



# Priorities for Rural Community Recovery and Post-Pandemic Development

## Survey Flow

Block: Welcome and Orientation (1 Question)  
Standard: Respondent Information (5 Questions)  
Standard: Priorities for Strengthening Rural Communities (4 Questions)  
Standard: Repeated Qualitative Block for Top 3 (4 Questions)  
Standard: Programming Value (2 Questions)  
Standard: Demographics Base/Universal (6 Questions)

Page Break

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Start of Block: Welcome and Orientation

### Q24 Consent to Participate

You have been invited to participate in the survey portion of a national listening session process whose **goal** is to identify priorities, valued programming, challenges, and opportunities for the development of rural communities. This process is being led by the four Regional Rural Development Centers (RRDCs). Results of the survey will be used to inform the work of the four RRDCs and as a guidepost for facilitated townhall-style conversations among invited participants. These survey results will be made available in public reports which may be shared by the RRDCs with USDA NIFA and other federal partners as stakeholder feedback.

This survey is open to adults (over 18) who are professionally engaged in work that supports the economic, workforce, and community development of rural communities in the United States and its territories. This can include but is not limited to those working in higher education institutions (including Cooperative Extension), public policy and advocacy organizations, government at all levels, industry and labor organizations, educators serving rural communities or in vocational subjects, or economic development organizations.

Your participation in this survey is voluntary. The time to complete the survey is estimated to be 20 minutes. Questions cover topics including: ranking a set of topical areas in terms of importance for rural communities, identifying the current capacity of your organization to engage in programming on issues within your top priority topics, providing detailed thoughts on issues



faced by rural communities, rating the value to you of different program activities, and sharing background information about your experiences and demographics. None of the questions are mandatory to complete the survey and you may skip any question(s). You may end participation in the survey at any time by exiting your browser.

The listening session process team values the confidentiality of those who choose to participate in the survey. The information you provide will be housed in the facilities of the participating host institutions and the listening process team will make every reasonable effort to maintain the security and confidentiality of the data you provide. We also do not ask you to provide personally identifiable information that is associated with your answers to these substantive questions. After the survey you will have the opportunity to provide contact information via a separate form if you would like to learn more about results or other stages in the listening session process.

This survey is a collaborative effort among the four RRDCs. If you have questions or concerns about this survey, you may contact Jason Entsminger, NERCRD, Penn State University, at [jentsminger@psu.edu](mailto:jentsminger@psu.edu) or Rachel Welborn, Southern Rural Development Center, Mississippi State University, at [rachel.welborn@msstate.edu](mailto:rachel.welborn@msstate.edu). If you have questions about your rights as a participant, you may contact the Institutional Review Boards of Penn State University [814-865-1775 or [irb-orp@psu.edu](mailto:irb-orp@psu.edu)] or Mississippi State [662-325-3294].

Answering the questions in this survey will help the RRDCs and our partners develop programming and invest in rural communities.

**If you consent and would like to participate in this initiative, click the button below to continue.**

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Page Break

End of Block: Welcome and Orientation

Start of Block: Respondent Information



Q2 Please select the answers that best describe your organization and role.

Sector (1)

Organization Type (2)

Role (3)

▼ Higher Education (1) ... Private Firms and Non-profits ~ Financial services and real estate ~ Realtor or agent (167)

Q3

Check this box if you could not find a description for one or more of the fields that suits your position.

☐

My sector, organization type, or role is not listed (1)

*Display This Question:*

*If Check this box if you could not find a description for one or more of the fields that suits your... = My sector, organization type, or role is not listed*

Q4 You indicated that you couldn't describe your institution and role easily with the options provided. Tell us more about where you work.

☐ Sector (1) \_\_\_\_\_

☐ Organization Type (2) \_\_\_\_\_

☐ Role (3) \_\_\_\_\_

Page Break



Q5 In which state do you yourself currently reside?

▼ I do not reside in the United States (1) ... U.S. Virgin Islands (58)

Q6 In which state(s) does your organization operate? Select all that apply by using the CTRL key.

- ☐ National Scope (1)
- ☐ Alabama (2)
- .
- .
- .
- ☐ U.S. Virgin Islands (56)

End of Block: Respondent Information

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Start of Block: Priorities for Strengthening Rural Communities



Q7 Below are eight broad topical areas relevant to workforce and economic development in rural communities. Each topic includes some issues that fall within it. Which of these topical areas do you view as the most important priorities to be addressed in the next five years for rural communities?

**How to respond:** Click and drag each topical area to the rank position you feel it should hold, with most important being on top, next one 2nd, etc.

**Taking a moment to do this step is important as it will give you some options for helping us understand your top priorities better.**

\_\_\_\_\_ **Economic development**    Rural innovation, entrepreneurship, and small business creation and retention    Tourism, recreation, travel, and hospitality    Exports and



international trade      Sustainable growth (including "closed-loop" and "circular" economies)  
(4)

\_\_\_\_\_ **Diversity, equity, and inclusion**      Equitable and inclusive economic growth  
Entrepreneurship among socially disadvantaged communities      Community racial  
understanding      Addressing disparities in access to programming      (6)

\_\_\_\_\_ **Physical infrastructure and public services**      Energy, including renewable  
production and reliable access      Broadband/high speed internet access, affordability, and  
reliability      Housing access and affordability      Transportation infrastructure renewal      (7)

\_\_\_\_\_ **Community vibrancy**      Youth development, engagement, and rural retention  
Community governance, leadership, and resident engagement/participation      Placemaking,  
culture, and arts      Aging and inter-generational engagement      Population change and  
demographics      (8)

\_\_\_\_\_ **Agriculture and food systems**      Local and regional food systems development  
Sustainable on-farm practices and value capture      New market development for agricultural and  
forestry products      Land access, heirs' property, and farm transition      (9)

\_\_\_\_\_ **Workforce development, training, and education**      Certificates and other  
professional training      Apprenticeships and internships      Skills gaps and strategic planning for  
workforce development      Educational programs in high schools, colleges, and universities for  
jobs of the future      Retraining and transition assistance      (10)

\_\_\_\_\_ **Climate change, climate variability, and extreme weather**      Disaster preparation,  
mitigation, and management      Natural and environmental resources management      Community  
and economic resiliency planning      Mitigation and adaptation strategies      (11)

\_\_\_\_\_ **Health**      Nutritional security, food access, and food affordability      Behavioral and mental  
health services      Substance abuse issues, including opioids      Public health, including availability  
and access to medical facilities and services      (12)

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Q8 Are there topics or issues not listed above that you see as important to community and  
economic development for rural communities in the U.S. over the next 5 years?

☐ Yes (1)

☐ No (2)

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*Display This Question:*

*If Are there topics or issues not listed above that you see as important to community and economic  
d... = Yes*



Q9 Please list up to 3 additional topics or issues that you see as important to rural communities which must be addressed in the next 5 years.

☐ Additional priority issue 1 (1)

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☐ Additional priority issue 2 (2)

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☐ Additional priority issue 3 (3)

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Q10 Thinking about the organization for which you work, to what extent does this organization have capacity to work on the issues you identified as high priority? Is the organization interested in expanding existing programming on any of these issues?

	Current Capacity				Interest in Expanding (beyond current activities)
	Not applicable or not engaged (1)	Low capacity (2)	Moderate capacity (3)	High capacity (4)	Organization likely has interest in expanding (1)

# RRDC

## Regional Rural Development Centers

Rural innovation, entrepreneurship, and small business creation and retention (4)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Tourism, recreation, travel, and hospitality (6)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Exports and international trade (7)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Sustainable growth (including "closed-loop" and "circular" economies) (8)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Equitable and inclusive economic growth (9)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Entrepreneurship among socially disadvantaged communities (10)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Community racial understanding (11)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Addressing disparities in access to programming (12)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Energy, including renewable production and reliable access (13)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Broadband/high speed internet access, affordability, and reliability (14)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Housing access and affordability (15)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Transportation infrastructure renewal (16)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Youth development, engagement, and rural retention (17)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

# RRDC

## Regional Rural Development Centers

Community governance, leadership, and resident engagement/participation (18)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Placemaking, culture, and arts (19)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Aging and inter-generational engagement (20)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Population change and demographics (21)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Local and regional food systems development (22)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Sustainable on-farm practices and value capture (23)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
New market development for agricultural products (24)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Land access, heirs' property, and farm transition (25)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Certificates and other professional training (26)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Apprenticeships and internships (27)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Skills gaps and strategic planning for workforce development (28)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Educational programs in high schools, colleges, and universities for jobs of the future (29)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Retraining and transition assistance (30)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>



Page Break

### Start of Block: Repeated Qualitative Block for Top 3



Loop and Merge Applied:

Items Q25, Q11, Q12, and Q13 were repeated a total of three times. Each repetition utilized a loop and merge application, where the Piped Text Reference [\${Im://Field/1}] displayed and recorded the respondent's first, second, and third ranked topics, and the associated list of issues within that topic, as indicated by the respondent in Q7.

Q25

Thinking about the important topic you previously identified, please answer the following questions.

\${Im://Field/1}

Q11 What **assets and resources** do you believe rural communities currently have?

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Q12 What **challenges** do you see rural communities facing?

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Q13 What **initiatives and research** do you believe should be supported to help rural communities address challenges?

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End of Block: Repeated Qualitative Block for Top 3

Start of Block: Programming Value

Q14 To what degree do you think the following current or potential programming efforts could expand capacity in rural communities to address these issues?

	No value (1)	Little value (2)	Some Value (3)	High Value (4)
Organize research teams across states/institutions around key issues (1)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Coordinate Extension and Outreach teams across states/institutions around key issues (2)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Provide formal training or educational programs on community and economic development topics (3)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Offer informal workshops and webinars on key community and economic development topics (4)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Showcase promising practices or programs within community and economic development programming (5)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Give technical assistance that helps identify and apply for funding for community and economic development activities (6)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Have funding targeted specifically for multi-state teams on high-priority issues (7)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Provide technical assistance for evaluation and impact measurement of community and economic development programming (8)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Facilitate multi-institutional approaches to technology transfer (12)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Support integrated (i.e. research plus Extension/outreach) projects on cross-cutting topics (13)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

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Q23 Do you have any other thoughts about community, economic, and workforce development programming for rural areas that you would like to share?

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End of Block: Programming Value

Start of Block: Demographics Base/Universal



Q15 It's important to us to know what experiences are represented in the feedback we collect. Please use the questions below to tell us more about yourself.

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Q16 How would you describe the community in which you currently live?

- ☐ Rural area (1)
  - ☐ Small city or town (2)
  - ☐ Suburb near a large city (3)
  - ☐ Urban area or large city (4)
- 

Q17 What is your age?

- ☐ 18 - 24 (1)
  - ☐ 25 - 40 (2)
  - ☐ 41 - 55 (3)
  - ☐ 56 - 65 (4)
  - ☐ 65 and above (5)
-



Q18 What is your race? (Select all that apply):

- ☐ White (1)
  - ☐ Black or African American (2)
  - ☐ American Indian or Alaska Native (3)
  - ☐ Asian (4)
  - ☐ Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander (5)
  - ☐ Not Listed or Additional Information (provide in the space below) (6)
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Q19 Are you Hispanic or Latino?

- ☐ Yes, I am Hispanic or Latino (1)
  - ☐ No, I am none of these (2)
-



Q21 How do you identify? (select all that apply)

- ☐ Man (1)
- ☐ Woman (2)
- ☐ Transgender (3)
- ☐ Non-binary (4)
- ☐ Intersex (5)
- ☐ Gay, Lesbian, or Bisexual (6)
- ☐ Straight/Heterosexual (7)

End of Block: Demographics Base/Universal

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