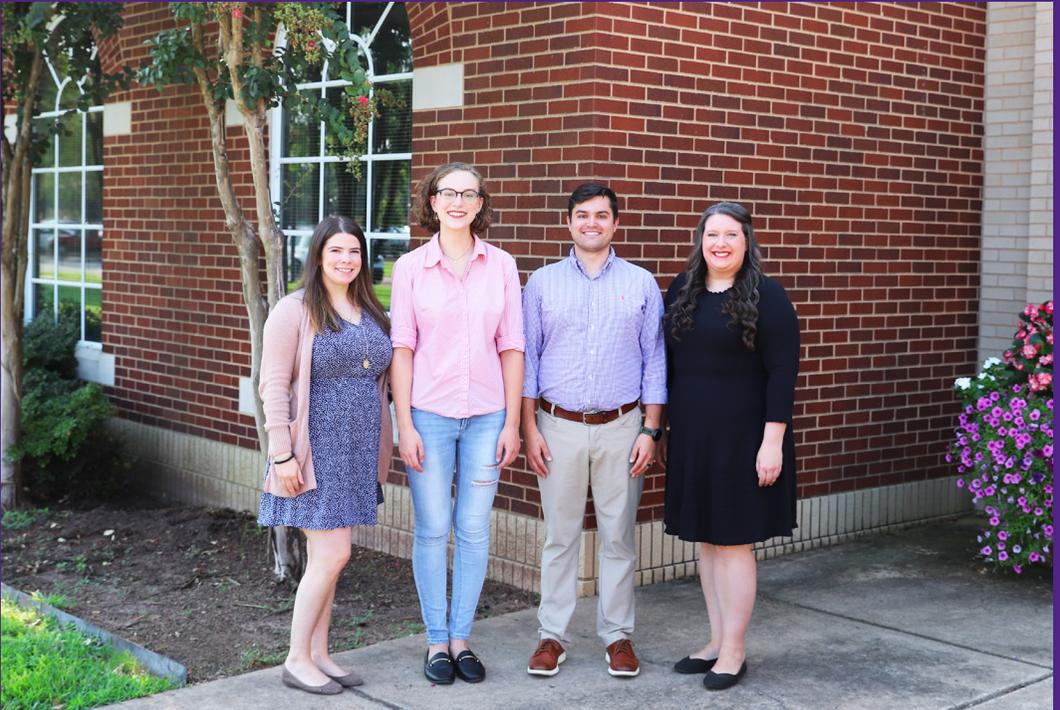




UNIVERSITY OF  
CENTRAL  
ARKANSAS™

CENTER FOR COMMUNITY &  
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

## 2020 - 2021 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

The Center strives 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

# Message from Our Director

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It feels like only yesterday we were publishing our 2019 - 2020 annual report on the heels of the COVID-19 pandemic. We were filled with uncertainty about the upcoming year, yet determined to continue to provide high-quality training and technical assistance to communities across the state of Arkansas.

In our annual report last year I shared that 2019 - 2020 was a “roller coaster of a year,” but the same can be said for 2020 - 2021. Our team innovated, maneuvered, edited, and changed as needed. Our standard of service never wavered, and we were able to directly serve 21 cities and counties in Arkansas and Louisiana. We connected with new leaders and continued to develop our relationships across the state.

This year we continued to provide assistance to cities participating in the Community Catalyst program in partnership with Entergy, hosted the inaugural Arkansas Racial Equity Summit, developed a brand for the City of Magnolia, worked with four cities to provide walk audits in partnership with Crafton Tull, launched a new version of the First Impressions Tour (FIT) assessment in partnership with the Arkansas Economic Developers and Chamber Executives, continued our virtual training series Community Conversations, completed seasons 1 and 2 of the CDI Podcast, hosted numerous Poverty Simulations and Futures Game simulations, and much more. We were also fortunate to be able to host the 35th annual Community Development Institute (CDI) 2021 after making the decision to cancel Year 1, Year 2, and Year 3 classes in 2020.

We could not have achieved so much in a tumultuous time without your support. If you are reading this annual report, thank you.



Shelby Fiegel, PCED  
CCED Director

# Year at a Glance

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2,112 ATTENDEES AT CENTER  
TRAINING EVENTS

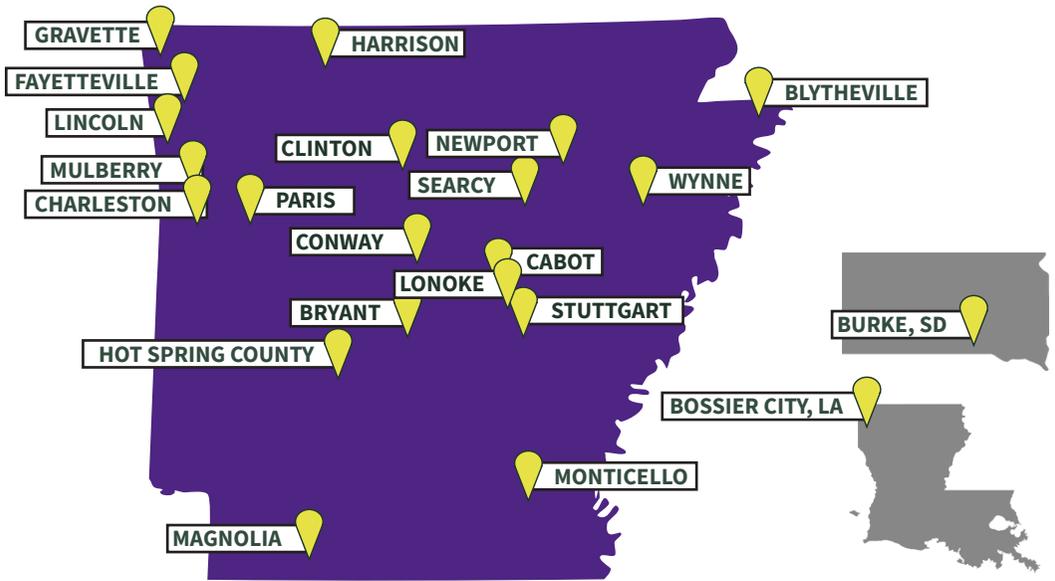
578 ATTENDEES AT TECHNICAL  
ASSISTANCE EVENTS

2,650 ATTENDED PRESENTATIONS  
BY CCED STAFF

21 CITIES AND COUNTIES RECEIVED  
DIRECT ASSISTANCE

33 ARTICLES FEATURED  
CCED

\$100,000+ RAISED



## 2020 - 2021 Trainings & Technical Assistance

### Community Catalyst

Wynne, Arkansas  
Magnolia, Arkansas  
Searcy, Arkansas  
Harrison, Arkansas  
Monticello, Arkansas

### Futures Game

Boone County Leadership  
CDI 2020 Participants  
City of Bryant  
Conway Area Leadership Institute

### Poverty Simulation

Baptist Health - Conway  
Conway Area Leadership Institute  
Conway Area Youth Leadership Institute  
Fayetteville, AR  
LeadAR Class 19  
Bossier City, LA  
Billie Sutton Leadership Institute, Burke, SD  
Cabot and Harrison, Arkansas  
Court Appointed Special Advocates  
Delta Leadership Institute

### CED Fellowship (Virtual)

Fall 2019 and Spring 2020 in Conway, Arkansas

### Walk Audit

Blytheville, Arkansas  
Clinton, Arkansas  
Monticello, Arkansas  
Mulberry, Arkansas

### Community Branding

Magnolia, Arkansas

### Newtonia Go!

Conway Area Leadership Institute

### First Impressions Tour

Stuttgart, Arkansas  
Newport, Arkansas  
Charleston, Arkansas  
Paris, Arkansas  
Lincoln, Arkansas  
Gravette, Arkansas

### CDI 2021 Advanced Year Community

Monticello, Arkansas

### VISTA

Hot Spring County, Arkansas  
Lonoke, Arkansas



# Partners

## Thank you to our partners!

- 64.6 Downtown
- AEP SWEPCO
- Arkansas Center for Health Improvement
- Arkansas Coding Academy
- Arkansas Community Development Society
- ARcare
- AR Conductor
- Arkansas Department of Parks and Tourism
- Arkansas Economic Development Commission
- Arkansas Economic Developers and Chamber Executives
- Arkansas Municipal League
- Arkansas Peace and Justice Memorial Movement
- Arkansas Public Policy Panel
- Arkansas State University Delta Center
- Bank OZK
- Batesville Area Chamber of Commerce
- Billie Sutton Leadership Institute
- Bossier Chamber of Commerce
- Cabot Chamber of Commerce
- Chaffee Crossing
- City of Blytheville
- City of Bryant
- City of Charleston
- City of Clinton
- City of Gravette
- City of Harrison
- City of Lincoln
- City of Lonoke
- City of Magnolia
- City of Maumelle
- City of Monticello
- City of Mulberry
- City of Paris
- City of Searcy
- City of Stuttgart
- City of Wynne
- City of Van Buren
- City of Hope Outreach
- Conway Area Chamber of Commerce
- Conway Development Corporation
- Conway Convention Center and Visitors Bureau
- Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASA)
- Crafton Tull
- Cross County Chamber of Commerce and Wynne Economic Development
- Crossroads Coalition
- Delta Regional Authority
- East Arkansas Crossroads Coalition
- Electric Cooperatives of Arkansas
- Entergy
- Fort Smith Regional Alliance
- ForWARD
- Harrison Chamber of Commerce
- Hot Spring County Judge's Office
- Innovate Arkansas
- Just Communities of Arkansas
- LeadAR
- Leadership Benton County
- Leadership Fayetteville
- Magnolia Columbia County Chamber of Commerce
- Main Street Arkansas
- Metroplan
- Monticello Economic Development Commission
- Mississippi Economic Development Corporation
- Newport Economic Development Commission
- Paris Chamber of Commerce
- Retail Strategies
- Rural Community Alliance
- Searcy Regional Chamber of Commerce
- Silverlake Design Studios
- Simmons Bank
- Stennis Institute at Mississippi State University
- Stuttgart Chamber of Commerce
- The Yarn Storytelling
- Thrive
- UCA Minority Mentorship Program
- UCA Outreach
- UCA Poverty Studies Working Group
- UCA Service-Learning
- UCA University Training
- University of Arkansas Cooperative Extension Service
- University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences
- Winthrop Rockefeller Institute
- Winrock International

# Community Development Institute

The 35th annual Community Development Institute (CDI) was held August 2 - 6, 2021 on the campus of the University of Central Arkansas. The Institute hosted nearly 150 community leaders from across the Mid-South and beyond: Arkansas, Indiana, Kansas, Louisiana, Maryland, Mississippi, Missouri, Oklahoma, Texas, and West Virginia.

Matt Dunne of the Center on Rural Innovation (CORI) was CDI's 2021 Keynote speaker. He shared his work in rural America building 21st-century economic development models, creating tools to allow rural stakeholders to do more impactful work, and investing in rural entrepreneurs to empower communities to build wealth and jobs.

The CDI Advanced Year class traveled to Monticello, Arkansas to conduct an in-depth assessment of the community based on online research, a driving tour, and interviews with community members. The CDI staff will continue to follow up with Monticello leaders through the Community Catalyst program and will help them identify key opportunities and quick wins based on a report created by the CDI Advanced Year.

Amy Whitehead, UCA Chief of Staff and former director of CDI Central, was recognized as the Bill Miller award recipient and Crafton Tull was awarded the Friend of Community Development award. Visit our social media channels for updates, pictures, and videos of CDI 2021.

We hope you join us for CDI 2022 on August 1 - 5, 2022! You can register at [www.uca.edu/cdi](http://www.uca.edu/cdi)



# 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. This past year, our advisory board served a crucial role as the CCED team navigated the COVID-19 pandemic and deserve special thanks and recognition for their insight and support.

Thank you to all CDI Advisory Board members for their outstanding service! **The complete list of board members can be found at [www.uca.edu/cdi/advisory-board/](http://www.uca.edu/cdi/advisory-board/)**



# Project Highlights

## **Community Catalyst - Wynne, Searcy, Magnolia, Harrison and Monticello**

Through the Community Catalyst program, CCED, in partnership with Entergy Arkansas (Entergy) and the John C. Stennis Institute of Government at Mississippi State University, is assisting five Arkansas communities in Entergy's service territory. 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.

The Catalyst program utilizes a process called Strategic Doing. Strategic Doing is an innovative community development tool that, unlike traditional strategic planning, focuses on immediate, impactful small wins and goals to create transformation in communities. The following Arkansas communities were selected for the Community Catalyst program: Wynne, Searcy, Magnolia, Monticello, and Harrison.

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, our Community Catalyst scope of work has transitioned to accommodate the new environment. Our work via the Catalyst program in 2020 - 2021 included: conducting a small business focused retail workshop in Wynne in partnership with Retail Strategies, community surveys in Harrison and Monticello, and focusing on our Community Catalyst communities with our technical assistance projects including conducting a walk audit in Monticello, facilitating a branding process in Magnolia, and conducting virtual training programs with Harrison.

Learn more about the Community Catalyst program at [www.uca.edu/cced/current-projects/](http://www.uca.edu/cced/current-projects/)



## Community Branding - Magnolia

CCED partnered with nonprofit design firm Thrive to assist the City of Magnolia, Arkansas with a community branding initiative. Magnolia previously did not have a city logo.

The branding development process engaged city leaders, the Magnolia-Columbia County Chamber of Commerce, Magnolia business leaders, and other local stakeholders. Based on feedback and research, Thrive developed a one-page creative brief, brand standards guide, tagline, logo for both print and digital contexts, social media icons and banner imagery, as well as other supplemental materials.

The final deliverable was a fresh identity for the city that could also be utilized as a logo for other community-affiliated organizations.

## Walk Audits - Blytheville, Clinton, Monticello, and Mulberry

CCED partnered with Crafton Tull to complete walk audits in the cities of Blytheville, Clinton, Monticello, and Mulberry. 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 each community with a brief summary of the audit that outlined potential opportunities.

Due to the walk audits, each community is moving forward in completing suggestions within the assessments. For example, Mississippi County leveraged the walk audit report and received a Rural LISC placemaking grant that will positively impact Blytheville's downtown.



## **2020 Arkansas Racial Equity Summit and 2021 National Day of Racial Healing**

Held on October 8, 2020, the Arkansas Racial Equity Summit convened over 200 diverse Arkansas leaders to learn about the history of racial injustice in Arkansas, current inequities that exist today (in health, education, wealth and income, and the criminal justice system), and provided attendees with actionable steps that they could implement immediately. Our evaluation results displayed overwhelming positive feedback and examples of how leaders would take the knowledge shared and apply it in their communities. The Summit was sponsored by our partners at ARcare, Arkansas Electric Cooperatives, and the Conway Area Chamber of Commerce. **You can learn more about the 2020 Arkansas Racial Equity Summit at [www.uca.edu/cced/arkansas-racial-equity-summit/](http://www.uca.edu/cced/arkansas-racial-equity-summit/)**

To continue our work towards racial equity, we partnered with Just Communities of Arkansas, the Arkansas Peace and Justice Memorial Movement (APJMM), and the Arkansas Municipal League to raise awareness of the National Day of Racial Healing (NDORH). Because of this effort, over 100 cities, towns, organizations, counties, and universities in Arkansas, as well as Governor Asa Hutchinson, issued a NDORH proclamation.

We followed this effort by partnering with APJMM and The Yarn Storytelling to develop the 28-Day Social Justice and Racial Equity Challenge. This was a daily challenge that offered one action per day for each day in February to increase awareness and knowledge of racial equity and how to take action in your own life. These actions were complemented by weekly storytelling workshops hosted by The Yarn Storytelling to help participants further understand their stories and themselves.

## **First Impressions Tours - Lincoln, Gravette, Charleston, and Paris**

Our team partnered with the Arkansas Economic Developers and Chamber Executives (AEDCE) and Crafton Tull to offer our First Impressions Tour (FIT) program to Lincoln, Charleston, Gravette, and Paris. This program partners two similar communities together to conduct a driving tour to assess each other's physical, social, and economic infrastructure. The completed assessments were then reviewed by CCED and our partners at the Arkansas Economic Developers and Chamber Executives and Crafton Tull to generate a report that included an assessment of each community and next steps. The leaders then debriefed on their experience virtually.

## **Arkansas Municipal League**

CCED continued its partnership with Arkansas Municipal League's City & Town magazine to contribute articles for the Community Development section. Articles in 2020 – 2021 covered topics such as: the American Rescue Plan Act, environmental sustainability, conducting community surveys, racial equity, retail recruitment, and the community benefits of murals and public art. **You can read our community development submissions from City & Town magazine at [www.uca.edu/cced/media/](http://www.uca.edu/cced/media/)**

## Community and Economic Development Fellowship (Virtual)

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.

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the CED Fellowship was transitioned to a virtual format for Fall 2020 and Spring 2021. Six students were selected for the Fellowship in fall 2020 and four students were selected for spring 2021. The students attended virtual site visits with 64.6 Downtown, the Arkansas Public Policy Panel, Arkansas Parks and Tourism, the Arkansas Economic Development Commission, ForwARD Arkansas, Winrock International, the Conductor, and Main Street Arkansas.



**Caylin Allen**  
Bryant, AR  
Fall 2020 Fellow



**Kelsey Carter**  
Blytheville, AR  
Fall 2020 Fellow



**Lauren McLemore**  
Maumelle, AR  
Fall 2020 Fellow



**Logan Smedley**  
Hector, AR  
Fall 2020 Fellow



**Mya Hall**  
Stuttgart, AR  
Fall 2020 Fellow



**Mallory McClure**  
Batesville, AR  
Spring 2021 Fellow



**Brooklyn Ray**  
Fort Smith, AR  
Spring 2021 Fellow



**Peyton Tolliver**  
Columbia, MO  
Spring 2021 Fellow

Not pictured:

Fall 2020 Fellow Raven Nobles, Russellville, AR  
Spring 2021 Fellow Cadyn Qualls, Monette, AR

# Training Events

## Community Conversations

To combat the lack of connection many of us are experiencing in a virtual world, in partnership with the Arkansas Economic Development Commission Community Development Division, the Arkansas State University Delta Center for Economic Development, and Entergy Arkansas, CCED created an ongoing series called Community Conversations to explore relevant community and economic development topics while having open conversations with one another. During Community Conversations sessions, participants are encouraged to connect with their colleagues across the state and have meaningful discussions about what's going on in your community.

We hosted seven Community Conversations virtual gatherings in 2020-2021 with over 350 total participants. Community Conversations topics included: How to Host a Virtual Meeting, Census 2020, Small Business Highlights, An Information Session with Community and Economic Development Organizations, Braver Angels, Depolarizing Within, Marketing Tips for Small Businesses, and Building Entrepreneurial Ecosystems.

Learn more about Community Conversations events at [www.uca.edu/cced/community-conversations](http://www.uca.edu/cced/community-conversations)



## Poverty Simulation

Ten Poverty Simulations were held in partnership with UCA Service-Learning in both in-person and virtual formats. To adapt to the COVID-19 Pandemic, we developed a virtual Poverty Simulation that allowed us to continue to offer simulations to our partners. A Poverty Simulation is an immersive experience intended to move community leaders to think about the harsh realities of poverty and to talk about how communities can address the problem. The simulation is a unique, interactive experience that helps people begin to understand what life is like with a shortage of money and an abundance of stress.

We held in-person Poverty Simulations with Baptist Health - Conway, the Conway Area Leadership Institute (CALI), the Conway Area Youth Leadership Institute (CAYLI), Leadership Fayetteville, and LeadAR Class 19. We hosted virtual Poverty Simulations with community leaders in Bossier City, LA, the Billie Sutton Leadership Institute in South Dakota, the Cabot and Harrison Chambers of Commerce, Arkansas Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASA), and the Delta Leadership Institute (DLI).

**If you are interested in hosting a Poverty Simulation in your community, please go to [www.uca.edu/cced/training-opportunities](http://www.uca.edu/cced/training-opportunities)**

## Newtonia Go!

CCED continued to host Newtonia Go! simulations, based off of the Newtonia simulation CDI Year 1 participants experience. Newtonia Go! is a community and economic development simulation that allows participants to experience the development of a community from the ground up and some of the real-life challenges that community leaders and citizens face. CCED presented Newtonia Go! for the Conway Area Leadership Institute (CALI).

**If you are interested in bringing Newtonia Go! to your community, contact Shelby Fiegel at [sfiegel@uca.edu](mailto:sfiegel@uca.edu).**

## Futures Game Simulation

CCED began to offer Futures Game simulations both in-person and virtually. The Futures Game is a “choose your own adventure” style simulation where participants act as the leaders of Sweet Tea County, Arkansas and develop the area over a simulated 20-year period. The goal of the simulation is to encourage community leaders to develop a future-focused mindset when thinking about planning for their communities. We held virtual Futures Game simulations with the Boone County Leadership Institute and the City of Bryant and held an in-person Futures Game Simulation with CALI.

**If you are interested in bringing the Futures Game to your community, contact Shelby Fiegel at [sfiegel@uca.edu](mailto:sfiegel@uca.edu).**

# Virtual Training and Technical Assistance

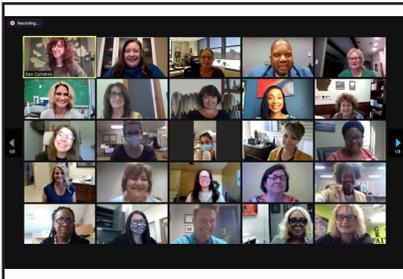
In the 2020-2021 year, CCED transitioned the majority of training and technical assistance work to a virtual format due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Over 9,000 individuals across Arkansas and the Mid-South were impacted through CCED's virtual programming.

## Canva Training

CCED partnered with Kate Carnahan of Silverlake Design Studio to host a free training workshop on the widely accessible graphic design tool called Canva. Canva is a graphic design platform used to create social media graphics, presentations, posters, documents and other visual content. The platform is free to use, but also offers paid subscriptions for additional functionality. Over 100 community leaders attended this training and gained the skills and tools they need to create graphics and visual content for their organizations while on a budget.

## CDI Book Club

The CDI Book Club was created as a way to stay connected with the individuals in the CDI network and continue our professional development through reading and discussing books that furthered knowledge in community and economic development. Over the course of the 2020-2021 year, we met with 85 total participants and read six books including *You're Not Listening*, *Building a Vibrant Community*, *Switch*, *Walkable City*, *13 Ways to Kill Your Community*, and *Creating Startup Junkies*. The CDI Book Club concluded in March 2021.



## Grassroot Mural Workshop

CCED partnered with Thrive to create the Grassroots Mural Workshop which provided participants with the knowledge they need to develop a mural from start to finish in their community. Topics covered included the importance of community branding and marketing, how to establish a timeline for developing a mural, tips and tricks on mural creation, and how to engage volunteers and youth.

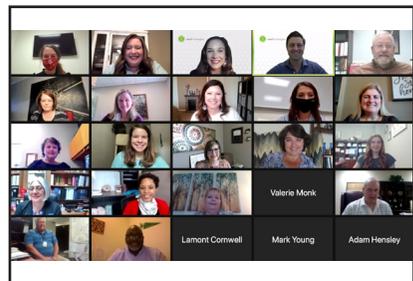
Participants also heard from community leaders who served as boots-on-the-ground for mural development in a variety of communities across the state. 26 individuals attended this paid training and came away with a recording of the webinar and useful resources to assist the development and execution of a mural in their community.

## Community Development Institute Podcast

The CDI Podcast launched its first episode in May 2020. The podcast strives to expand the reach of CCED by connecting with community leaders and citizens to explore a broad range of community and economic development topics and engage in real conversations with leaders across the state of Arkansas and beyond. The CCED team has recorded 48 episodes featuring such guests as Matt Dunne from the Center on Rural Innovation, Dr. Joe Thompson from the Arkansas Center on Health Improvement, and author Quint Studer of Building Vibrant Communities. The podcast has over 1,500 downloads from 19 countries.

Episodes are released on a weekly basis and can be found at [www.uca.edu/cced/cdi-podcast](http://www.uca.edu/cced/cdi-podcast) or on Apple Podcasts or Google Play.

The third season of the CDI Podcast will be released in spring 2021.



# Staff Highlights



Shelby Fiegel, PCED  
CCED Director

- Became a certified Gallup Strengths Coach
- Selected for LeadAR Class 19
- Served as a member of UCA Staff Senate
- Served as the Arkansas Community Development Society Ex-Officio
- Served as a Conway Historic District Commissioner



Dylan Edgell  
CCED Assistant Director

- Served on Metroplan Livable Communities Regional Advisory Committee
- Became a Strategic Doing Facilitator
- Completed CDI Year 1
- Completed Midsouth Basic Economic Development Course



## Emily Cooper Yates CCED Project Coordinator

- Served on UCA 2020 Homecoming Committee
- Served as Be Well Champion for UCA Outreach
- Became a Strategic Doing Facilitator
- Completed Midsouth Basic Economic Development Course



## Greta Hacker CCED Graduate Assistant

- Hired as CCED Graduate Assistant in May 2021
- Pursuing her Masters of Mental Health Counseling

Andre Archer served as the CCED intern during the fall 2020 semester. Mya Hall and Marquette Strickland served as CCED spring 2021 interns.



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