



ENGAGEMENT'S IMPACT 2025



Office of Engagement



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INTRODUCTION

A foreword from the Vice President for Engagement

Pathways to Impact: Bringing Purdue Expertise Forward

Wow. What a year! First and foremost, I want to thank our community partners from the bottom of my heart. None of what you will read in this report would have been possible without you. I also want to thank the amazing Office of Engagement team. We are literally the definition of a lean, but mean machine. Without them, too, none of this would be possible.

Community engagement at Purdue University remains strong and meaningful. A testament of this hard work was recognized by the Carnegie Foundation when Purdue was recertified as a community engaged university.

The challenge now is to keep this momentum, diversify and strengthen partnerships, and broaden impact. This year, the Office of Engagement continued to focus on two fronts: institutionalizing community engagement across the university while implementing innovative mechanisms and providing resources and expertise to co-create and build trust with the community. This helps fulfill our land-grant mission.

At the end of the day, we want to make sure Purdue's research, teaching, and engagement are accessible and impactful to as many communities as possible, while rewarding, equipping, and supporting Purdue's community as well as providing opportunities for them to meaningfully engage.

Roberto Gallardo

Roberto Gallardo
Vice President for Engagement
Purdue University



INSTITUTIONAL COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Carnegie Classification • Awards • Engaging Case Studies • Professional Development • Community Engagement, Research, and Impact Grant



Carnegie Community Engagement Elective Classification

The Carnegie Foundation's Elective Classification for Community Engagement is a prestigious designation that recognizes institutions demonstrating a deep commitment to community engagement. Purdue University first earned this classification in 2008 and was successfully reclassified in 2015, placing it among an elite group of universities nationwide.

To retain this critical designation, particularly for a land-grant university, the Office of Engagement convened a campus-wide task force in January 2024 representing colleges, units, and programs across the university. This task force focused on collecting data, documenting practices and capturing engagement activity. The result after 14 months of work was a 70+ document submitted in the Spring of 2025. **President Chiang and Provost Wolfe were notified in December of 2025 that Purdue University was reclassified as a community engaged university.**



 [Read more about the Carnegie Community Engagement Elective Classification](#)

Awards

During our Community Impact Summit of 2025 (*read more about the summit on page 11*), the Office of Engagement **recognized two rising star faculty members, an engaged program or unit, and an exemplary community partner through the JoAnn Miller award.**

In addition, the Morrill Award winner was recognized in the University-wide faculty awards ceremony later in the Spring. This award is the highest honor conferred by Purdue, recognizing excellence in teaching, research, and engagement.

2025 Rising Star Awardees

- Jennifer DeBoer
- Amanda Deering

2025 Engaged Unit Awardee

- School of Languages and Cultures

2025 JoAnn Miller Awardee

- The Children's Museum of Indianapolis

 [Read more about each award winner](#)



Engaging Case Studies

To better document, and frankly brag, about the great meaningful and reciprocal community engagement done by Purdue faculty, students, staff, and community partners, the Office of Engagement launched the Engaging Case Studies series. These case studies outline clearly how community engagement is embedded in discovery, teaching, and engagement, leading to broader impact. **Four case studies were published in 2025** ranging from research being done with the homeless population to health excellence, quality, and access to gaining early awareness and readiness for undergraduate programs to the federal work study program.

 [See all of our Engaging Case Studies](#)



Dr. Natalia Rodriguez

Collaborates with community partners to improve preventive healthcare access for people experiencing homelessness.



Center for Health Excellence, Quality, and Innovation

Strengthens health access by partnering with organizations to deliver preventive services and student learning opportunities.



Gaining Early Awareness and Readiness for Undergraduate Programs

Expanded college readiness through statewide partnerships supporting students, educators, families, and communities.



The Purdue Federal Work Study Program

Builds community connections by supporting students financially and providing partners with dedicated workers.

Professional Development

Dr. Jason Ware officially joined the Office of Engagement as a Faculty Fellow in 2025. Dr. Ware is spearheading a critical component of community engagement: ensure faculty, students, and staff are properly trained to conduct meaningful and reciprocal community engagement. During 2025, the Office of Engagement drafted a professional development strategy that consists of four pillars: scholarship of engagement fellows' program, broader impact fellows' program, engagement community of practice, and presentations, workshops, and consultations.

The community of practice launched in the fall of 2025 while multiple presentations and consultations took place. Both fellows' program will be launched in 2026.

 [Read more about the Office of Engagement's new professional development strategy](#)



Community Engagement, Research, and Impact Grant

Related to our professional development priority, the Office of Engagement launched the inaugural community engagement, research, and impact grant program. These grants support interdisciplinary faculty teams collaborating with communities to advance research, education, and engagement outcomes. More than 15 applications were received resulting in two projects funded totaling \$60,000.

Funded Projects



Co-Design of Natural Environment VR Experience in Partnership with the Indiana Department of Natural Resources



Expanding Rural Hearing Health through Community Collaboration

 [Read more about the grant and funded projects](#)

STRENGTHENING COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

College & Community Collaboration Initiative • Purdue Partnership Pathways • Community Impact Summit • Purdue Center for Regional Development
Purdue Extension • United Way • Nonprofit Executive Lunch & Learn • Purdue United Way Board Fellows

The Office of Engagement continues to envision, design, and implement innovative programs and efforts to strengthen and build trust throughout the community and further translate Purdue's brain trust into community impact and bring community opportunities to our faculty, students, and staff.

College & Community Collaboration (CCC) Initiative

Made possible by funding from the Lilly Endowment Inc., this five-year program continues to make a difference in the region. The CCC focuses on transportation and childcare, two key issues identified by our community partners. During 2025, a new airport terminal was inaugurated **servicing more than 7,000 passengers**; construction on multiple trails across the region continues; and more than **150 childcare seats** have been added to the region's childcare ecosystem as well as **supporting more than 470 unlicensed childcare providers**.

 [Read more about the College & Community Collaboration Initiative](#)



Purdue Partnership Pathways (P3)

This pilot program launched in the summer seeks to build trust with businesses and organizations through semi-structured interviews. The discussion touches on existing, potential, and quality of the partnerships with Purdue. **Two interviews took place during 2025**, and more are being scheduled for 2026. This is another approach to building trust and discovering meaningful and reciprocal community partnerships.

 [Read more about Purdue Partnership Pathways](#)



Community Impact Summit

Our flagship event, the 2025 Community Impact Summit, brought together **more than 140 changemakers** including faculty, innovators, community leaders, and philanthropic partners to celebrate and brainstorm on strengthening community engagement. The keynote delivered by Dr. Gamoran, president of the William T. Grant Foundation, set the stage for great panel discussions, excellent lightning talks, and an innovative engagement exchange.

 [Read more about the 2025 Community Impact Summit](#)





Purdue Center for Regional Development (PCRD)

The Center turned 20 years old in 2025, celebrating two decades of regional impact. As a university-based applied research and engagement hub, PCRD serves regions across Indiana and the nation through collaboration and co-creation, providing data-informed technical assistance and evaluating the impacts of programs and projects.

During 2025, PCRD advanced major regional initiatives statewide and beyond. The team guided both the Northwestern Indiana Regional Planning Commission and the East Central Indiana Regional Planning District through Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy processes, delivering data visualizations, document design, and U.S. Economic Development Administration (EDA)-ready submissions. PCRD also updated cluster data for the Riverhills Region. Nationally, PCRD completed substantial work on the EDA Industry Clusters Project, publishing new insights, refining cluster definitions, and presenting findings across the country. The Center also **finalized its three-year evaluation of the \$1B Build Back Better Regional Challenge**, producing a capstone report on governance, outcomes, and ripple effects. Additionally, PCRD began evaluation support for the Heartland BioWorks Tech Hub, developing metrics and real-time dashboards.

 [Read more about the Purdue Center for Regional Development](#)



Purdue Extension

Purdue Extension is housed in the College of Agriculture and is a critical component of land-grant universities and community engagement. In existence for over 100 years, it has a presence in all 92 counties of the state. Purdue Extension focuses on agriculture and natural resources, health and human sciences, 4-H youth development, and community development programming. **Purdue Extension is a trusted, reliable, and impactful partner to communities and stakeholders across the state.**

 [Read more about Purdue Extension in their 2025 Annual Report](#)

United Way

This year was particularly impactful regarding the United Way campaign. On one hand, the Purdue United Way campaign, managed by the Office of Engagement, shattered records, both dollars donated as well as number of employees donating. The goal was to raise \$700,000 dollars. The final amount raised thanks to **Purdue employee donations exceeded \$750,000!**

On the other hand, our very own Virginia Vought served as the Greater Lafayette United Way Campaign chair during 2025. Her creativity, unlimited energy, and relentless motivation to help those in need, resulted in the **Greater Lafayette United Way campaign meeting its goal for the first time in years**, raising more than \$4.5 million dollars.

 [Read more about United Way](#)



Nonprofit Executive Leadership Lunch & Learn

The inaugural nonprofit executive leadership lunch & learn took place this year. This event served as a launchpad for deeper partnerships between the university and the local nonprofit community—aimed at expanding and strengthening the region's collective impact. The event was attended by **more than 20 nonprofits and 5 Purdue collaborators.**

 [Read more about the Nonprofit Executive Leadership Lunch & Learn](#)



Purdue United Way Board Fellows

This innovative program also debuted this year. This program seeks to connect local nonprofit organizations with talented Purdue students who are eager to make a difference. This one-year partnership allows Purdue students to serve as non-voting members on nonprofit boards. **A total of 8 students from the Daniels School of Business were placed on nonprofit boards.**

 [Read more about the Purdue United Way Board Fellows](#)



OFFICE OF ENGAGEMENT'S METRICS



Through joint unit efforts,

ALL

Indiana counties
were engaged across all

16

Regions

253+

Organizations engaged



203K+

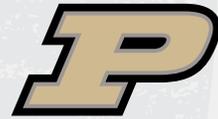
Individuals reached
online



\$2,277,129

Secured through projects, contracts,
and grants for PCRD





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Office of Engagement



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