

## **Key Issue Form: Creating Entrepreneur-Friendly Communities**

**Instructions:** Each Program area is to identify 8 key issues that their programming activities currently address, or should address. For each issue, craft a 2-3 sentence issue statement that outlines, in brief, what the issue at hand is and why it is important or relevant. The issue statements should be crafted based on objective data, as well as input from Specialists, County Educators, County Advisory Councils, and input from other key stakeholders.

**1. In a few words, please come up with a title that succinctly defines the issue:**

Creating Entrepreneur-Friendly Communities

**2. Please describe the issue in 2-3 sentences (i.e. craft an issue statement that describes what the issue at hand is and why it is important):**

A large portion of the job growth in the United States and New Hampshire is generated from businesses with 15 or less employees. Yet, state and Federal economic development programs tend to focus their energies on recruiting large industries and commercial enterprises. Thus, many of the support structures and resources that might otherwise go to generate, expand and retain local entrepreneurial enterprises are instead spent on commercial and industrial recruitment. The outcome of this general policy is that there is little in the way to support 'community infrastructures' that strengthen entrepreneurship at the local level in New Hampshire communities: infrastructure such as entrepreneurship training programs, business incentive programs, regional business planning and marketing, land use regulations that support small business (eg. mixed zoning), and entrepreneurship support networks.

**3. In 2-3 sentences, please describe what the public value for Extension to address this issue is/would be.**

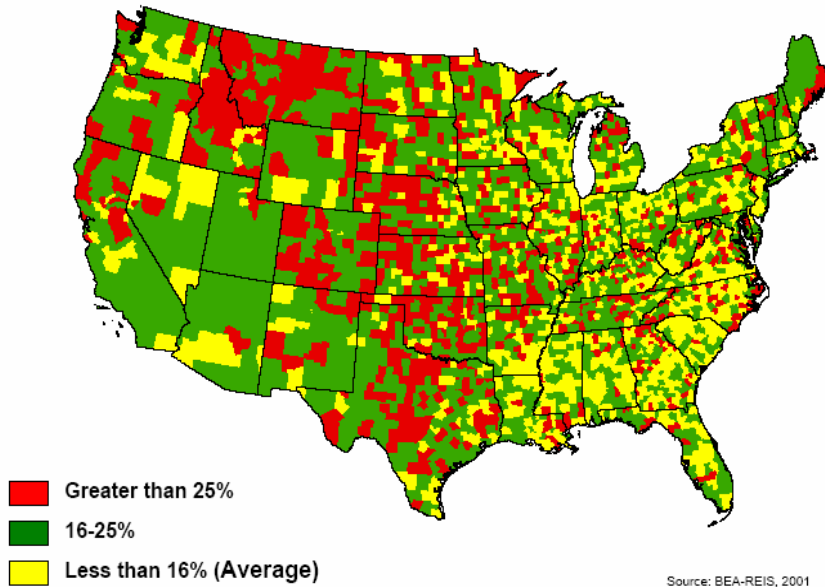
Communities that implement entrepreneurial support infrastructures – entrepreneurship training programs, business incentives, business-friendly policies, and small business incentive programs, local and regional entrepreneur networks, etc. – see higher rates of job growth than communities without such infrastructures. Cooperative Extension, by providing assistance and educational resources to help communities to bolster entrepreneurial support infrastructures, will help to generate new wealth and new local jobs. This, in turn, will help to strengthen families, youth and the overall vitality of communities.

**4. Identify and summarize key data that help make the case that this is a key issue (key data might include demographic trend data, University priorities, issues identified in plans/policies of other agencies and organizations, stakeholder input, etc.).**

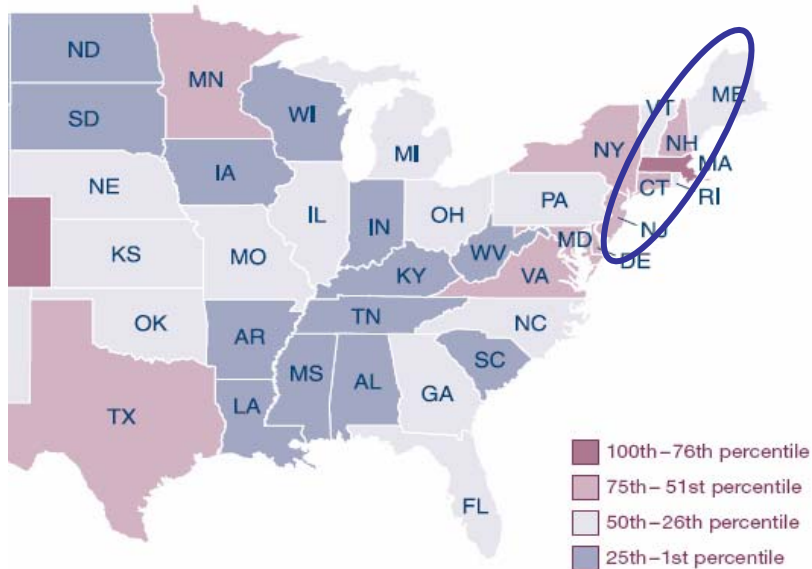
The *Global Entrepreneurship Monitor Project* (GEM) – a comparative study that provides evidence linking the level of entrepreneurship and economic performance – shows that the correlation between the level of entrepreneurial activity and economic growth is greater than 70 percent. In sum, communities with high levels of entrepreneurial activity have higher than average rates of economic growth. Clearly, entrepreneurship (as opposed to large industry and commerce) is an important component of the US and international economy.

The maps below illustrate that self-employment is an important component of total employment across large sections of the United States. Approximately 20-25% of jobs in New Hampshire are classified as self employed. Many of these self-employed entrepreneurs are operating on the margins due to lack of resources and assistance. Given the magnitude of the self-employed sector, it merits attention.

**Share of Self-Employment to Total Employment**



The map below ranks states on how adaptive they are to the new, knowledge-based economy which relies largely on entrepreneurial start-ups. NH ranks in the 50-75 percentile, suggesting that there is room for improvement. Neighboring Massachusetts ranks in the highest quartile.



**5. How does/would addressing this issue tie into UNH Cooperative Extension's Mission?**

Part of Extension's mission is to create healthy families, youth, communities and environment. Yet, the United Nations has demonstrated that without economic stability, communities cannot even begin to meet their basic human needs or wisely use natural resources. In short, providing support, education and resources to foster entrepreneur-friendly communities would help to strengthen individuals, families, youth and the environment.

**6. What programs/activities, if any, currently address this issue? For each, please succinctly describe how the program/activity addresses the issue.**

- **Natural Resources Business Institute (NRBI):** NRBI is a 13-session training program designed to provide existing and potential natural resource-based entrepreneurs with the tools and skills to manage healthy and viable businesses. The primary course faculty are made up of an interdisciplinary team of University of New Hampshire Cooperative Extension educators from across the state working closely with government agencies, private businesses, and nonprofit organizations.
- **Assistance to NH Aquaculture Businesses:** Aquaculture extension programs within New Hampshire are designed to assist both potential and existing aquaculture operations with all aspects of the business. These include species identification, broodstock care, nutrition, disease, systems design, marketing, permitting and business plans. For more information, please e-mail [jj-newman@unh.edu](mailto:jj-newman@unh.edu)
- **Business Planning for Agricultural and Natural Resource Firms:** UNH Cooperative Extension conducts 1-day workshops to audiences interested in learning the basics of business planning. Potential audiences include communities, organizations, or coalitions interested in business planning around

agricultural and natural resources. For more information about this program, please e-mail [Mike.Sciabarrasi@unh.edu](mailto:Mike.Sciabarrasi@unh.edu)

- **Economic Development via the Forest Industry:** Sarah Smith, Extension Forest Industries Specialist, educates local and state-level economic development practitioners about the forest industries and expansion opportunities. Sarah provides workshops to interested groups and provides technical assistance to individual businesses and forest-based industries. For more information, please e-mail [Sarah.Smith@unh.edu](mailto:Sarah.Smith@unh.edu)

**7. If Extension does not currently address this issue, is there capacity to address this issue?** (consider staff capacity, financial resources, volunteer capacity, and what other agencies/organizations might address this issue, etc.).

There simply needs to be coordination among the existing resources within Extension and an added focus on ‘community’ supports for entrepreneurship in addition to supports to individual businesses.