



**COLORADO STATE UNIVERSITY
EXTENSION**

Community Needs Assessments for Colorado State University Extension & Engagement

The mission of Colorado State University Extension is to empower Coloradans to address important and emerging community issues using dynamic, science-based educational resources. We have developed an understanding of community issues because of our long history in the state and because our agents live in the communities they serve. At the same time, changing demographics, evolving technologies, information overload, and a growing distrust of science has led us to reflect: How can CSUE maximize our impact at this time and into the future?

A needs assessment is a process of understanding needs and how to meet them. CSUE is embarking on a statewide community needs assessment process in 2020-2021. This formal needs assessment process is designed to support our core values of being inclusive and science-based. Results will be used by CSUE as well as other units of CSU's Office of Engagement & Extension (OEE). Benefits include:

- raise awareness of our work
- engage with new community members and partners, including co-creation of programs
- inform other county departments of needs
- provide evidence of the importance of existing programs
- provide data to support grant applications to meet community needs
- understand barriers to our programs
- discover new opportunities for impact
- reinvigorate our daily work
- ensure our relevancy at a time of great uncertainty

Our community needs assessment process will consist of four main elements:

1. A **perceptions survey** to gauge familiarity with off-campus OEE services, the unique values we add, ways we can enhance our services, and barriers to access.
2. **Secondary data analysis** that utilizes demographic and economic information as well as other existing data to identify needs and potential partners and informants.
3. **Key informant data** collected through interviews and focus groups that will allow us to gather qualitative insights on needs and how to address them.
4. A **community needs assessment (CNA) survey** to measure the breadth of needs across a diverse array of respondents.

These data sources will collectively contribute to a detailed understanding of needs in our communities. Through a guided process, CSUE staff will use this enhanced understanding of needs to work with CSU and external partners to co-create County Program Plans that will become the basis for CSUE activities in future years. County Program Plans and CNA results will be rolled up to inform regional and statewide program priorities.

A pilot cohort of counties will begin the process in summer 2020 and will complete program plans in spring of 2021. All other county CSUE offices will begin in fall of 2020 and complete program plans in fall of 2021. Counties will have an opportunity to partner with one another on the CNAs.