



CST staffer Rebecca Haider and student Maria Keeler '16 survey local produce at the Morris Area Farmers' Market.



CST staff (clockwise from top left) Roger Rose, Kelly Asche, Kerri Barnstuble, Rebecca Haider, and Rose Murphy.

WHO WE ARE

The Center for Small Towns (CST) serves as a catalyst for growth and change, allowing rural community leaders to better implement their visions for their communities. CST serves communities in a variety of ways, including utilizing our four core methodologies pictured to the right.

CST works specifically with small towns that have a population of 5,000 people or fewer and the organizations that support them. CST prioritizes the voices of small towns and their leaders and consults with each community individually to better understand and meet its needs.

HOW WE SERVE COMMUNITIES

CST operates on four core methodologies that guide community project selection and internal focus. These four guiding principles help CST tailor services to the needs of each small community. All of our core methodologies depend on the involvement and enthusiasm of Morris students.



COMMUNITY SUPPORT

Communities benefit from low-cost, specialized assistance from talented, bright students as well as from the expertise of highly-trained faculty and staff. By providing these resources CST, can support small towns in a multitude of ways depending on the needs of each community.

DATA ANALYSIS AND RESEARCH

CST helps participating organizations by researching best practices, compiling statistical information, generating original surveys, and performing sophisticated data analysis.

REFERRAL

CST helps communities and organizations connect with appropriate resources at the University of Minnesota, Morris as well as regional, state, and national organizations involved with community and economic development.

CONVENING

CST hosts, in alternating years, the Symposium on Small Towns and the Rural Arts and Culture Summit. Recent gatherings have focused on rural migration, leadership development, and the role of arts in promoting rural development.



CST staff and students hosting a convening on the state of rural water resources in west central Minnesota at the University of Minnesota, Morris.

STUDENT INVOLVEMENT

Students are central to all CST programs. Students provide organizations with valuable, specialized, low-cost assistance on a wide range of activities such as:

- applied research,
- coordination of programs or projects, and
- promotional writings.

FACULTY INVOLVEMENT

Morris faculty members often work together with staff and students at CST on projects, grants, and consultations. Staff provide:

- experience and expertise,
- university resources, and
- research abilities and credentials.

For example, Morris Assistant Professor Nina Ortiz worked with a student to conduct research with the hope of better understanding the needs and desires of the Latino community in Morris and the surrounding area.

"The Center for Small Towns has provided the City of Morris an excellent opportunity to utilize students and staff at UMM. My experience has been very good, and I enjoy working with them on various issues. They provide me the ability to do things that I couldn't do otherwise in this trying economy."

—Blaine Hill, city manager

"As an Extension Educator who does community development, working with CST students allows me to undertake projects with a deeper focus that I wouldn't be able to do on my own. This not only gives undergraduate students good experience working on a real-life projects, but really augments the power of the University of Minnesota to meet its land-grant mission."

—Ryan Pesch, Extension educator

The Center for Small Towns connects rural areas to the resources that help them accomplish their goals and continue to thrive.

UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA MORRIS

Contact the Center for Small Towns to learn more about how we can help your community or nonprofit organization.

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