

Building Community Capacity in the Southern Tier

THE COMMUNITY AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT INSTITUTE



What do we mean by “Community Capacity?”

Community Capacity can be defined as the resources (human, natural, built, etc.) and opportunities that communities have to shape their immediate and future destinies.

The Southern Tier’s interest in building Community Capacity:

Pipeline 4 Progress is a regional economic development initiative “focused on attracting and retaining a talented workforce in southern and central upstate New York.” The initiative is based on several fundamental principles, two of which specifically relate to community capacity building:

1. Attracting and retaining a talented workforce must be pursued in tandem with supporting and developing community assets that make the P4P region a desirable place to live (e.g.: world class educational institutions and nationally renowned healthcare facilities, livable communities nestled between internationally known cities, opportunities for civic engagement, etc.)
2. Both workforce development and community development require collaboration between public and private sectors that transcends administrative boundaries (town, county, and other regional lines); in other words, to be successful, communities throughout the region will need to support and work with one another to achieve their shared goals.

To some extent, assets are built on assets: skills and resources are the basis for further developing assets. Yet, as is the case with individuals, communities differ in terms of their assets; where some are strong, others are weak and vice versa. When communities work together, as region, they can draw on one another’s strengths and minimize one another’s weaknesses, for the benefit of all.

While the concept of regional economic development is not new, however, it is not commonly practiced. Planning for and working towards a regionally shared future is new for many communities and can require the development of new skills.

CaRDI and the EDA University Center of New York will be working within the P4P region to increase capacity of Southern Tier communities to pursue shared community and economic development goals, collaboratively, as region.

CaRDI’s approach to Capacity Building in the Southern Tier:

Research-based information, education and technical support designed to (1) enhance understanding of and foster regional approaches to community and economic development; (2) increase understanding of regionally relevant development issues (social, economic, and ecological); and (3) cultivate skills and provide tools that will help local leaders work with their communities to achieve their community and economic development goals.

Program Components

- Regional Leadership Training
 - Local Government Leadership Institute
 - Know Your Region
 - Natural Leaders Initiative
 - Sustainable Communities
 - Cornell Municipal Clerks Institute
 - Vital Indicators for Enhancing Well-being
 - Cornell Municipal Clerks Institute
- Regional Learning Communities
 - The Rural Learning Network
 - Grant Writing Mentors
 - Community Capacity Assessments
 - First Impressions Program
 - Community Support for Entrepreneurship
 - Green Enterprise Development