



COMMUNITY VITALITY



CULTIVATING VIBRANT COMMUNITIES THROUGH CONNECTION, RESILIENCE, AND SHARED OPPORTUNITY

Community vitality is about people having common interests and connecting to meet the needs of all. When functioning collectively, a community of people becomes a powerful force and thrives. A community potentially contributes to the quality of life, health, and well-being of its members.

Several types of communities may be distinguished by the roles they assume within society, the level of cohesion that exists within them, as well as the value that they add to the common good of society. A community may be a physical place, an organization, or a center such as a school or church.

It is a community's collective capacity to create and respond to change with an enhanced level of participation. A community can sustain itself in the future as well as provide opportunities for its members to pursue their personal life goals. Additionally, members can experience positive life outcomes. In short, community vitality refers to the health and well-being of a community brought about by a set of relationships among people with common interests and needs. While some communities are robust, others are distressed and dysfunctional.

Key components that often play a role in fostering community vitality include social cohesion, economic stability, environmental sustainability, health and well-being, education and learning, safety and security, cultural expression, and civic engagement. A positive, growth-promoting community is one where these elements work together to create a supportive, resilient, and robust environment for its members. In distressed and dysfunctional communities, members feel alienated, alone, and undervalued.

Community vitality involves processes such as community engagement and community development. Community engagement brings diverse expertise together with understanding and sensitivity to fit the needs and interests of the community members. Community development is a process in which people come together to act on what is important to them. Community development is designed to empower individuals and groups of people with the skills they need to effect change.

An end goal is for a vital community to realize positive social, economic, and environmental outcomes that foster the growth and development of its members. Family and Consumer Sciences professionals focus on research-based knowledge, practices, actions, and policies that foster a community's vitality regardless of its size, challenges, or economics so that the community experiences access to opportunities, resources, and the support essential to thrive.

Striving for community vitality as participants within a variety of communities that exist in our work and life experiences is ongoing.