

# RFI Fellows Impact Report

EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION  
GARDEN COUNTY, NEB.  
2019



For 10 weeks in summer 2019 students from the University of Nebraska at Kearney and University of Nebraska–Lincoln worked, served and lived in Garden County, Neb., (population 2,057) through Rural Futures Institute Fellows.

With a focus on early childhood education, daycare and economic development these students developed a prototype for community investment to address the daycare shortage. The system will be used for all Panhandle schools. They were supported in their work by RFI Community Innovation Fellows Dustin Styskal and Lauren Olson of Garden County Public Schools and Rachel Sissel of the Nebraska Children and Families Foundation, which initiated the work through a grant.



► [ruralfutures.nebraska.edu/2019fellows](http://ruralfutures.nebraska.edu/2019fellows)



**Our work was to help get some crucial resources to make an impact on the children in the county and give them the best we can for the future.”**

*Kersten Peters*

*RFI Student Fellow, University of Nebraska at Kearney*

**Top:** Kersten Peters, Elementary Special Education (K-6) and Early Childhood Inclusive, University of Nebraska at Kearney  
Hometown: Scribner, Neb.

**Bottom:** Courtney Albrecht, Leadership and Communication, University of Nebraska–Lincoln  
Hometown: Kearney, Neb.

## TOTAL MARKET VALUE\*

Total value of RFI Fellows Program to Garden County

► **\$25,581**

## AVERAGE INVESTMENT

2 Students Stipends \$10,000 | Approximate Housing \$2,500

► **\$12,500**

*\*This report estimates the market value, the price it would have cost Garden County to hire professional services in the marketplace to complete the outcomes delivered by RFI Fellows and the Rural Futures Institute.*

# ESTIMATED MARKET VALUE OF DELIVERABLES

DELIVERABLES	ESTIMATED MARKET VALUE	CALCULATION NOTES
 <b>STRATEGY DEVELOPMENT</b> RFI Student Fellows worked on the Communities for Kids Project conducted by Nebraska Children and Families Foundation (NCF). Fellows followed up on the NCF survey by conducting listening sessions and interviews as well as coordinating focus groups and community meetings about the results. The Fellows then developed key messages and an action plan for the future.	\$8,556	Estimated average hourly wage rates for meeting, convention and event planners (\$21.98) and public relations specialists (\$24.66) in Nebraska (Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS)).
 <b>EVENT PLANNING</b> RFI Student Fellows contributed to the Fourth of July festivities in Garden County by helping organize a kids' carnival.	\$6,154	Estimated average hourly rate for meeting, convention and event planners in Nebraska (\$21.89) (BLS).
 <b>PUBLIC RELATIONS CONSULTATION</b> RFI Student Fellows wrote weekly articles for the local newspaper and set up a Facebook page for Garden County Communities for Kids. The Facebook page allows the organization to highlight and promote important information about relevant events taking place in Garden County.	\$2,391	Estimated average hourly rate for public relations specialists (\$24.66/hour) and photographers (\$17.19) in Nebraska (BLS).
 <b>VOLUNTEERED IN THE COMMUNITY</b> RFI Student Fellows are committed to volunteering for 10 hours per summer, beyond their typical duties.	\$480	Estimated value of a volunteer hour in Nebraska is \$24.01 (independentsector.org).
 <b>INCLUSIVE LEADERSHIP TRAINING</b> RFI Community Innovation Fellows received 20 hours of Inclusive Leadership training from experts at the Rural Futures Institute.	\$8,000	Estimated market value of Inclusive Leadership Training.



The people make the [RFI Fellows] academy [training]. The content and everything was great, but the people are what left an impact on me. I will never forget the academy experience. I can honestly say it was the best professional development that I have been to.”

Dustin Styskal  
Elementary Teacher, Garden County Public Schools

## REPORT CONSTRUCT

Researchers at the University of Nebraska–Lincoln Bureau of Business Research (BBR) conducted background research with Community Fellows located in Garden County, Neb. The Community Fellows provided detailed information about the community tasks in which Student Fellows engaged. To estimate economic impact, the BBR estimated the market value of the labor put toward completing tasks in Garden County, Neb.