

COMMUNITY, ENVIRONMENT, AND DEVELOPMENT, B.S.

Seven Penn State campuses are scheduled for closure after Spring 2027: DuBois, Fayette, New Kensington, Mont Alto, Shenango, Wilkes-Barre, and York. New students are not being admitted at these campuses.

Begin Campus: Any Penn State Campus

End Campus: University Park

Program Description

Community, Environment, and Development is a hands-on, multidisciplinary program that helps students understand and address challenges faced by communities abroad and at home. It focuses on areas like sustainability, community, development, local governance, and more with the goal of balancing environmental stewardship with improved quality of life. The major emphasizes critical thinking, core knowledge, and the skills required for professional success working on such issues. Graduates take leadership roles in a variety of areas, such as corporate social responsibility, environment/sustainability, economic development, government, land use planning, and the non-profit sector. Foundation (Level I) courses introduce students to key concepts in economics and sociology, and how these inform an understanding of community, sustainability and the environment, quality of life, and the economy. Level II courses build on the Foundation courses by using these concepts to take deep looks at issues like climate change, inequality, corporate social responsibility, and land use to assess what's working- and what needs work. Coursework in Methods, Quantification and Communication is also required, including skills and techniques such as Geographical Information Analysis, statistics, applied research methods, and the communication skills for successfully engaging governments, businesses, other organizations, and residents. Finally, students select among four options:

1. Community and Economic Development,
2. Environmental Economics and Policy,
3. International Development,
4. Social and Environmental Responsibility.

To complement this core, students take an additional 12 credits in an area of their interest outside of the CED major to tailor their studies towards their specific education and career goals. Around 40 percent of students completing the program continue on to graduate school or law school, while others choose employment after graduation.

What is Community, Environment, and Development?

The Community, Environment, and Development (CED) Major is a hands-on, multidisciplinary program that helps students understand and address challenges at the intersection of communities, economies, and the environment. Grounded in economics, sociology, sustainability, and policy, the program focuses on how social, economic, and environmental systems shape outcomes—and how to create meaningful change. The major provides a balance of theory and applications so graduates both understand the varied dimensions of the challenges and strategies for addressing them, and have the practical skills to put such strategies into action. Graduates take leadership roles in local government, non-profits,

and other community organizations, as corporate sustainability officers, or continue academic work in law, business, and science.

You Might Like this Program If...

- You want to make a real-world impact on communities, economies, or the environment
- You are interested in sustainability, public policy, economic development, or responsible business
- You enjoy solving complex problems and working across sectors
- You want hands-on experience through internships, projects, and community engagement
- You are looking for a flexible major that connects purpose with practical, career-ready skills