



# Community Development Online Graduate Program

## Student Handbook

Updated August 2024

Community development is a practice-based profession and an academic discipline that promotes participative democracy, sustainable development, rights, equality, economic opportunity, and social justice, through the organization, education, and empowerment of people within their communities, whether these be of locality, identity, or interest in urban and rural settings. (As adopted by [IACD](#), [CDS](#) and [NACDEP](#).)

The IDEA Community Development master’s degree or graduate certificate will empower you to lead communities to action and engage citizens in democratic decision-making.

There are four IDEA institutions participating in the Community Development (CD) program. Degree titles vary by institution.

University	Master’s Degree	Master’s degree culminating experience	Graduate certificate culminating experience
Kansas State University	Master of Science in Community Development	Coursework only examination, master’s report, or thesis	No required culminating experience
North Dakota State University	Master of Science in Community Development	Thesis, evaluation study paper, or coursework only with presentation	No required culminating experience
University of Nebraska-Lincoln	Master of Applied Science with specialization in CD	Degree project	<i>UNL does not offer this certificate</i>
South Dakota State University*	Master of Science in Community Development	Thesis, practicum/capstone research paper completion, or coursework completion with portfolio; all options include an oral examination	No required culminating experience

*\*South Dakota State University is no longer accepting new students into their program.*

Course descriptions, a course planner, and contacts for participating universities can be found on the Community Development webpage: <https://www.idea.edu/program/community-development>



## Program Requirements

The master's degree in community development is a 36-credit hour post-baccalaureate program of study. The graduate certificate in community development is a 12-credit hour post-baccalaureate program of study.

To qualify for the master's degree, students must:

1. Be admitted to the master's degree program at a participating university
2. Complete the necessary coursework
3. Meet the master's degree requirements of their admitting/degree granting university

## Course Requirements for Master's Degree Program

The master's degree program requires completion of 36 credit hours of coursework and successful completion of a culminating experience which varies by institution. See when courses are offered using our interactive [Course Planner](#).

Core courses for the master's program includes 18 credit hours:

- Foundations of Community Development
- Principles and Strategies of Community Change
- Organizing for Community Change
- Community Analysis (Introduction to Methods)
- Community and Natural Resource Management
- Community and Regional Economic Policy and Analysis

## Course Requirements for Graduate Certificate Program

The graduate certificate program requires completion of 12 credit hours of coursework and successful completion of a culminating experience which varies by institution.

Core courses for the certificate program includes 6 credit hours:

- Principles and Strategies of Community Change
- Organizing for Community Change

## Together We're Better

This four-part Venn Diagram illustrates the blending of expertise from the four partner universities who developed this interdisciplinary curriculum. By collaborating to provide a holistic approach to community development, this program offers a wide range of skill-building topics you can't find at just one university.



## Who to Contact for Help

Your primary program contact will vary by institution.

Institution	Primary Program Contact	Campus Coordinator
Kansas State University	<a href="#">Virginia Brunner-Livingston</a> , program coordinator	<a href="#">Ashley Schultz</a>
North Dakota State University	<a href="#">Christopher Whitsel</a> , department chair	<a href="#">Stacy Duffield</a>
South Dakota State University	<a href="#">Paul Markel</a> , program director	<a href="#">Sarah (Heewon) Kim</a>
University of Nebraska-Lincoln	<a href="#">Daniela Mattos</a> , program director	<a href="#">Mel Sedlacek</a>