

## 2023 Annual Report

### MISSION

The mission of CCRE is to **provide interdisciplinary social science research and evaluation support for community-based projects**. CCRE strives to be the leading source of expertise on community transformation in the Mid-South.

### IMPACT

**\$1.3M**

RESEARCH &  
EVALUATION  
BUDGET

**\$109M**

IN GRANTS  
SUPPORTED

**13**

COLLABORATIONS  
IN 2023

**18**

STAFF & AFFILIATE  
RESEARCHERS

### SERVICES



- Needs Assessments, Proposal Development, Instrumentation, Research Design, Data Pipelining, Focus Groups



- Data Analytics, Survey Research, Mixed Methods, Computational GIS, Automated Reporting, Modeling & Data Science



- White Papers, Dashboards, Visualizations, Publications, Economic Impact, Data-Driven Facilitation

### FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Dear partners,

Since establishing CCRE in 2020, we have used a few simple principles in building and growing the Center. First, we've prioritized building up and empowering a fantastic staff with diverse skill sets and capacity to assist our partners with any research and evaluation needs they might have. Second, we've always strived to build a consultancy that is dependable, accessible, flexible, and easy to conduct business with. And third, we've prioritized balancing methodological rigor with the need to produce reporting that is useful, understandable, and feasible in the real world.

I look back on 2023 with gratification and excitement for the future. Simply by following these few principles, we have been incredibly fortunate to earn the trust of a growing number of valued partners. We are excited to begin 2024 with so many great opportunities to apply our expertise to the most pressing problems of the region -- and across nearly every sector that touches the lives of Mid-South families.

We are grateful to the community for their partnership and continued trust in CCRE and look forward to a wonderful (and busy) 2024!

Sincerely,



Wesley James, Ph.D.  
Executive Director, CCRE  
Interim Chair, Department of Anthropology  
Pat E. Burlison Professor, Department of Sociology



# Education



## Early Childhood

- Head Start
- Imagination Library
- Maternal Home Visiting
- SPARK
- Summer Camps

## Academic Interventions

- Literacy Tutoring
- Summer Camps
- Teacher Professional Development
- College Readiness
- Workforce Development

## Wraparound Services

- Family Home Visiting
- Neighborhood & School Climate
- Leadership Development
- Physical Education
- Mentoring

CCRE executive director Dr. Wes James and CCRE education unit director Dr. Rachel Arthur evaluate dozens of programs for the Leflore and Deer Creek Promise Communities in rural Mississippi. Modeled after the Harlem Children's Zone, these programs implement a place-based academic and wraparound services model serving thousands of students. In addition to CCRE's Promise Community portfolio which is in its ninth year, CCRE provides evaluation support for K-12 interventions by other local partners including Delta Arts and Shelby County Health Department.



Dr. Wes James with University of Chicago summer interns Lucas Miller and Miao Li, visiting the Birthplace of Kermit the Frog Museum in Leland, Mississippi during a Deer Creek Promise Community site visit.

# Data Science Laboratory



CCRE's data scientists support community partners with interactive dashboards, automated reporting tools, GIS support, data engineering services, predictive analytics, and statistical consulting. Much of the team's efforts in 2023 focused on developing dashboards to support our education projects, expediting analysis and making results accessible to more audiences. The laboratory also leveraged machine learning methods to develop a model to predict low birthweight births, helping program managers target resources in a maternal home visiting intervention.

CCRE data scientists Shuai Yuan, Jonathan Bennett, and Joseph Branson attend the 2023 Posit conference in Chicago. Hosted by the makers of RStudio, CCRE data scientists studied emerging data science tools and attended seminars on data visualization, package development, and machine learning.

# Public Health

With six public health grants and agreements in 2023, CCRE continues to support public health projects across the lifespan. This year, CCRE was awarded a ten-year NIH-funded subaward. CCRE and partners will develop and evaluate innovative structural interventions to address health disparities in the Mississippi Delta, focusing specifically on contraception, clinician training, and pregnancy care.

Maternal &  
Infant Health  
(NIH)

Leland Medical  
Clinic

Vitalant:  
Memphis Donor  
Growth Plan

Produce  
Prescriptions  
Program

Delta BLUES:  
Endocrinology

Delta Stroke  
Initiative

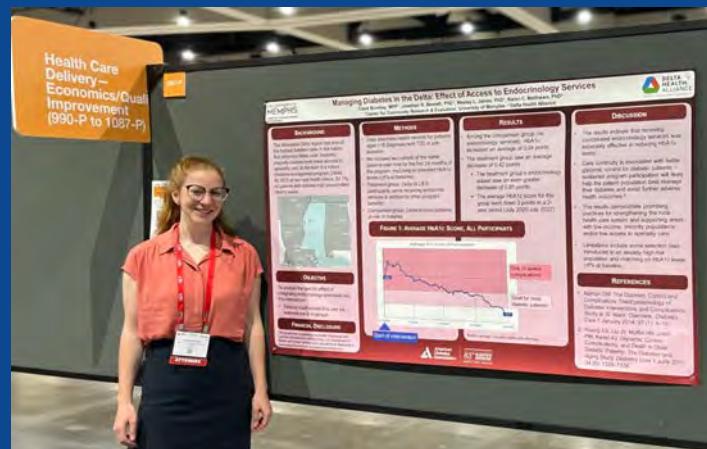
Healthy Start  
Collaborative

Delta Futures:  
Teen Pregnancy  
Prevention

Delta Opioid  
Initiative

City of  
Inverness:  
Health Literacy

Public  
Health  
Projects  
in 2023



In July, CCRE health unit director Claire Brindley attended the American Diabetes Association conference in San Diego to present key findings from Delta BLUES. This program leverages telehealth to bring endocrinology care to diabetic patients in the Mississippi Delta, a region with both high diabetes rates and limited access to providers.



Executive director Dr. Wesley James leverages CCRE research on the COVID-19 pandemic in his Presidential Address to the Southern Demographic Association. Since 2021, CCRE has conducted surveys, targeted interviews, project evaluations, and epidemiological surveillance to inform efforts to improve COVID-19 vaccination and health literacy projects in Mississippi.

## Community Interventions

Domestic  
Violence Task  
Force

Memphis Area  
Legal Services

South City Digital  
Inclusion Project

Memphis Police  
Crisis Intervention  
Team

In 2023, CCRE staff conducted evaluations, community surveys, and technical assistance for a wide variety of important community interventions, including initiatives to improve digital literacy and crisis intervention, reduce domestic violence, and tailor legal advocacy services.



CCRE staff McKinlee Deutsch, Rachel Arthur, and Madeline Arriaza discussed careers in public health with students at Kingsbury High School.

Community-Focused  
Collaborations in 2023

## Workforce Development Collaborations in 2023

GROWWTH

Upskill Mid-South

Tennessee  
Business  
Leadership  
Council

Delta Health  
Alliance

Shelby County  
Health Dept.:  
PH-IDEAS

## Upskill Mid-South

As of February 2024, CCRE is serving as the institutional home of Upskill Mid-South, an ambitious \$21.5 million project to provide in-demand training to unemployed, underemployed, and incumbent workers based on industry-identified needs. Funded by the Economic Development Administration and in partnership with partnering backbone entities Greater Memphis Chamber and Moore Tech, Upskill Mid-South's objective is to bridge skill gaps to address the needs of both workers and employers.

Upskill Mid-South focuses on cultivating the skilled workforce that the Mid-South needs to compete in the modern economy, with special focus on advanced manufacturing, constructions, and logistics technology. Providing up to 1,860 students with accelerated training classes, Upskill Mid-South adds to CCRE's growing workforce development portfolio, including partnerships with GROWWTH, Delta Health Alliance, Tennessee Business Leadership Council, and Shelby County Health Department.



Diane Pabich, senior project director, brings fifteen years of workforce policy and program expertise to the CCRE team.

## WANT TO COLLABORATE? CONTACT US!

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