



REVITALIZING U.S. COMMUNITIES

Created more than three decades ago with the merger of three Rockefeller organizations, Winrock grew from a shared vision of helping the poor and vulnerable help themselves. It also grew from an Arkansas mountaintop, where two-term governor Winthrop Rockefeller established a model farm and livestock center before bringing his message of economic empowerment to the state. As small-town communities in America face urgent challenges around declining populations and foundering economies in farming and small manufacturing, Winrock's U.S. Programs team continues to revitalize U.S. communities through economic and community development.

Winrock attempts to solve these complex problems with four interrelated core competencies: **entrepreneurship development, innovation ecosystem development, workforce development** and **community development**. We believe that Winrock is uniquely positioned to empower the disadvantaged, increase economic opportunity and sustain natural resources in the small towns of America, where those services are desperately needed.

ENTREPRENEURSHIP DEVELOPMENT

Smaller communities, both urban and rural, often lack a support system for **entrepreneurship** due to

isolation or lack of resources. Winrock sees entrepreneurs as part of a community. We provide opportunities for wide-ranging, rapid and iterative feedback from a diverse set of experienced stakeholders, and we empower entrepreneurs by providing access to connections and increased knowledge and skills. Recognizing that each entrepreneur has a unique path and potential, we offer targeted services and interventions to conceptualize and pilot new products, scale up production, and expand markets.

INNOVATION ECOSYSTEM DEVELOPMENT

Mirroring the natural world, the success of a rural or urban community depends upon the creation of interlocking, symbiotic relationships — a type of ecosystem. For a community to thrive, it must have a convergence of resources: innovative entrepreneurs, interested corporate patrons, active communication platforms, access to capital, mentorship opportunities and more. But it's not enough for these resources simply to exist; they must be capable of effective collaboration. Winrock fosters the development of **innovation ecosystems** not only by encouraging the growth of these individual units, but by fostering the relationships between them. These ecosystems create the perfect environment for businesses to grow and thrive — and that environment, in turn, attracts even more innovators and resources.

WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

As new technologies take the place of hard labor,

workers need training to prepare for emerging jobs. Winrock projects tackle this with a community-focused approach. We keep track of local business needs and work with nearby community colleges to provide corresponding classes. These trainings **develop a workforce** perfectly suited to the community's specific needs, making it easier for citizens to find jobs and for businesses to fill essential positions.

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

To foster entrepreneurship, build healthy innovation ecosystems, or develop a skilled workforce consumers and businesses must locate and commit to small towns. **Community development** is necessary to create places where people can live, work and grow. It provides incentives for citizens to stay in their small towns, and for businesses both large and small to set up shop there. These neighborhood improvements can take many forms: cleaning up a drainage ditch behind the local school, setting up a citywide network of parks, or bringing a coffee shop to Main Street. By working with communities to make these kinds of changes, Winrock helps small towns grow and thrive.

OUR WORK

- **The Delta Innovation Fund**, in partnership with the Delta Regional Authority, funds 12-week business accelerator courses for entrepreneurs in the eight-state Delta region, where 85 percent of counties or parishes have lower-than-average incomes and/or higher-than-average unemployment. The Delta I-Fund includes a companion investment fund created to incentivize its participants, and Winrock is actively seeking private-sector investors to expand this work.
- **The Arkansas Women's Business Center (AWBC)**, funded through a partnership with the U.S. Small Business Administration, has provided more than 2,100 hours of consultation to more than 400 clients and trained almost

800 people. AWBC clients have started 39 businesses and created 118 jobs, mostly in rural Arkansas. AWBC also partners with the South Arkansas Community College to host workshops for older adults who want to generate income through self-employment, and it helps fuel the growth of women-owned small businesses by providing the training and access entrepreneurs need to grow their companies.

- **The Arkansas Regional Innovation Hub** is a nationally recognized program empowering entrepreneurs and makers of all ages with tools, technology, equipment, support and community. The Hub fosters entrepreneurship as a strategy for job creation and workforce development. It offers co-working and design spaces that can be used to develop, test and launch new products.
- **Workforce development programs** like the Job-Driven National Emergency Grant and the Arkansas Apprenticeship Pathways Initiative, both funded by the U.S. Department of Labor, provide work-skills training to dislocated and disadvantaged job seekers. To date these programs have trained more than 400 people, and 70 percent of participants have found jobs.

