

# Competitive Awards

## 2016 Funded Projects

### TEACHING AND ENGAGEMENT

**Facilitating the Implementation of Social Media Plans for Small Businesses & Local Non-Profits through Service Learning at UNK** – Sherri Harms (PI), University of Nebraska at Kearney (UNK) partnering with the Economic Development Council of Buffalo County, Nebraska.

*Many rural Nebraska small businesses and non-profit organizations do not have the expertise or resources to implement social media plans, which can limit their organizational reach. This project will implement a service learning component to an existing course, where students work with organizations to develop and implement social media plans, in partnership with the Economic Development Council of Buffalo County.*

**Art at Cedar Point** – Karen Kunc (PI), University of Nebraska-Lincoln (UNL) partnering with the Ogallala Public School District, Nebraska Game and Parks, Lake McConaughy Visitor/Water Interpretive Center, Nebraska Art Teachers Association and the Petrified Wood Art Museum in Ogallala, Nebraska.

*Art at Cedar Point is a transdisciplinary program which blends art and science through undergraduate field courses and artist residencies at Cedar Point Biological Station in western Nebraska. This innovative project will allow students to experience the unique ecosystems and communities of rural western Nebraska and showcase the potential for artists working in rural areas by developing the only Artist in Residence program in the region.*

**Minority Health Disparities Initiative (MHDI): Youth Are Rural Health Program (YouRhealth)** – Kim Matthews (PI), University of Nebraska-Lincoln (UNL) partnering with Lexington High School, Sheldon Art Museum, UNK, UNMC College of Nursing, Lexington Regional Health Center and DHHS.

*YouRhealth is a new innovative and bold initiative that creates a learning community that includes civic engagement by transforming Lexington High School's (LHS) freshman health course into a rigorous visual literacy/critical thinking/community engagement environment. This project will implement the YouRhealth program that teaches freshman high school students to be community health educators by developing and presenting multimedia public health campaigns to their family and friends, as well as provide NU students civic engagement opportunities in a predominately minority community.*

**Understanding Hispanics and Sense of Community in Rural Nebraska** – Athena Ramos (PI), University of Nebraska Medical Center (UNMC) partnering with Platte County (Columbus) and Colfax County (Schuyler).

*A mixed methods research study will be conducted within two Nebraska counties to better understand the assets and the challenges associated with being Hispanic/Latino in rural Nebraska. This project addresses community concerns that were identified during the 2015 East Central District comprehensive community health needs assessment. Six focus groups (three in each county) and a survey of at least 100 Hispanic/Latino individuals from each community will be conducted. A bilingual community report will be developed with community partners that includes actionable recommendations.*

**CEEM Project: A New Community Engagement Education Model** – Kim Wilson (PI), University of Nebraska-Lincoln (UNL) partnering with Nebraska Extension, the Center for Rural Entrepreneurship and various community partners including the Willa Cather Foundation, City of Red Cloud, Chamber of Commerce, and others.

*Many semester-long service learning (SL) projects realize immediate impact on community partners and SL students, yet has not translated into long-term community impact. It is felt the short timeframe of the fifteen-week semester coupled with the partner's limited capacity and infrastructure to act on recommendations diminishes long-term impact. This two-year process will evaluate the ability to strengthen partnerships and develop capacity for the region's residents by going beyond the semester timeframe and including an expanded team that includes Nebraska Extension and community and professional experts and also extends the project timeframe over multiple years with participation of multiple studios of students.*

## **RESEARCH AND ENGAGEMENT**

**Identifying the Interrelationships Between Social Determinants, Self-identity, and Public Health in Minority Rural Communities: Photovoice + Random Spatial Sampling Survey** – Kirk Dombrowski (PI), Minority Health Disparities Initiative, Departments of Sociology, Nutrition & Health Sciences, Communications, Psychology and Sheldon Art Museum at UNL, partnering with DHHS and Two Rivers Public Health Department

*The HealthVoiceVision transdisciplinary team will combine participatory research with traditional random spatial sampling survey to better understand minority health disparities in rural communities. The research results will translate into interventions, tools and data that communities can use to understand and address minority health disparities.*

**Enhancing Nebraska's Ecotourism Industry** – Richard Edwards (PI), Center for Great Plains Studies, with UNL, UNK, UNO, College of Law, Calamus Outfitters, and international connection with Namibia

*Private-lands nature-based tourism can provide many benefits to stressed rural areas. This project will focus on international best practices in Namibia that can help Nebraska's emerging ecotourism industry grow into world leaders in private-lands ecotourism.*

**Rural Prosperity Research Project** – Chuck Hibberd (PI), Nebraska Extension, ALEC, NHRI, and College of Architecture at UNL, partnering with UNO, Center for Rural Entrepreneurship, Heartland Center for Leadership Development, Nebraska Community Foundation, and the Aspen Institute

*This collaborative will build the capacity of a cohort of rural communities to effectively create conditions for a more prosperous future by: increasing economic opportunities through business creation; building up community assets that support a high quality of life; and attracting and keeping people to achieve demographic renewal. This project applies a systems approach designed to achieve systemic change.*

**Raising Awareness of Health Professions Education Among Rural Nebraska Latino Youth** – Patrik Johansson (PI), UNMC College of Public Health, with UNK, Nebraska Area Health Education Center (AHEC), and partnering with Blue Cross Blue Shield of Nebraska, Central Community College, Doane College, Grand Island Latino Leadership Group, Grand Island Senior High, St. Francis Hospital, and DHHS

*Health professions shortages represent a challenge to the sustainability of rural communities. While there are insufficient rural health professionals in general, Latinos are virtually absent from this workforce. This study will develop strategies to raise awareness of health professions education among rural Nebraska Latino high school and college students, resulting in increased numbers of Latino youth who pursue health professions.*

## **SPECIAL PROJECTS**

**Collaborative Capacity Building in Rural Nebraska Schools via Technology** – Amanda Witte (PI), and Susan Sheridan (co-PI) University of Nebraska-Lincoln (UNL) partnering with rural schools and educators, and the Nebraska Department of Education.

*There are long-standing barriers to services in rural communities including insufficient mental health services, cultural differences, and stigma that make access to treatment options for mental and behavioral issues a challenge for students in rural areas. This project will develop and evaluate highly accessible, effective and sustainable solutions for rural schools and families to increase access to mental health supports, address rural students' mental and behavioral health challenges, and bolster academic success.*

For questions or comments please contact:

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