



UNIVERSITY OF
CENTRAL
ARKANSAS™

CENTER FOR COMMUNITY &
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

2025 - 2026 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

"The University of Central Arkansas Center for Community and Economic Development continues to be a leader in the state providing training, technical assistance, and guidance to community leaders and residents in every corner of Arkansas (and beyond).

Each new year leads our team to build on the impacts of previous years and expand our scope of work. We continue to partner with diverse communities, organizations, and businesses to increase civic engagement, develop leaders, serve as a link to local, statewide, and regional resources, and assist them in achieving their unique visions. We exist to empower leaders and their constituents to create positive change at the local level.

This annual report serves as a space to reflect on and celebrate the wins that our team was fortunate to be a part of. If you are reading this report, thank you for being a part of our network and for your support - we could not do what we do without YOU!"



Shelby Fiegel

Shelby Fiegel, PCED
CCED Director

Year at a Glance

1,480

**ATTENDEES AT CENTER
TRAINING EVENTS**

914

**LEADERS AND RESIDENTS ENGAGED IN
TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE SERVICES**

39

**ARTICLES PUBLISHED
FEATURING CCED**

19

**CITIES AND COUNTIES RECEIVED
DIRECT ASSISTANCE**

\$325,000+

RAISED

Where We Served



2025 - 2026 Training & Technical Assistance

Branding Centerton	Newtonia Go! Simulation Cabot Youth Leadership Conway Area Leadership Institute Leadership Batesville Pea Ridge Rogers-Lowell Chamber of Commerce	Strategic Doing Workshop Conway Area Leadership Institute
CDI 2026 Advanced Year Community Pea Ridge		Other Training Arkansas City Management Association Arkansas Community Development Society Arkansas CED Association Arkansas ESO Summit CDI Alumni Network LeadAR Mid South Basic Economic Development Retail Academy University of Central Arkansas Gear Up
CED Fellowship - Spring 2026		
Community Development Pipeline Program Benton County Washington County	Poverty Simulation & Workshop Arkansas Executive Forum Cabot Youth Leadership Conway Area Leadership Institute Fayetteville Xperience Youth Leadership Life Prep Leadership Arkansas County Leadership Paragould Pea Ridge UCA Communication Sciences & Disorders University of Central Arkansas (faculty & staff) Washington County Youth Leadership	
Futures Game Simulation Conway Area Leadership Institute Leadership Arkansas County Leadership Maumelle Youth Leadership Paragould Women's Leadership Academy		
Gallup Strengths Workshop CDI Louisiana Greenbrier Arts Council Leadership Batesville		

Community Development Institute

The 40th annual Community Development Institute (CDI) hosted 172 participants from 10 states and awarded over 85 scholarships. Richard V. Reeves of the American Institute for Boys and Men delivered the keynote address.

The Advanced Year class conducted a community assessment in the city of Pea Ridge, engaging with local leaders to identify opportunities for growth.

CDI 2026 award winners included:

- Bill Miller Award - Dr. Shaneil Ealy of the Women's Leadership Network
- Friend of CDI Award - Conway Area Chamber of Commerce and Conway Development Corporation
- Ernest Whitelaw Award - Tannella Gauthreaux-Foster of Entergy Arkansas
- Year 2 Champion - Gary Bass of the Jefferson Davis County Economic Development Association
- Year 1 Champion - Rashad Woods of ARVAC, Inc.

Visit uca.edu/cdi or our social media channels for additional updates, pictures, and videos of CDI 2026.

We hope you join us for the 41st annual CDI from August 2 - 6, 2027! You can register at uca.edu/cdi



Follow CDI: facebook.com/cdi.uca | linkedin.com/company/cdi-uca | youtube.com/cdicentral

CDI 2026 Awards



Bill Miller Award
Dr. Shaneil Ealy



Friend of CDI
Conway Area Chamber of Commerce &
Conway Development Corporation



Earnest Whitelaw Award
Tannella Gauthreaux-Foster



Year 2 Class Champion Award
Gary Bass



Year 1 Class Champion Award
Rashad Woods

CDI 2026 Sponsors

PRESENTING SPONSORS



SPONSORS



SCHOLARSHIP SUPPORTERS



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.

Two students were selected for the Fellowship in spring 2025. The students attended site visits with the Conway Area Chamber of Commerce and Conway Development Corporation, the Community Foundation of Faulkner County, and City of Hope Outreach.



Ava Walker
Little Rock, AR
Sociology
Spring 2026 Fellow



Destiny Lindsey
Pine Bluff, AR
International Studies
Spring 2026 Fellow

Community Development Pipeline Program

CCED received an additional 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. 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:



Audra Butler
Communities
Unlimited



Beth Cogger
Washington County
Quorum Court



Bethany Carter
Canopy NWA



Christian Weber
City of Centerton



Coletta Patterson
The Jones Center



Geovanny Sarmiento
City of Rogers



Javier Hernandez
Rogers-Lowell
Chamber of
Commerce



**Mayor Jeffrey Van
Sickler**
City of Little Flock



Jonathan Bricker
Regions Bank



Josh Vasquez
Generations Bank



Joshua Johnson
City of Pea Ridge



Kaleb Turner
City of Pea Ridge



Keith Urbanski
University of Arkansas



Marlee Stark
City of Fayetteville



Megan Brown
Urban Land Institute:
Northwest Arkansas



Melisa Laelan
Arkansas Coalition of
Marshallese



Michelle Tabor
Farmington
Chamber of
Commerce



Nathaniel Izard
City of
Bentonville



Prentis Grayson
Crystal Bridges



Sarah Henderson
Bentonville Area
Chamber of
Commerce



Sarah Moore
City of
Fayetteville



Shawntill Puryear
Hark at Excellerate



Taylor Robertson
City of Bella Vista



Tyler Overstreet
City of
Bentonville



Wendy Henson
City of Centerton

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CCED would like to thank our 2025 - 2026 interns and Graduate Assistants for their support: April McCullough, Clara Spivey, Linda Tetteh-Quaye, and Logan Howell!



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