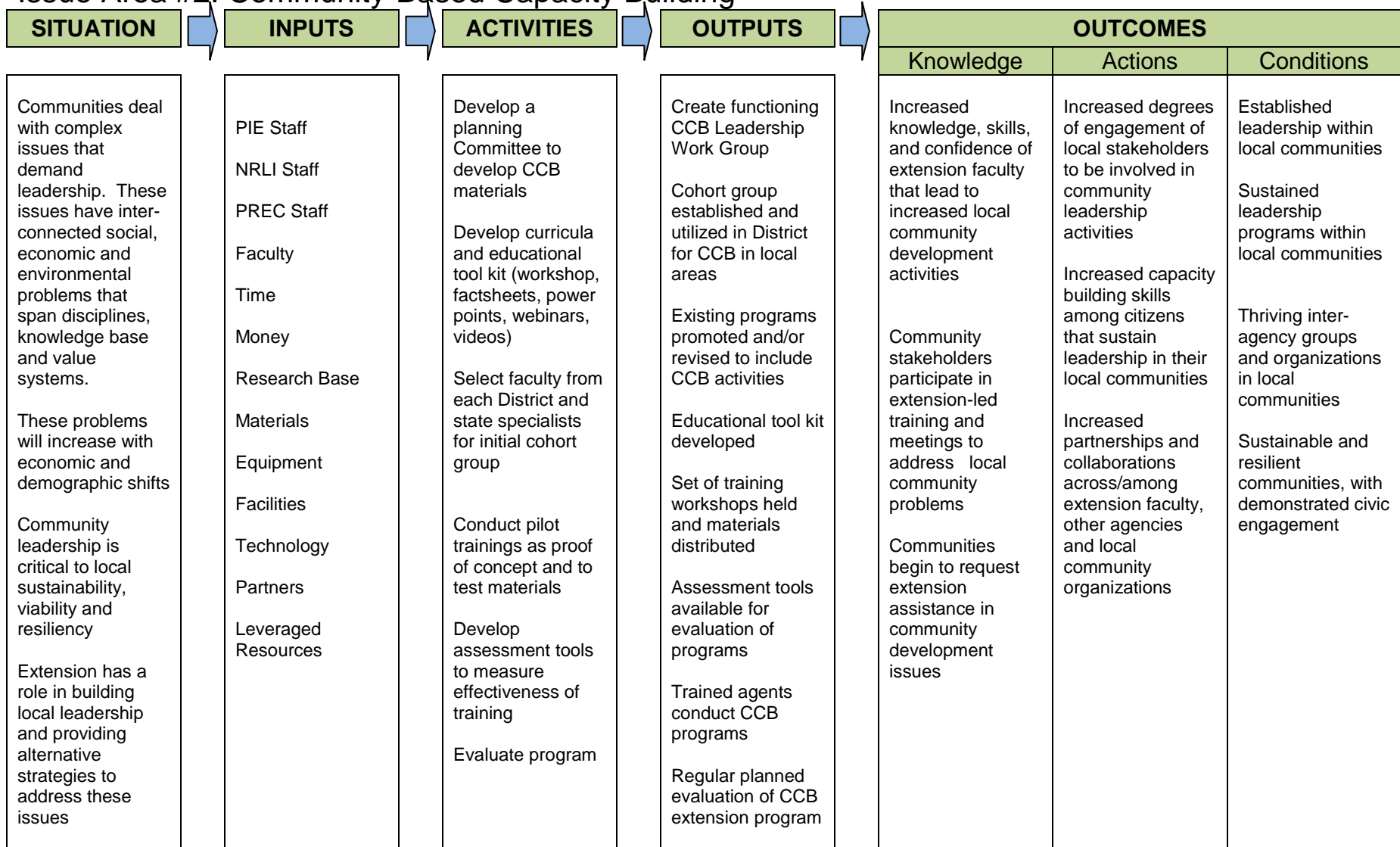
Funding is needed to provide training for extension faculty, specialist support and programmatic expenses, as well as funds for short-term and long-term evaluation of programs.

SUPER ISSUES

Community building programs are inter-disciplinary and can cut across the following super issues.

- Awareness and appreciation of food systems and the environment.
- Resource sustainability and conservation in Florida communities.
- Financial management for individuals and enterprises.
- Science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) opportunities for youth.
- Help Floridians develop healthy lifestyles.

Issue Area #2: Community-Based Capacity Building



ASSUMPTIONS

- Need for extension faculty training in community capacity building
- Florida communities will continue to grow with conflict over resources
- Extension can play leadership role in addressing local problems
- Training will lead to more competent faculty to address issues
- Training program will be universal for both rural and urban audiences

EXTERNAL FACTORS

- Florida economy. Growth/decline will lead to new complex issues
- Support for Capacity Building Programs within UF structure
- Partners and staff may change over time that affect training/delivery
- Competent faculty to address issues