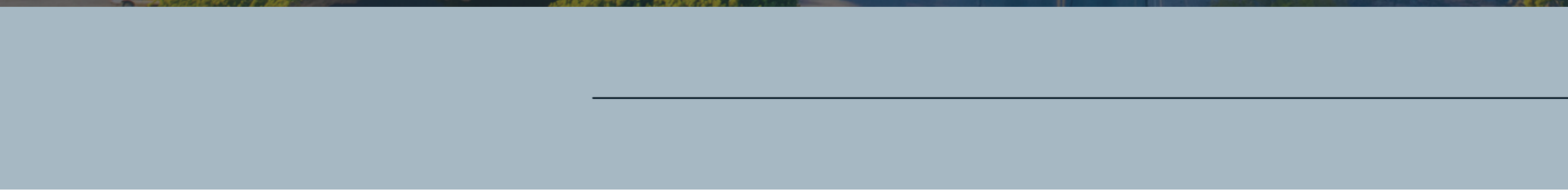
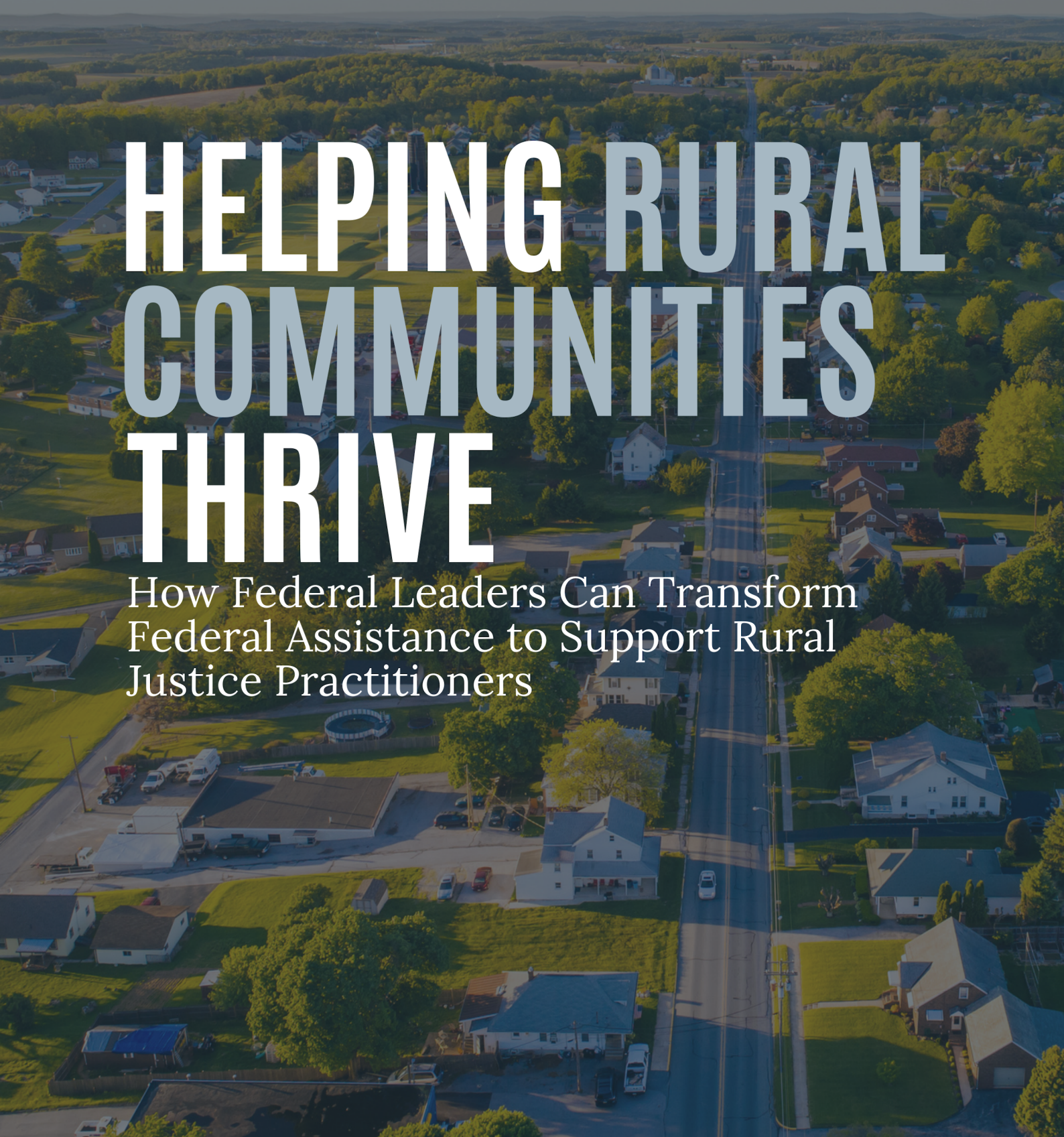


June 2023

# HELPING RURAL COMMUNITIES THRIVE

How Federal Leaders Can Transform  
Federal Assistance to Support Rural  
Justice Practitioners



# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The Institute for Intergovernmental Research (IIR) is grateful to the Bureau of Justice Assistance for funding and enabling the development of this publication. IIR appreciates and acknowledges its invaluable partnership with the Rural Justice Collaborative, RTI International, and Rulo Strategies for their critical collaboration in helping to develop this publication.

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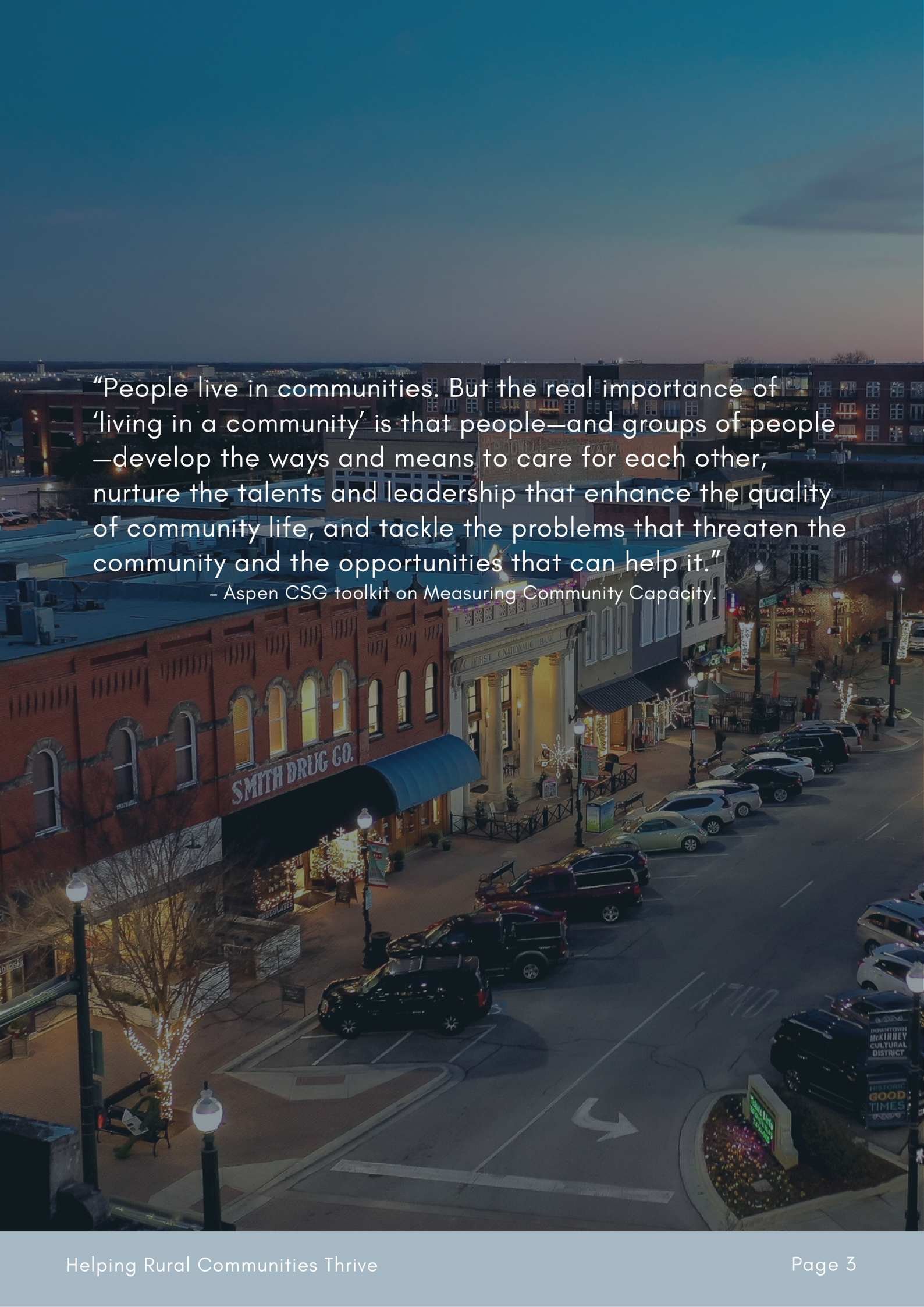
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Additionally, this publication could not have been developed without the valuable input of rural justice practitioners who participated in our roundtable discussions. IIR wishes to thank the distinguished members, who are listed in *Appendix A*, for providing their expertise, guidance, and suggestions.

This project was supported by Grant No. 2019-ARBX-K061, awarded by the Bureau of Justice Assistance. The Bureau of Justice Assistance is a component of the Department of Justice's Office of Justice Programs, which also includes the Bureau of Justice Statistics, the National Institute of Justice, the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, the Office for Victims of Crime, and the Office of Sex Offender Sentencing, Monitoring, Apprehending, Registering, and Tracking. Points of view or opinions in this document are those of the author and do not necessarily represent the official position or policies of the U.S. Department of Justice.

An aerial photograph of a downtown street at dusk. The street is lined with multi-story brick buildings. On the left, a prominent red brick building has a sign that reads "SMITH DRUG CO." in white letters. Next to it is a white building with a sign that says "FIRST NATIONAL BANK". The street is filled with cars parked along the curb and a few cars driving. Streetlights are on, and there are some festive decorations like white lights on trees. The sky is a deep blue, and the overall atmosphere is warm and inviting.

“People live in communities. But the real importance of ‘living in a community’ is that people—and groups of people—develop the ways and means to care for each other, nurture the talents and leadership that enhance the quality of community life, and tackle the problems that threaten the community and the opportunities that can help it.”

- Aspen CSG toolkit on Measuring Community Capacity.

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1 Long, J. C., Delamater, P. L., & Holmes, G. M. (2021). Which definition of rurality should I use?: The relative performance of 8 federal rural definitions in identifying rural-urban disparities. *Medical Care, 59* (Suppl 5), S413-S419. <https://doi.org/10.1097/MLR.0000000000001612>.  
2 Reamer, A. (2019). *Comprehensive accounting of census-guided federal spending (FY2017)*. George Washington University. <https://gwipp.gwu.edu/sites/g/files/zaxdzs2181/f/downloads/Counting%20for%20Dollars%202020%20Brief%20A%20-%20Comprehensive%20Accounting.pdf>

## FORWARD

There is no singular definition of “rural” in the United States. Rather, there are over 15 different definitions of “rural” used by federal agencies and programs, including at least eight definitions within USDA Rural Development programs alone. These definitions vary based on how geographic boundaries are defined and how differences in population size, population density, and/or the degree of geographic isolation are accounted for.

Each federal rural definition results in different counts of Americans living in rural communities. For example, using the rural definition derived by the U.S. Census Bureau, 62 million people lived in rural America as of 2020. Using the Office of Management and Budget's

definition, 46 million people were living in rural America as of 2020.

The different definitions of “rural” matter because they are used by Congress and federal agencies to determine eligibility for specific federal funding streams and the allocation of federal funds. In 2017, nearly \$773 billion in federal funding was allocated based on geography, and 92 federal programs used rural definitions to establish funding eligibility requirements.<sup>2</sup>

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1 Long, J. C., Delamater, P. L., & Holmes, G. M. (2021). Which definition of rurality should I use?: The relative performance of 8 federal rural definitions in identifying rural-urban disparities. *Medical Care, 59* (Suppl 5), S413-S419. <https://doi.org/10.1097/MLR.0000000000001612>.  
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# INTRODUCTION

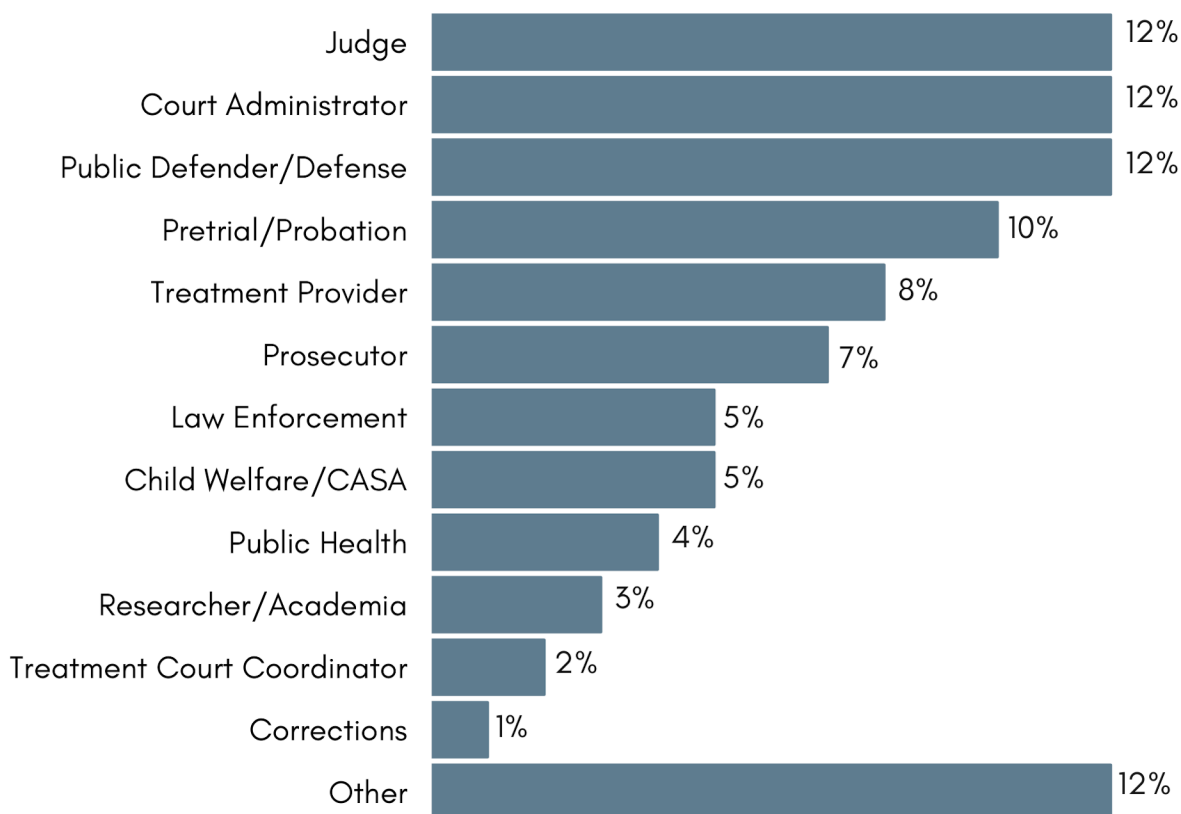
The Rural Justice Collaborative, the Institute for Intergovernmental Research, and RTI International sought to document rural communities' challenges in accessing federal grants and develop recommendations to address the problem. This report includes the findings from the data collected and presents recommendations for federal agencies and state agencies administering federal grant funds.

## RURAL JUSTICE SURVEY

Two hundred sixty-three (263) rural practitioners representing 42 states completed the online survey between February and March 2022. The professional backgrounds of the respondents were diverse, with a full quarter working outside the justice and public safety sectors. Respondents

included rural healthcare providers, researchers, language access providers, public health officials, treatment providers, faith-based community representatives, educators, victim advocates, and individuals with prior justice involvement. *Figure 1* provides a snapshot of the respondents' current professions.

Figure 1: Profession of Respondents (n=263)



"Other" included a variety of non-profits, faith-based representatives, individuals previously justice-involved, county administration, and victim advocates.

“ Our rural community lacks many resources and options for those on probation or jail who need treatment services. The closest drug and alcohol providers are 45 minutes away. There are transportation issues, funding issues, and long wait times to get into one mental health provider. Our community needs financial resources to implement programming to help reduce the recidivism rate in our community jail who need treatment services. ”

## PRIORITIES OF RURAL JUSTICE STAKEHOLDERS

### CROSS-SECTOR COLLABORATION

Respondents prioritized system-wide solutions that included strengthening cross-sector collaboration (86% agreed or strongly agreed) and expanding information sharing between justice and public safety agencies, behavioral health, and public health (83% agreed or strongly agreed).

This spirit of cooperation across agencies is a strength of many rural communities. People living in rural America often acknowledge their connection to their neighbors and community. Community organizations,

including churches, cooperatives, sports leagues, and membership organizations such as Rotary International, provide opportunities for social connection. Agencies are highly motivated to share resources across sectors and within the region to serve the community better.

### BEHAVIORAL HEALTH DISORDERS

Respondents indicated an equal need to access mental health and substance use disorder treatment and support services like housing and transportation for individuals trying to access services. These were the highest-rated needs identified by the survey respondents (95% agreed or strongly agreed). Respondents provided open-ended responses to many questions posed

86%

Agreed or strongly agreed they want to strengthen cross-system collaboration

83%

Agreed or strongly agreed they want to expand information sharing across justice, treatment, and public health



# 95%

Agreed or strongly agreed they need expanded access to mental health and substance use disorder treatment as well as support services

in the survey. Select responses emphasizing the importance of treatment and support services are noted below.

*"We lack low-cost housing options for people in the justice system, and those we hope will work for community agencies. We cannot draw people here to work if we don't have housing. Even the best community programs will only be marginally effective if participants remain unhoused."*

*"This area experiences a lot of poverty and intergenerational trauma. Prevention and intervention services for youth in the school setting would be beneficial, as well as access to high-quality classes and family support services to break the cycle."*

*"I am the prosecutor for a small, rural tribe in Arizona. Transportation is a huge barrier to care as the closest in-patient treatment programs are two hours from the reservation. They are often full, requiring people to travel 4-6 hours to reach the closest treatment facility with an available bed."*



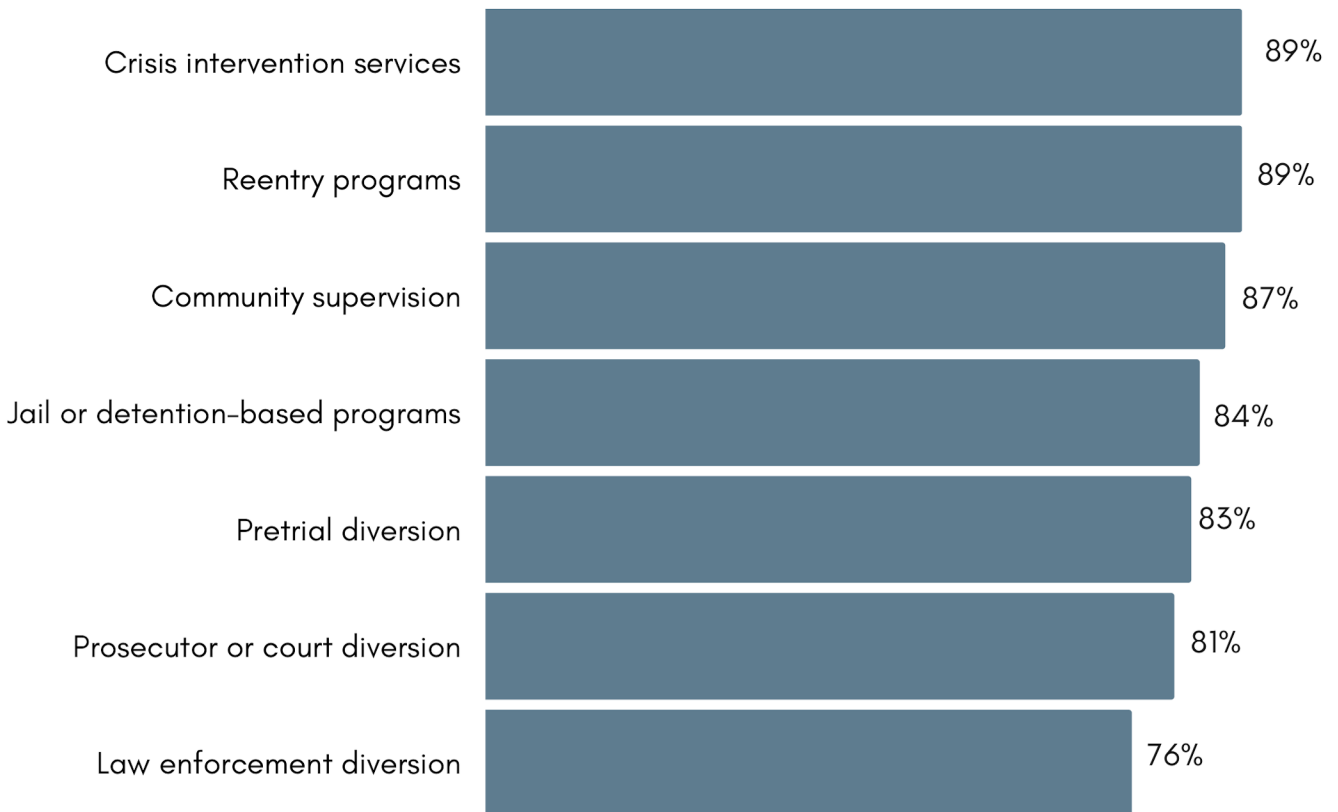
## FEDERAL FUNDING

Multiple respondents urged Congress and federal funders to provide flexible funding to meet broad needs. In some regions of the United States, this means providing resources to respond to persistently high methamphetamine and alcohol abuse rates. In other communities, funding is needed to address basic needs like transportation and housing while individuals also engage in evidence-based treatment services.

## INTERVENTIONS AND PROGRAMMING

Respondents supported interventions and programming at all points within the justice system. As shown in *Figure 2*, the percentage of respondents who prioritized services, interventions, and programming at all intervention points within the justice system was high, reflecting the system-wide approach embraced by rural practitioners.

Figure 2: Percentage who prioritized services, interventions, and programming across the justice system (n=204)



# 79%

Agreed or strongly agreed they want to expand access to legal representation

# 79%

Agreed or strongly agreed they want to strengthen support and services for crime victims

# 61%

Agreed or strongly agreed they want to expand support for self-represented litigants

Finally, respondents indicated an interest in expanding access to legal representation (79% agreed or strongly agreed), strengthening support and services for crime victims (79% agreed or strongly agreed), and providing support for self-represented litigants (61% agreed or strongly agreed).

### PREFERRED TYPE OF FEDERAL ASSISTANCE

Respondents ranked the type of federal

assistance that would be of the greatest value to their community and the justice system. The top two priorities were related to funding, with 60% of respondents prioritizing funding to assist with implementation and 58% prioritizing funding to assist with planning. Various types of technical assistance in the planning and implementation phase were identified as medium to low priorities (see *Table 1*).

Table 1: Technical Assistance Priorities

	1-2 Highest Priority	3-5 Medium Priority	6-7 Lowest Priority
Funding to help implement an initiative or a solution to a pressing problem.	60%	28%	12%
Funding to help plan an initiative or solution to a pressing problem.	58%	25%	17%
Support from a subject-matter expert to determine the best solutions to a pressing community problem,	27%	46%	27%
Guidance from a consultant with subject-matter expertise during planning or implementation.	17%	62%	21%
Implementation checklists/roadmaps around best practices.	16%	53%	31%
The opportunity to visit other sites that have already implemented this solution.	15%	42%	43%
Assistance coordinating partners during the planning phase.	5%	43%	50%

## BARRIERS TO ACCESSING FEDERAL FUNDING

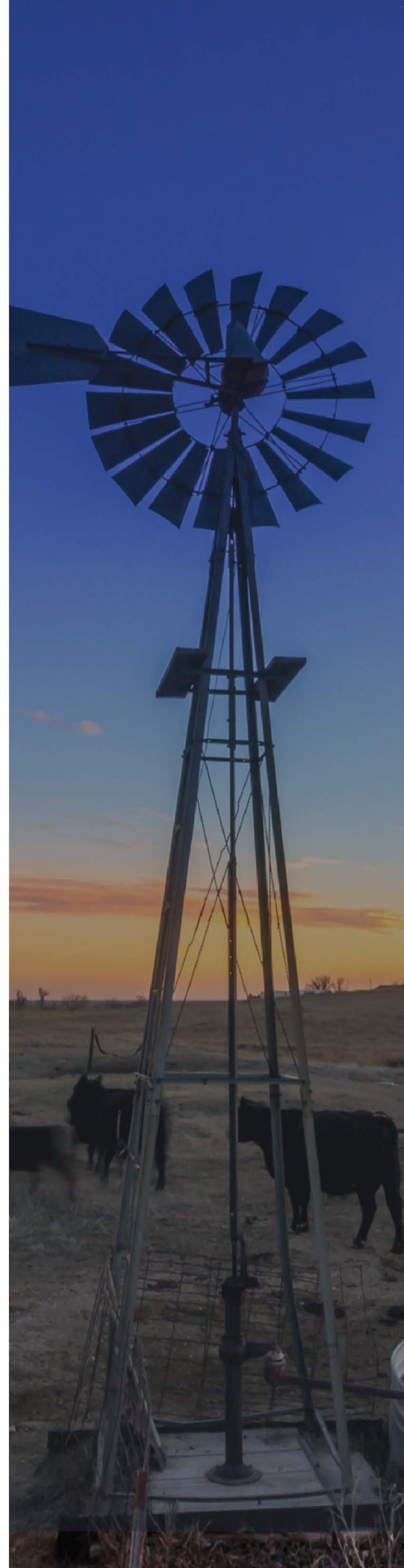
While accessing federal funding was the top priority of rural practitioners, it's important to note that approximately half of all the respondents indicated they experienced difficulties in this area. Fifty-four percent of the respondents experienced challenges identifying funding opportunities, 52% experienced problems applying for grant funds, and 42% experienced difficulties administering grant funds (see *Table 2*).

Table 2: Rural Challenges in the Grant Process (N=179)

	% who strongly agree or agree
It is difficult for my agency to <b>identify</b> grant funding opportunities to support our specific needs.	54%
It is difficult for my agency to <b>apply</b> for grant funding.	52%
It is difficult for my agency to <b>administer</b> grant funding (including complying with grant reporting).	42%

## RURAL JUSTICE ROUNDTABLE

Thirty-one (31) rural practitioners and researchers participated in a roundtable discussion held on April 21, 2022. The attendees highlighted how limited capacity, expertise, and resources impact rural communities' success in accessing federal funding. The roundtable participants also developed recommendations to meaningfully support rural communities. Their recommendations follow and are organized into chapters addressing federal grant funding, federally sponsored technical assistance, and federally sponsored training.



# CHAPTER 1: FEDERAL GRANT FUNDING

The federal grant cycle consists of three phases: a) identifying funding opportunities that align with local needs, b) applying for funding, and c) administering grant funds. Localities vary in their capacity to navigate each of these three phases. Some communities – primarily urban and suburban counties and cities – employ full-time staff or consultants who write and administer grants on behalf of the city or county. Other communities have partnered with local colleges, universities, or regional or state entities to assist with these functions. Rural communities are less likely to have access to professional grant support than their urban and suburban counterparts, which puts them at a disadvantage.

## BARRIERS & CHALLENGES

The following were identified as barriers or challenges rural communities frequently face when accessing and administering federal funds.

### LIMITED CAPACITY TO RESEARCH, WRITE, AND SUBMIT APPLICATIONS WITHIN FEDERAL TIMELINES.

Federal grant-making agencies frequently post their funding opportunities for 90 days. Professional grant writers maximize the available

time to write their applications by monitoring the release of funding opportunities daily or weekly. Without professional grant writing support, a rural or tribal community may become aware of a funding opportunity well into the 90-day application period. This puts them at an immediate disadvantage in developing a robust application.

Rural communities often rely upon existing staff, who may or may not have the training, to author grants in addition to their full-time duties. These staff frequently write grant applications in the



evenings and on weekends. Experienced grant writers may spend forty to sixty hours writing and submitting a single grant application. Those with little experience writing grants may spend twice as much time preparing their application.

### **NARROW OR OVERLY PRESCRIPTIVE PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS.**

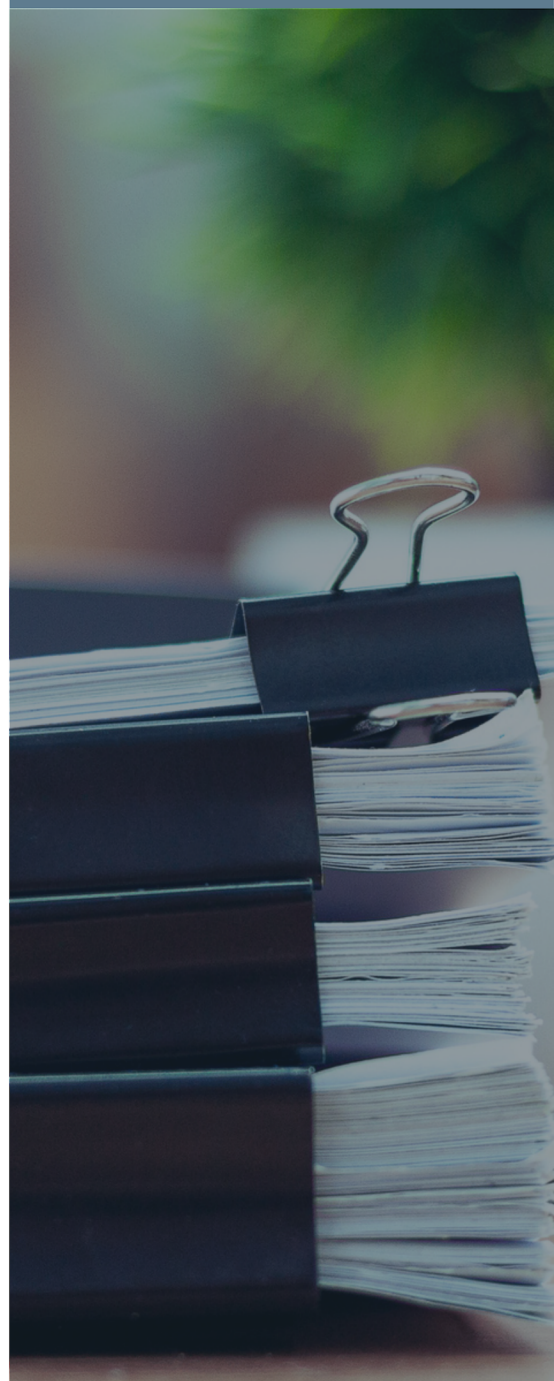
The authorizing statute for each federal grant program defines the issues a grant is intended to address and the program's goals. The Congressional guidance may be broadly written, allowing the federal administering agency flexibility in designing the grant program. Alternatively, the language may be more prescriptive, limiting how funds can be expended. Rural communities rely upon flexible funding to address a broad set of needs. It is taxing on local staff to administer multiple federal grants, each with a narrow focus.

### **CHALLENGES NAVIGATING COMPLEX AUTOMATED GRANT MANAGEMENT SYSTEMS.**

First-time applicants must navigate a series of automated systems to submit a federal grant application. Federal grant management systems are often complex, intimidating to novice users, and time-consuming to learn. Wait times can be lengthy to access assistance from the help desk if an applicant needs help. Electronic submissions can be particularly challenging in geographic areas that lack high-speed internet.

## **RURAL CAPACITY FUND**

In 2021, the Oregon legislature created a Rural Capacity Fund (HB 2345) to support hiring grant writers for rural communities. The Ford Family Foundation matched the state Legislature's \$500,000 appropriation.



### **APPLICATION SCORING THAT FAVORS EXPERIENCED GRANT WRITERS.**

Federal funders provide the scoring rubric in the funding solicitation. Experienced grant writers understand how to align their applications to maximize their scores. Professional grant writers also repurpose sections of their previously successful applications to save time. Newer grant writers, particularly those without grant-writing mentors, may not fully align their application to the scoring matrix, which typically results in a lower score.

### **LIMITED LOCAL CAPACITY TO ADMINISTER FEDERAL GRANTS AND IMPLEMENT NEW INITIATIVES.**

Successful awardees must comply with complex and time-consuming federal grant reporting requirements. Rural communities may struggle to track and report their performance without automated data collection systems.

Larger suburban and urban communities often set aside a portion of grant funding to hire a project director or an evaluator for the project. These individuals are responsible for managing the grant reporting. Rural communities are more likely to allocate all the funding to direct services and not set aside part of the budget for administrative staff or evaluators.

### **SUSTAINABILITY CHALLENGES.**

Rural communities may struggle to secure local funding to sustain grant-funded positions when the federal grant ends. Sustaining a grant-funded effort is particularly challenging if the funding period is brief (two years or less).

“ We cannot serve the hundreds of people funders want to see in impact reports. We serve our communities deeply, and grantors need to recognize, acknowledge, and be okay with funding us in that manner. We will never reach the same amount of people as our urban counterparts. That must be understood when requiring a minimum number of people to be served.

”

# OPPORTUNITIES

1.

## **SET ASIDE A PORTION OF COMPETITIVE GRANT FUNDING FOR RURAL COMMUNITIES.**

Setting aside a pre-determined percentage of competitive grant funding for rural communities prioritizes underserved communities and levels the playing field by reviewing rural applications separately from urban and suburban communities.

2.

## **PROVIDE INTENSIVE TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE TO INCREASE CAPACITY TO APPLY FOR FUNDING.**

Federal grant-making agencies can use applicant data to develop an understanding of the communities being reached through each grant program and identify underserved areas. Once these areas are identified, federal agencies can deploy targeted technical assistance to build capacity to apply for grant funding. Requiring that technical assistance providers build this type of technical assistance into their yearly work plans as a deliverable is a useful way to prioritize this activity.

3.

## **BLEND FUNDS ACROSS FEDERAL AGENCIES TO MEET THE NEEDS OF RURAL COMMUNITIES.**

The needs of rural communities are broad (e.g., transportation, housing, substance use, mental health) and beyond the scope of a single federal agency's funding streams. Federal agencies can better address these needs when they partner with other federal agencies and develop blended funding opportunities. "Blended" funding combines financial assistance from two or more federal agencies under a single set of reporting requirements. Blended funding eliminates the administrative burden associated with multiple grants. For example, a federal grant program to support workforce development for individuals reentering rural communities from incarceration may blend funding from the Department of Labor, the Department of Justice, and the Department of Agriculture.

## **ALLOW STATES OR REGIONAL ENTITIES TO APPLY FOR AND ADMINISTER GRANTS ON BEHALF OF RURAL COMMUNITIES.**

4.

Some federal grant programs allow state or regional entities to apply on behalf of a rural community and manage the grant award for the local applicant. This model leverages the capacity of the state or regional organization and can be an effective approach when the rural community has an established relationship with the state or region.

## **STREAMLINE APPLICATION PROCESSES WHERE POSSIBLE.**

5.

Federal agencies can better reach rural communities by redesigning and streamlining application processes. Streamlining the application processes is easiest achieved by awarding federal funds to an intermediary (such as a technical assistance provider) and allowing the intermediary to develop an application process managed outside the complex federal grant management systems. This approach introduces greater flexibility, including the potential for a longer period to apply or accept applications on a rolling basis. Micro-grant programs that reduce reporting requirements are also an effective strategy to streamline funding for equipment or the planning phase of a project.

## **ADOPT A PHASED APPROACH TO GRANT-MAKING IN RURAL COMMUNITIES.**

6.

Phased funding that supports both program planning and implementation can be an effective model for supporting rural communities. Under this approach, rural communities receive a small grant award for a planning phase lasting one to two years. As part of the planning phase, communities receive intensive technical assistance to build partnerships, identify priorities, develop a project budget, and complete an implementation plan. When sites reach a pre-determined point in their project, they can receive a second grant award that supports project implementation for four or five years. Alternatively, a rural community could decide not to implement after the planning phase without penalty.



# CHAPTER 2: TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

This report defines technical assistance as support provided to a local or state organization or group of organizations. Technical assistance can take the form of virtual consultations, webinars, site exchanges, or on-site training. Federal agencies frequently fund national or regional organizations to provide technical assistance at no cost to the requestor.

## BARRIERS & CHALLENGES

The following were identified as barriers or challenges rural communities face when accessing federally-funded technical assistance.

### A LIMITED NUMBER OF TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE PROVIDERS HAVE EXPERIENCE SUPPORTING RURAL COMMUNITIES.

Many justice-focused national technical assistance providers are not based in rural communities and may need more experience working with rural communities. Notable exceptions include

the Small and Rural Law Enforcement Executives Association and the Rural Justice Collaborative.

Technical assistance providers working in rural communities need to be familiar with rural culture and values that are often present, including:

- Reliance on informal resources like family, friends, and church leaders.
- The importance of relationships and building trust.
- The degree of social connectedness among community members.
- A culture of helping and taking care of one another.

## RURAL PARTNER NETWORK

The Biden Administration launched the Rural Partners Network in April 2022 in 14 communities in Georgia, Kentucky, Mississippi, New Mexico, and Native American communities in Arizona. These select communities receive on-the-ground support from full-time federal staff members assigned to provide technical assistance tailored to the community's unique needs and objectives. These community liaisons live and work in the rural communities they serve and help the community build relationships, identify community-driven solutions, navigate federal programs, and develop successful funding applications. In November, the Rural Partners Network was expanded to serve 17 other communities in Alaska, Nevada, West Virginia, and Puerto Rico.

Structural barriers such as the distance to services, limited office hours, the shortage of local staff, and stigma may impact program planning and implementation.

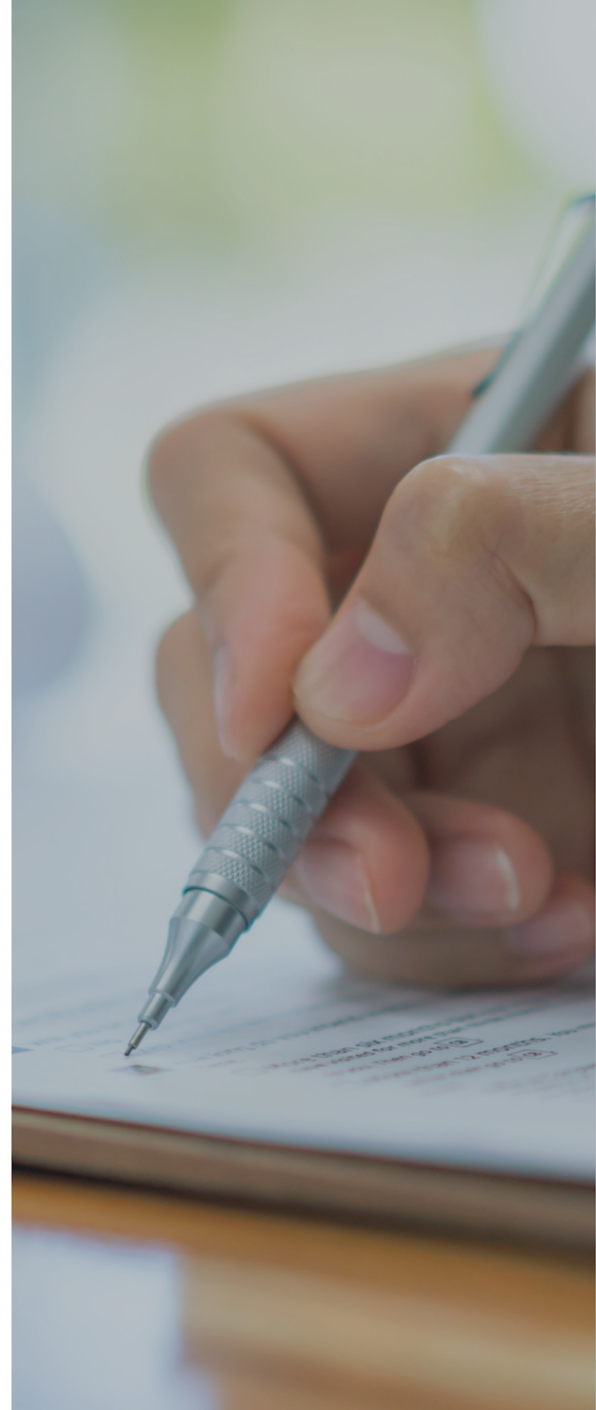
### **INFLEXIBLE APPROACHES TO TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE DRIVEN BY THE PRIORITIES OF THE FEDERAL AGENCY OR THE TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE PROVIDER.**

Technical assistance designed around a specific grant program with rigid timelines and a pre-defined set of activities often does not have the flexibility needed to support rural communities.

### **LIMITED OPPORTUNITIES TO ENGAGE IN PROGRAM EVALUATION**

Technical assistance providers may be asked to help a rural community establish a plan to evaluate the impact of their current or planned services. Rural communities face several barriers to program evaluation, including:

- Lack of funding to hire an evaluator.
- Limited staff capacity to support data collection and evaluation activities.
- Lack of historical data for program evaluation and limited access to automated data collection systems.



“ We need people to come and evaluate our community or help us assess and then help us continue a healthier path with better support options. ”

# OPPORTUNITIES

## **STRUCTURE TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE TO SUPPORT RELATIONSHIP-BUILDING.**

1.

Technical assistance providers should have experience working in diverse rural settings and devote time to understanding the context of local service delivery. The best way to develop this understanding is to spend time in the local community to learn from practitioners and the people who have experienced the justice and human service systems first-hand. Technical assistance providers must be staffed and funded in a manner that recognizes the importance of relationship and trust building in rural communities.

## **SUPPORT PEER-TO-PEER EXCHANGES THAT STRENGTHEN RURAL NETWORKS.**

2.

Peer-to-peer exchange opportunities allow rural practitioners to visit other rural communities and interact with local program staff. These learning opportunities reduce isolation and create critical professional networks. Practitioners prefer structured peer exchanges to allow multiple teams of cross-sector practitioners to participate in a peer exchange together. This reduces the burden on the host site and creates an opportunity for the teams to network within and across groups. Several respondents noted that having more than one interaction would be important so that ongoing relationships could be supported and maintained.

## **BUILD PARTNERSHIPS BETWEEN RURAL PRACTITIONERS AND PROGRAM EVALUATORS.**

3.

Program evaluators from academic institutions and non-profit or for-profit organizations can be helpful partners to rural communities adding additional capacity to support strategic planning, data collection and analysis, and performance reporting. Technical assistance providers can facilitate building these connections.

## **ANTICIPATE AND BUDGET FOR HIGHER EXPENSES WHEN OFFERING RURAL-SPECIFIC TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE OPPORTUNITIES.**

**4.**

Federal funders and technical assistance providers must anticipate and acknowledge the additional time and expense associated with providing rural technical assistance. For example, hosting rural peer exchanges or rural-specific convenings requires budgeting additional travel days since rural attendees will typically fly to and from regional airports with a limited number of daily flights. Rural attendees may also drive an hour or more to the airport or the host site.

“

Any 'outsider' needs to understand small communities, rural people, and what it's like working with limited resources.

”

# CHAPTER 3: TRAINING

The final topic addressed in this report is designing federally sponsored training that is relevant, useful, and targeted to the needs of rural communities. Rural practitioners who responded to the survey indicated they were more likely to attend state and local training over national training. Seventy-five percent (75.5%) of practitioners surveyed attend state and local training, while 43% frequently participate in national training. About half (53.1%) of the respondents indicated that national training meets their needs, while almost three-fourths (71.7%) felt that state, regional, or local training meets their needs.

## **BARRIERS & CHALLENGES**

The following were identified as barriers or challenges rural communities frequently face when accessing training.

### **A LACK OF TRAINERS WITH RURAL EXPERTISE.**

While many policymakers and trainers are interested in supporting rural communities, their experience working in

diverse rural communities may be limited. Rural practitioners preferred receiving training from rural practitioners with implementation experience.

### **TRAINING THAT IS TOO BROAD, THEORETICAL, AND OVERLY FOCUSED ON DEFINING THE PROBLEM INSTEAD OF PRACTICAL SOLUTIONS.**

“ No national conference can ever meaningfully address the needs of those involved in rural practices as the problems of every rural area are unique and, to address them, they must be talked about at a level of detail that a national conference will be unable to provide.

”



Training provided in a lecture format is often perceived as “too theoretical” by rural practitioners. Instead, there is a preference for practical teaching strategies highlighting implementation examples.

#### **THE COSTS AND TIME ASSOCIATED WITH ATTENDING TRAINING CAN BE PROHIBITIVE.**

Many rural practitioners carry a heavy workload due to staff shortages. Under those conditions, practitioners may prioritize their daily work over education. If training occurs outside of the region, other barriers like the travel distance and cost associated with attendance may become barriers.

“Most of these forums are spent identifying problems and encouraging the participants without any time spent on practical solutions-- things that can be done the next day, week, year, etc. While I love a good "we can change the world and do BIG things" session, it does not feel like a practical use of time. I need guidance and assistance doing the next five small things-- knowing what those things are and what resources are available--so the big, game-changing things we're always talking about can be achieved in my rural community.”

”

# OPPORTUNITIES

1.

## **ENSURE THAT TRAINING FOR RURAL COMMUNITIES IS PRACTICAL AND SOLUTION-FOCUSED.**

Rural practitioners are primarily focused on managing their day-to-day work. Workshops that identify practical solutions and teach the actual “nuts and bolts” of implementation in a rural setting are perceived as the most useful approach to training.

2.

## **COMBINE TRAINING WITH TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE TO SUPPORT IMPLEMENTATION.**

Practitioners expressed interest in longer, more in-depth training that extends past a single day. Respondents also expressed interest in training and follow-up technical assistance to support implementation.

3.

## **SUPPORT REGIONAL TRAIN-THE-TRAINER MODELS.**

Providing one-off training within a single community is both cost-prohibitive and short-sighted. A more sustainable training strategy is to invest in developing curricula that can be deployed at multiple sites. Once developed, staff within each state or region can be trained to deliver the curriculum.

4.

## **PROVIDE OPPORTUNITIES FOR RURAL PRACTITIONERS TO EXCHANGE IDEAS AND NETWORK.**

Rural practitioners expressed interest in open forum discussions that allow attendees to exchange ideas and network. These facilitated engagements allow practitioners to brainstorm and connect through shared experiences. In doing so, the isolation rural practitioners experience may be reduced.

## 5.

### **HOST TRAINING IN CENTRALLY LOCATED AND ACCESSIBLE VENUES TO REDUCE THE BURDEN OF ATTENDANCE AND ENCOURAGE RURAL PARTICIPATION.**

Rural practitioners encouraged federal agencies to host training in cities near rural communities in the middle of the country to reduce the travel burden.

“ Holding training closer to rural communities would be a great start. National conferences tend to be on the east or west coast or another "destination" location. Kansas City, Denver, Oklahoma City, Omaha, Minneapolis-St. Paul, St. Louis, etc. are more centrally located and easier for rural practitioners to attend.

”



# APPENDIX A

## Rural Justice Roundtable Participants April 20, 2022

The Honorable Richard Blake | Chief Judge | Redding Rancheria Tribal Court | Redding, California

Lauren Brinkley-Rubinstein, Ph.D. | Assistant Professor | Center for Health Equity Research, The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill | Chapel Hill, North Carolina

Ryan Conover | Chief Probation/Parole Officer | Keene District Office | Keene, New Hampshire

Pastor Greg Delaney | Community Engagement Specialist | Woodhaven Residential Treatment Center | Dayton, Ohio

Seth Dewey | Substance Misuse Health Educator | Reno County Health Department | Hutchinson, Kansas

Juan Figueroa | Sheriff | Ulster County Sheriff's Office | Kingston, New York

Kelly Firesheets | Vice President of Strategy and Partnership | Cordata Healthcare Innovations, LLC | Cincinnati, Ohio

Angeles Guzman | Program Manager Opioid Crisis Response Program | Coconino County Health and Human Services | Flagstaff, Arizona

Valerie Gray Hardcastle, Ph.D. | Vice President of Health Innovation | Northern Kentucky University | Highland Heights, Kentucky

Dr. Brandy Harrell, Ph.D., LCAS, CCS, CCSOTS, LCSW | Behavioral Health Director | Kinston Community Behavioral Health Center | Kinston, North Carolina

Lisa Macon Harrison, MPH | Health Director | Granville Vance Public Health | Granville and Vance Counties, North Carolina

The Honorable Elizabeth Heath | Chief District Judge | Eighth Judicial District Court | Kinston, North Carolina

The Honorable Paul Heimel | Commissioner | Potter County | Coudersport, Pennsylvania

Todd Heitschmidt | District Court Administrator | Salina County District Court | Salina, Kansas

Molly Hicken | County Attorney | Cook County | Grand Marais, Minnesota

Robbie Hodge | Detective | Corbin Police Department | Corbin, Kentucky

The Honorable Andy Hunthausen | Commissioner | Lewis and Clark County | Helena, Montana

Tracy Keirns, Ph.D. | Assistant Director | University of New Hampshire Survey Center | Durham, New Hampshire

Kelly Moore, Ph.D. | Assistant Professor | East Tennessee State University | Johnson City, Tennessee

The Honorable Donna Mowrer | District Judge | New Mexico's Ninth Judicial District Court | Portales, New Mexico

Devon Noonan, Ph.D. | Dorothy L. Powell Term Chair of Nursing | Duke University | Durham, North Carolina

Jessica Peterson, Ph.D. | Assistant Professor | The University of Nebraska at Kearney | Kearney, Nebraska

The Honorable Greg Puckett | Commissioner | Mercer County | Princeton, West Virginia

The Honorable Michelle Rick | Judge | Michigan Court of Appeals | Lansing, Michigan

Christie Rig | Director of Substance Abuse and Recovery Services, Northeast Region | Mid-South Health Systems | Imboden, Arkansas

Nicole "Cola" Rowley | Deputy County Administrator | Gallatin County | Bozeman, Montana

The Honorable Jonathan Shamis | Judge | Colorado's Fifth Judicial District | Leadville, Colorado

The Honorable Duane Slone | Judge | Fourth Judicial District | Dandridge, Tennessee

Joey Smith | Chief of Adult Behavioral Health Services and Revenue Development | Center for Life Resources | Brownwood, Texas

Stephanne Thornton | Director of Programs | Public Defender Services | Charleston, West Virginia

Wilma Weber | Community Health Specialist | Grays Harbor Public Health | Aberdeen, Washington