

Regional Rural Development Centers Listening Sessions Initiative

Rural Community, Economic, and Workforce Development Identifying Needs and Opportunities in Rural Recovery

In the wake of multiple chronic challenges exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic, rural communities and small towns across the United States are beginning to build back from the associated impacts on their economies, workforces, and communities. These recovery efforts pose critical questions of where and how to invest. To identify where stakeholders engaged in rural development see the greatest need, and the greatest opportunity, the Regional Rural Development Centers have embarked on a process to collect feedback through a year-long initiative. This feedback will be shared with with USDA NIFA and other federal partners as stakeholder feedback.

Phase 1: Assessing Stakeholder Priorities for Rural Development

The first step in this process was a survey through which key rural development implementers and other stakeholders could provide baseline feedback. Use the tools below to explore findings from this assessment, including a 48-page report, a series of infographics, and an interactive data tool.

Phase 2: National and Regional Listening Sessions to Identify Long-Range Strategies

In March - April 2022, the RRDCs hosted a series of facilitated listening sessions with invited stakeholders aimed at diving deeper into survey findings and identifying long-range strategies on key priorities. Each of the four RRDCs hosted one regionally focused listening session and one of national scope focused on a specific topic area. The topics for the four national discussions were Broadband and the Digital

Divide, Community Planning and Engagement, Innovation and Entrepreneurship, and Workforce Development.

Phase 3: Analysis and Final Report

Now that all eight listening sessions have been conducted, the RRDCs are analyzing the data collected from stakeholder input and preparing a final report for publication in the late summer or early autumn of 2022. Once it is externally reviewed and finalized, it will be made available to our stakeholders and federal partners.

To review the data collected from the Phase One stakeholder survey and the associated infographics (as previewed below), and to stay up to date, visit the RRDC Listening Session web page at <https://www.usu.edu/rrdc/listening-sessions>. *

Priority Ranks						
	North Central	Northeast	South	West	National Scope	Total
1	Economic development	Physical infrastructure and public services	Workforce development, training, and education	Physical infrastructure and public services	Health	Physical infrastructure and public services
2	Workforce development, training, and education	Economic development	Physical infrastructure and public services	Economic development	Physical infrastructure and public services	Economic development
3	Physical infrastructure and public services	Workforce development, training, and education	Health	Health	Economic development	Workforce development, training, and education
4	Community vibrancy	Climate change, climate variability, and extreme weather	Economic development	Workforce development, training, and education	Community vibrancy	Health

RRDC Infographic of stakeholder input on Priority Ranks.

Capacity						
	North Central	Northeast	South	West	National Scope	Total
1	Agriculture and food systems	Agriculture and food systems	Agriculture and food systems	Community vibrancy	Agriculture and food systems	Agriculture and food systems
2	Climate change, climate variability, and extreme weather	Diversity, equity, and inclusion	Climate change, climate variability, and extreme weather	Workforce development, training, and education	Diversity, equity, and inclusion	Diversity, equity, and inclusion
3	Community vibrancy	Climate change, climate variability, and extreme weather	Diversity, equity, and inclusion	Climate change, climate variability, and extreme weather	Health	Climate change, climate variability, and extreme weather
4	Diversity, equity, and inclusion	Workforce development, training, and education	Community vibrancy	Agriculture and food systems	Workforce development, training, and education	Community vibrancy

RRDC Infographic of stakeholder input on Capacity Ranks.

REGIONAL RURAL DEVELOPMENT CENTERS



Advancing the Vibrancy of Rural America

