



UNIVERSITY OF
CENTRAL
ARKANSAS™

CENTER FOR
COMMUNITY
& ECONOMIC
DEVELOPMENT

2023-2024 ANNUAL REPORT



Mission

To have a positive impact on communities by equipping leaders with economic tools and resources, building consensus to achieve community goals and bringing UCA resources and communities together.

Vision

We envision communities with robust economies, a flourishing quality of life and diverse and engaged citizen leaders.

Values

We strive to develop relationships with leaders and communities that are based on:

- Trust and respect
- Local action that fosters consensus-building, community ownership and empowerment, transparency and inclusion
- An asset-based approach focusing on local strengths as the foundation for success

“Community development facilitates economic development” is the mantra we stand by throughout our work at the University of Central Arkansas Center for Community and Economic Development. It is what frames our conversations, sets our vision, and serves as a best practice. We believe that when we create communities that have high quality of life and place, our local economies will grow strong and resilient.

The training and technical assistance we provided in 2023-2024 upholds our legacy of a high standard of service and continues to positively impact all four corners of our state. We continue to support Arkansas communities and their leaders through access to high-quality training, capacity building, strategic planning, and other customized services that meet each communities’ unique needs.

Our staff continues to offer a slate of community and economic development support services across the state: walk audits, Strategic Doing workshops, CliftonStrengths training, First Impressions Tour assessments, Newtonia Go simulations, Poverty Simulations, and Futures Game simulations. We also offered new services such as a mission and vision development workshop for the City of Searcy.

We continued to support Washington and Benton county leaders through the Community Development Pipeline program, funded by the Walton Family Foundation. In partnership with Entergy, we engaged Vilonia and Mount Ida in the Community Catalyst program. Following the CDI 2023 Advanced Year in Murfreesboro, we hosted a Strategic Doing workshop to assist local leaders in identifying high-impact, low-hanging fruit and created an action plan to focus their community and economic development efforts moving forward.

These are just a handful of examples that showcase our impact. I invite you to learn more by reviewing this annual report. Finally, I want to acknowledge and thank the countless partners and sponsors we have in our network who make this work possible.



Shelby Fiegel

Shelby Fiegel, PCED
CCED Director

Year at a Glance

1,700

ATTENDEES AT CENTER
TRAINING EVENTS

902

ATTENDEES AT TECHNICAL
ASSISTANCE EVENTS

30

ARTICLES FEATURED
CCED

34

CITIES AND COUNTIES RECEIVED
DIRECT ASSISTANCE

\$160,000

RAISED

Where We Served



2023-2024 Training & Technical Assistance

CDI 2024 Advanced Year Community Visits

Greenbrier
Morrilton
Vilonia

CED Fellowship - Fall '23 and Spring '24

Community Development Pipeline Program

Washington County
Benton County

Community Catalyst

Vilonia
Mt. Ida

Strategic Doing Workshop

Little River County
Murfreesboro
United Way of Central Arkansas
CDI Central: Bossier City

Strengths Workshop

Leadership Arkansas County
Leadership Batesville
CDI Central: Bossier City

Walk Audits

Prairie Grove

Mission & Vision Development

City of Searcy

Futures Game Simulation

Conway Area Leadership Institute
Boone County Leadership Institute
Leadership Mountain Home
Stuttgart
Leadership Crawford County
Leadership Arkansas County

Newtonia Go! Simulation

Cabot Youth Leadership Council
CDI Central: Bossier City
Paragould Youth Leadership
Conway Area Leadership Institute

Walk Audit

Prairie Grove

Branding

Pea Ridge

Regional Trainings

Arkansas Equity Summit
Arkansas Leaders Consortium
NWA Community Building Workshop
NWA Gallup Strengths Workshop

Community Survey

Main Street El Dorado
City of Elkins

Poverty Simulation & Workshop

Jacksonville School District
UCA Honors College
Leadership Crawford County
Paragould Adult Leadership
Washington County Youth Leadership
Leadership Arkansas County
Stuttgart School District
CDI Central: Bossier City
Cabot School District
Leadership Conway County
Arkansas Department of Education
Fayetteville Teen Leadership Xperience

Economic Development Action Plan

City of Pea Ridge

First Impressions Tour

City of Harrison
City of Prairie Grove

Training

Conway Area Youth Leadership Institute World of Work Session
Women's Leadership Academy Community Development Session
Mid South Basic Community and Neighborhood Development Session
CDI Mid Atlantic Community and Economic Development Practice Session

Community Development Institute

The 38th annual Community Development Institute (CDI) was held July 29 - August 2, 2024. The Institute hosted nearly 200 leaders from across the Mid-South and beyond: Alabama, Arizona, Delaware, Georgia, Louisiana, Missouri, Mississippi, and Tennessee. Thanks to our incredible partners, over 75 scholarships were awarded.

During the 2024 Keynote Presentation, Janet Harris, Executive Director of the Winthrop Rockefeller Institute (WRI) shared a walk through the life of Arkansas Governor Winthrop Rockefeller including his work in community development and the qualities that WRI strives to instill in Arkansans today. The CDI Advanced Year class visited three communities in central Arkansas to learn best practices to take back to their own communities: Greenbrier, Vilonia, and Morrilton.

The Friend of CDI award was awarded to Arkansas Electric Cooperatives and the Bill Miller award given to Mulberry Mayor Gary Baxter. Other award winners included: Ernest Whitelaw Award recipient Misty Hawkins of the Arkansas River Valley Regional Library System, Year 2 Gray Champion Award recipient Amanda Killingsworth of Entergy Arkansas, Year 2 Purple Champion Award recipient Michelle Viney of Communities Unlimited, and Year 1 Champions Malik Barnes of Americans 4 Action and Vanesha Sasser of Walnut Hill Communications.

Visit uca.edu/cdi or our social media channels for additional updates, pictures, and videos of CDI 2024.

We hope you join us for CDI 2025 on July 28 - August 1, 2025! You can register at uca.edu/cdi



Follow CDI: facebook.com/cdi.uca | [@cdicentral](https://twitter.com/cdicentral) | youtube.com/cdicentral

CDI 2024 Awards



Bill Miller Award
Mayor Gary Baxter



Friend of CDI
Arkansas Electric Cooperatives



Earnest Whitelaw Award
Misty Hawkins



Year 2 Gray Class Award
Amanda Killingsworth



Year 2 Purple Award
Michelle Viney



Year 1 Class Award
Vanessa Sasser & Malik Barnes

CDI 2024 Sponsors

PRESENTING SPONSORS



KEYNOTE SPONSOR



SPONSORS



SCHOLARSHIP SUPPORTERS



CDI Alumni Network

CDI 2023 Year 3 Class
(Pay It Forward Scholarships)

Bill Miller
Scholarship Fund

Jenna Rhodes
Scholarship Fund

CDI Advisory Board

The CDI Advisory Board was established in 2002 to assist UCA with the development of CDI curriculum, marketing, resource development, and external stakeholder support. Thank you to all CDI Advisory Board members for their outstanding service!

The complete list of board members can be found at uca.edu/cdi/advisory-board/

CED Fellowship Program

The Community and Economic Development (CED) Fellowship program aims to prepare UCA students for careers in the field of community and economic development. The program exposes UCA students to a variety of community or economic development careers and provides networking, coaching and mentoring to enhance career preparedness. During the program, fellows participate in three site visits that showcase community and economic development activities at the local and state levels of government and in the nonprofit sector. Activities include organization site visits, mock interviews and mentorship from CCED staff. Fellows have the opportunity to join the Arkansas Community Development Society and attend the Community Development Institute.

Five students were selected for the Fellowship in fall 2023 and two students were selected for spring 2024. The students attended site visits with the Office of Governor Sarah Huckabee Sanders, Arkansas Economic Development Commission, City of Hope Outreach, United Way of Central Arkansas, Conway Area Chamber of Commerce, and the City of Conway.



Abbie Asher
Benton, AR
Political Science
Fall 2023 Fellow



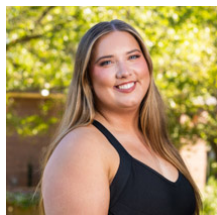
Ashlyn Billingsley
Birmingham, AL
Pre-Law
Fall 2023 Fellow



Emmet Brick
Fayetteville, AR
*Environmental Science,
Planning Administration,
and Economics*
Fall 2023 Fellow



Summer Charles
Sherwood, AR
Political Science
Fall 2023 Fellow



Kylie Garritty
Little Rock, AR
Public Relations
Fall 2023 Fellow



Aminatou Adeniji
Ivory Coast, West Africa
International Relations
Spring 2024 Fellow



Phoenix Vu
Fort Smith, AR
*Political Science and
Public Administration*
Spring 2024 Fellow

Community Development Pipeline Program

CCED received a three-year grant from the Walton Family Foundation to support the development and implementation of the Community Development Pipeline program. The vision of the program is to train community leaders on foundational community and economic development principles, positively impact and uplift the economies and quality of life of communities whose leaders participate in the program, and develop new relationships that build bridges across Arkansas communities. The CD Pipeline program provides Community Development Institute (CDI) training and technical assistance services to community leaders in Washington and Benton counties. Twenty-five (25) community leaders from Benton and Washington counties were selected to participate in the Pipeline programs.

The leaders selected for the program include:



Amy Drummonds
Downtown
Springdale Alliance



Mayor Chris Moore
City of Lowell



Daisy Bonilla
The Valle Pino
Foundation



Mayor David Faulk
City of Prairie Grove



Dustin Phy
City of Pea Ridge



Ezequiel Tovar
Elkins Community
Network



Hannah Lee
University of
Arkansas



James Bell
Greater Bentonville
Area Chamber of
Commerce



Jamie Smith
Elkins Community
Network



Judith Yanez
RootED Northwest
Arkansas



Kayla Knight
City of Centerton



Keegan Stanton
City of Bentonville



Kelly Rich
Experience
Fayetteville



Lydia Alston
CDC of Bentonville +
Bella Vista, Inc.



Mallory Barker
Walton Arts Center



Michelle Viney
Communities
Unlimited



Mayor Nathan See
City of Pea Ridge



Judge Patrick Deakins
Washington County



Ross Phillips
Rogers Lowell
Chamber



Stacy Morris
Main Street Siloam
Springs



Taryn Golden
Prairie Grove
Chamber of
Commerce



Trace Henley
Health Partners



Trish Ouei
Beaver Water District



Mayor Troy Reed
City of Elkins



Veronica Alzaga
Madres in Acción

Project Highlights

Community Catalyst 2.0

The Community Catalyst program is made possible through a partnership between CCED, Entergy Arkansas (Entergy), and the John C. Stennis Institute of Government at Mississippi State University (MSU). Two Arkansas communities in Entergy's service territory, Vilonia and Mt. Ida, participated in the program. The program focuses on grassroots citizen engagement and technical assistance training to develop small, actionable community and economic development goals and to serve as a catalyst for longer-term economic development engagements and priorities. Learn more at uca.edu/cced/community-catalyst/

Arkansas Leaders Consortium

2024 celebrated the third convening of leaders across the state for the Arkansas Leaders Consortium. The consortium is hosted by the CDI Alumni Network in partnership with LeadAR, Leadership Arkansas, Arkansas Economic Developers and Chamber Executives, and the Arkansas State University Delta Center for Economic Development (representing the Delta Leadership Institute). The event serves as a unique opportunity for alumni and members of these organizations (and friends) to gather in one place to learn from one another and connect. Sessions during the consortium were led by Chris Cook of Entergy, Dr. Teri Cox with Cox Consulting, LLC., Dr. Julie Robinson with LeadAR, Kerrie Lauck with KLauckwork, Dr. Cliff Jones with the Arkansas State University Delta Center, and Lisa Davis with LeadAR.

Arkansas Equity Summit

CCED recognizes that striving for equity in our communities is a crucial part of community and economic development. To support that vision, we hosted the fourth annual Arkansas Racial Equity Summit in October 2023. Participants discussed and were exposed to community-engaged research, best practices, wealth building, and how we can support and engage our immigrant populations. Partners included Arkansas Black Hall of Fame, Southern Bancorp, Teach Plus Arkansas, TNTP, and Arkansas United.

Prairie Grove Walk Audit

CCED partnered with Crafton Tull to complete a walk audit in the City of Prairie Grove. The goal of walk audits is to help develop placemaking concepts and solutions for circulation (vehicular, pedestrian and bike), parking, universal access, low-impact development concepts, wayfinding, beautification and community character improvement. The walk audits included one-on-one interaction and assessment of a three-by-three-block area of each community's downtown or other selected area. Crafton Tull provided the community with a brief summary of the audit that outlined potential opportunities.



Community Surveys - Main Street El Dorado and Elkins

Community surveys provide crucial data community leaders can utilize to make informed decisions, serve as a basis for future planning efforts, and provide an understanding of citizen needs and perceptions.

Pea Ridge Rebranding

In March through June of 2024, the City of Pea Ridge partnered with CCED and Thrive, Inc. to build a new brand and logo. The new logo embraces their military history, natural beauty, and long history in Northwest Arkansas.



Economic Development Action Plans - Pea Ridge and Elkins

CCED partnered with Pea Ridge, Elkins, and Jim Fram of Community Growth Strategies, LLC to create economic development action plans based on community demographics and economic data, focus groups with residents, and interviews with leaders and stakeholders.

First Impressions Tour - Harrison and Prairie Grove

A First Impressions Tour identifies two similar communities whose leaders "swap places" for the day. The goal is to explore, assess, and build regional relationships; a FIT should provide each community with a list of strengths, weaknesses, and opportunities for the future with an unbiased perspective.

For more information about our programs and services visit www.uca.edu/cced/



Other Activities

Arkansas Municipal League City & Town Magazine

CCED continued its partnership with Arkansas Municipal League's City & Town magazine to contribute articles for the Community Development section. Articles in 2003 - 2024 covered stories such as: community foundations' impact at the local-level, community centered crowd funding, and First Impressions Tours (FIT).

You can read our articles at: uca.edu/cced/blog/

UCA Alliance for Economic Impact

UCA is a driver of economic impact in central Arkansas and state-wide. In fact, the university's economic impact is over \$1.01 billion annually. We understand the responsibility we have to the state and its economy, our students, and our community. That's why we are committed to being an active driver of economic growth and opportunity.

The UCA Alliance for Economic Impact is composed of key programs across the university that have a shared commitment to meeting the economic and workforce needs of the state. We bring together the fields of community development, talent and innovation, workforce development, and entrepreneurship to find new and better ways to support the state and its people. Alliance members include:

- Center for Community and Economic Development
- UCA College of Business (Applied Data Analytics and Computer Information Systems)
- UCA College of Natural Sciences and Mathematics (Cyber Range and Computer Science)
- Arkansas Coding Academy
- Conductor
- UCA Makerspace

Learn more at: uca.edu/economicimpact



**UCA ALLIANCE FOR
ECONOMIC IMPACT**

Staff Highlights



Shelby Fiegel, PCED
CCED Director

- Graduated from Leadership Arkansas Class 18
- Served as Chair of the Community Development Council (CDC)
- Served as the Arkansas Community Development Society Ex-Officio
- Served as a member of the UCA Alliance for Economic Impact
- Served as a Conway Historic District Commissioner



Tabatha Duvall, PCED
CCED Assistant Director

- Joined CCED in April 2024
- Obtained PCED Certification
- Served as Arkansas Community Development Society Vice President of Membership
- Presented at the Community Development Society Annual Meeting in Portland, Oregon and the World Community Development Conference in Darwin, NT, Australia in Summer 2023 on Utilizing Asset-based Community Development in Rural Areas



Tracie Spivey
CCED Project Coordinator

- Joined CCED in September 2024
- Graduated from CDI 2024
- Member of the 2024 UCA LEAD Program
- Served as member of UCA's CERT Team



Kristen Hurst
CCED Graduate Assistant

- Joined CCED in January 2024
- Pursuing her Masters of Business Administration

CCED would like to thank former Assistant Director Abayi Ibro Ayoubu, former Project Coordinator Michael Hudson, and former Graduate Assistant Zadie St. Louis for their shared impact at CCED!



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