



EXTENSION IMPACT

Supporting Wisconsin's Small Businesses, Entrepreneurs

Wisconsin communities rely on businesses and entrepreneurs to increase overall economic well-being and quality of life. Businesses and entrepreneurs require critical information and knowledge of resources to be successful. Knowledge of these resources strengthens the local entrepreneurial networks that support existing businesses and enhance entrepreneurship. This helps increase the quantity and quality of entrepreneurial activity, and leads to more high-growth companies. The state of Wisconsin is currently ranked 39th (out of 50) in the nation on early-stage entrepreneurship. Given the more than 10,000 new businesses created annually and over 130,000 existing businesses with employees, Wisconsin has no shortage of opportunities to support these critical engines of local economies, livelihoods, and wealth creation.

Extension programming, connections, and research serve as a crucial resource for local communities that are examining ways to strengthen local businesses and support entrepreneurship. Last year, 58 Extension educators, specialists, and program managers supported and delivered educational programming in 63 counties in Wisconsin. We provided research and data support to increase the quantity and quality of entrepreneurial activity, and to foster more high-growth companies. Educational programming and research covered a broad array of business sectors such as childcare, food, lodging, pharmacy, retail, and tourism. Educators and specialists completed over 100 discrete business-support related activities resulting in hundreds of local partnerships, thousands of hours working with businesses and partner organizations, and reaching over 12,000 participants.

Extension partnered with Wisconsin Small Business Development Center, the Wisconsin Early Childhood Association, the nine Wisconsin Child Care Resource & Referral Agencies, and several local economic development partners to support business development opportunities for existing and pre-venture child care providers in an effort called the Wisconsin Child Care Business Initiative. The project aimed to improve or grow existing child care business operations and help new owners chart

Extension provides communities with the information, research, education, and technical assistance needed to help them improve local economic well-being and quality of life in Wisconsin.

their course to success. Nearly 650 people from 63 Wisconsin counties participated in the program, many of whom were new to child care businesses and were interested in opening one. Participants often identified that these opportunities led to greater confidence in several aspects of business operations such as the legal implications of business startup, financial planning, recordkeeping, accounting, policy and procedures development, staff hiring, training, and professional service contracting. These efforts created a sense of support among their peers.



The Community Economic Development program is part of Extension's Community Development Institute. Learn more by visiting economicdevelopment.extension.wisc.edu.

in 2021



12,000+
participants



63 counties
receiving direct programming



~100
activities completed



Extension
UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN-MADISON

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