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# Cornhusker Economics

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## **Empowering Rural Communities: Unlocking Potential through the Online Rural Economic & Community Vitality Graduate Certificate**

In today's evolving economic landscape, rural Nebraska stands at a crossroads. While communities face challenges like population decline, job loss, and infrastructure needs, they also have enormous potential for growth, innovation, and resilience. The key to unlocking this potential lies in skilled, passionate leaders ready to shape the future.

The **Rural Economic & Community Vitality (RECV) Graduate Certificate** offered 100% online by the **University of Nebraska–Lincoln's Department of Agricultural Economics**, provides a powerful platform to do just that. This 12-credit, no-prerequisite program is designed for individuals eager to create real, lasting impact in rural communities—whether you're already working in economic or community development or just starting your journey in supporting rural America.

### **Why This Certificate Matters—Now More Than Ever**

In small towns across Nebraska and beyond, a handful of dedicated individuals—public officials, community leaders, nonprofit organizers, and local advocates—often shoulder multiple roles to keep their communities thriving. These individuals are the backbone of rural development efforts. Yet, many haven't had access to formal, specialized training that could significantly boost their effectiveness, productivity, and results.

The RECV certificate fills that gap. It offers a unique opportunity to sharpen critical skills, build a strong professional network, and gain the tools needed to:

- Lead successful community initiatives
- Create sustainable economic growth strategies
- Secure funding and drive grant development
- Mobilize volunteers and engage stakeholders
- Respond effectively to economic and demographic shifts

## Who Should Enroll?

This program is ideal for:

- Community and Economic Development Professionals seeking to grow their impact and lead effective rural initiatives
- Local Leaders, Volunteers, or Elected Officials working to solve local challenges and drive community progress
- Public Officials in Small Towns who frequently manage planning, zoning, infrastructure, and development tasks
- Graduate Students aiming to add a powerful credential to their academic portfolio and open new career doors
- Nonprofit Directors and Public Sector Employees who serve rural populations and want to expand their strategic capabilities
- Career Changers and Passionate Advocates looking to build meaningful skills and increase employability in the rural development space

## The Value of Professional Training in Rural Development

- Job growth in rural development is strong: Careers in community and economic development are projected to grow by 7–10% nationally over the next decade (U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics).
  - ◇ Professional certification pays off
  - ◇ Individuals with certifications or licenses earn up to 30% more than their non-certified peers.
- A recent study also found that 76% of individuals who completed an online certification received a promotion or salary increase (Sources: ResumeBlaze, Project Management Institute, Associations Now).
- Local impact in Nebraska is growing: Over the past five years, rural counties in Nebraska have secured more than \$70 million in grant funding for community projects—often driven by professionals with specialized training (Nebraska Community Foundation).

## What You'll Gain in This Certificate

### In-Demand Knowledge and Skills

Master critical topics like strategic economic planning, community law, demographic analysis, public-private partnerships, rural entrepreneurship, and more.

### Flexible, Fully Online Learning

Designed for busy professionals, each one-credit course is delivered in an accelerated one-week format, offering the ability to complete the certificate in as little as **one year**.

### Real-World Application

Case studies, service-learning projects, and guest lectures from seasoned practitioners make this more than a classroom experience—it's a launchpad for action.



## Professional Recognition

Earn a respected credential from the University of Nebraska–Lincoln, signaling your commitment to excellence and community impact.

### What Graduates Are Saying

*“The certificate helped me apply what I learned to real challenges in my rural community. The online format made it easy to balance my studies with work and life at home. The skills I gained have really improved my ability to lead and make a positive impact. I highly recommend this program for anyone in rural areas looking to make a difference.”*

— **Program Graduate**, Community Leader, Nebraska

*“I move often due to military commitments, but this program allowed me to engage deeply with issues rural Americans face—wherever I live. The flexible schedule and one-credit classes worked perfectly for my lifestyle.”*

— **Program Graduate**, Military

### Program Highlights at a Glance

Feature	Description
Credits	12 total
Format	100% Online
Start Dates	Multiple entry points per year
Prerequisites	None
Estimated Completion	As little as 1 year

### How Communities Benefit from This Certificate

- **Boosted Leadership Capacity**  
Graduates step into roles that require strategic thinking and collaboration, transforming ideas into actionable outcomes.
- **Economic Growth and Job Creation**  
Apply planning and analysis tools to stimulate small business development, attract investment, and retain talent.
- **Civic Engagement and Collaboration**  
Develop inclusive approaches to planning that involve residents, nonprofits, and businesses in decision-making.
- **Sustainable Development**  
Learn to balance environmental stewardship with economic opportunity, promoting a healthier future for the generations to come.

## Let's Build the Future of Rural Nebraska—Together

Rural communities are resilient, creative, and full of untapped potential. With the right tools, training, and partnerships, we can write the next chapter of success for rural Nebraska—and beyond. Whether you are building a career, strengthening your hometown, or launching new community initiatives, **this certificate will move you forward.**

## Ready to Make a Difference?

Apply today or learn more:

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🔗 [Apply Now – UNL Graduate Admissions](#)

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