Community Development Online Graduate Program
Student Handbook
Updated October 2022

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 Great Plains 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 Great Plains IDEA institutions participating in the Community Development (CD) program. Degree titles vary by institution.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>University</th>
<th>Master’s Degree</th>
<th>Master’s degree culminating experience</th>
<th>Graduate certificate culminating experience</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Kansas State University</td>
<td>Master of Science in Community Development</td>
<td>Coursework only examination, master’s report, or thesis</td>
<td>Summary reflection (&quot;mini-portfolio&quot;) of coursework</td>
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<tr>
<td>North Dakota State University</td>
<td>Master of Science in Community Development</td>
<td>Thesis, evaluation study paper, or coursework only with presentation</td>
<td>NDSU does not offer this certificate</td>
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<tr>
<td>South Dakota State University</td>
<td>Master of Science in Sociology with specialization in CD</td>
<td>Thesis, practicum/capstone research paper completion, or coursework completion with portfolio; all options include an oral examination</td>
<td>No required culminating experience</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University of Nebraska Lincoln</td>
<td>Master of Applied Science with specialization in CD</td>
<td>Degree project</td>
<td>UNL does not offer this certificate</td>
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Course descriptions, a course planner, and contacts for participating universities can be found on the Community Development webpage: [https://www.gpidea.org/program/community-development](https://www.gpidea.org/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 Analysis

Course Requirements for Certificate Program
The 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.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Institution</th>
<th>Primary Program Contact</th>
<th>Campus Coordinator</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Kansas State University</td>
<td>Huston Gibson, program director</td>
<td>Ashley Schultz</td>
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<tr>
<td>North Dakota State University</td>
<td>Christina Weber, program director</td>
<td>Michael Russell</td>
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<tr>
<td>South Dakota State University</td>
<td>Paul Markel, program director</td>
<td>Carey Kilmer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University of Nebraska-Lincoln</td>
<td>Daniela Mattos, program director</td>
<td>Lisa King</td>
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