CaRDI’s Community Development Institute: *Informed Communities, Informed Decisions*, will focus on critical pieces of the community development process, and is designed for a diverse audience of local government and school officials, CCE Educators, practitioners, and other community leaders.

Topics addressed will include: framing the various approaches to community development; how recent socioeconomic and demographic trends impact NYS communities; resources for accurate community-level data; the role of leadership in strengthening community capacity; and how these approaches and resources can lead to informed decision-making. Special sessions will focus on supporting recent initiatives in agriculture and food systems, community and energy, shared municipal and school services, and regional community and economic development.

Over this two-day period, participants will engage in dynamic discussions, exercises, and trainings which form the heart of CaRDI’s mission – to promote informed decision-making in support of sustainable community and economic development.

**Day 1 – July 16th 2013**

9:00-10:15    Plenary Session – Welcome  

*Framing the Community Development Approach*

Presenters: *Rod Howe & Caroline Williams*

There are many ways to frame community development. A holistic viewpoint sees a community as a system of interdependent components, including dynamic interactions between individuals, groups, organizations and institutions. One definition of community development is: *A process through which people and communities acquire the attitudes, skills and abilities for active participation in creating meaningful futures and dealing with community issues.* This opening workshop will engage participants in a discussion of this process and the ways in which a community development approach can lead to a variety of outcomes, including economic development, resiliency and sustainability.

10:15-10:30  Break
The Changing Composition of NYS Communities

Presenters: David Brown & Robin Blakely-Armitage

Significant change has occurred over the past several decades in NYS communities. It is critical to understand these trends across the demographic and socioeconomic landscape in order to proactively meet the future opportunities and challenges facing the region. In this session we examine some of the major trends impacting NYS communities such as migration, age structure, income and poverty, employment patterns, industrial composition, race and ethnic composition, school enrollments, and overall population growth and decline.

Tools & Resources for Demographic Data

Presenter: Robin Blakely-Armitage

In the previous session we examined larger trends across New York State. But what is the profile of your community, and how does it compare to the region? Many of us find it a challenge to locate accurate, up-to-date socio economic and demographic data for our individual communities. Knowing how to interpret and use this data once you've found it presents another set of challenges. This session will highlight some key data resources to help community development practitioners find and use the community and regional-level data they need for short- and long-term planning, grant writing, program evaluation, and making informed decisions.

Leadership, Community Capacity, & Resiliency

Presenters: Larry Van De Valk, Heidi Mouillesseaux-Kunzman, & Rod Howe

Leadership is inherently a social process which involves building and using social capital, a critical piece of community capacity. This session will focus on the various components of leadership development, how the very process of leadership development influences and strengthens community capacity, and how this in turn can create vibrant and resilient communities. This session will balance panel presentations with broad group discussion to explore how these processes work (or not) in local communities.

Effective Decision-Making

Presenters: David Kay, Rod Howe, John Sipple, & Robin Blakely-Armitage

We are all interested in “Informed Communities, Informed Decisions” but do we have an understanding of what factors are associated with decision making processes? This session will be both presentation and discussion as we seek input based on participants’ experiences. Local officials and communities allocate resources and make key decisions regarding complex, challenging issues. What are framework components that offer a path to a more intentional process that includes research and data, active public
participation and consensus building? How might those components support community and economic development?

4:45-5:00  
*Instructions for Community Development Exercise*

Presenter: *Larry Van De Valk*

5:00-6:00  
*Reception at Statler Bar (free drink ticket included in registration)*

6:00-7:30  
*Dinner at Statler*

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**Day 2 – July 17, 2013**

8:00-8:30  
*Breakfast*

8:30-12:15  
*Community Development Exercise*

*Facilitated by Larry Van De Valk*

This half-day exercise offers participants an opportunity to focus on how communities deal with issues facing them, and the dilemmas that communities often face when they confront many issues and alternatives in the decision-making process. Being faced with too many issues and having inadequate time, money, and information to fully deal with the issues is part of the reality of community decision making. The objectives of this exercise are numerous, including: sensitizing participants to social problems and the difficulties of affecting change in a community; creating awareness of kinds of problems facing communities and the procedures and avenues available for solving them; demonstrating the role of power in affecting the course of community actions; gathering, using and controlling information, establishing norms and setting goals, problem solving, decision making, resource allocation, evaluation, endorsement; formulating strategies and tactics; simulating leadership and initiative among participants as community members; achieving a better understanding of how an individual can effectively play a role in community affairs, and much more.

12:15-1:00  
*Lunch*

1:15-3:00  
*Topical Work Sessions* (concurrent – choose one)

These special work sessions will give participants an opportunity to dig more deeply into special topic areas, integrating the material covered in the previous day and a half. Each session will begin with a brief presentation by CaRDI staff on an important initiative, trend, or issue in the theme area. Participants will then engage in discussions around how communities currently engage, and could potentially engage, in the decision-making process to move such initiatives forward, including the role of leadership, data, and public opinion. Participants will be asked to share information on issues, initiatives, and challenges in their own communities.

#1- *Agriculture & Food Systems*

Facilitators: *Mary Jo Dudley & Anu Rangarajan*
Subthemes:

- Immigration Reform
- Local Foods Systems & the Small Farms Program

#2 – Community & Energy

Facilitators: David Kay and Rod Howe

Subthemes:

- community-based energy planning and decision-making
- complementary local and state goals for communities

#3 – Shared Municipal/School Services

Facilitators: John Sipple, Bruce Fraser & George Homsy

Subthemes:

- Findings from recent state-wide survey on shared services
- Issues around consolidation, efficiencies, and survival moving forward

#4 – Regional Community & Economic Development

Facilitators: Heidi Mouillesseaux-Kunzman & Robin Blakely-Armitage

Subthemes:

- SET (Stronger Economies Together) Program
- Importance of informed decision-making in community development

3:00-3:45

**Putting it Into Practice for Your Community**

Presenter: Scott Peters

4:00

**Adjourn**