

APPENDICES

Endnotes

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All web addresses in these endnotes were active as of publication. For updates, please visit aspencsg.org and find the Endnotes page in the online version of this report. On that page, CSG will endeavor to provide either updated web addresses or an archive of any referenced resources for any web addresses printed here that become inactive.

Methodology

This Rural Development Hubs report is one product of research that the Aspen Institute Community Strategies Group (CSG) conducted in late 2018 and the first half of 2019 to address this framing question:

What actions could shift mindsets, construct or revise systems and policies, and build capacity to advance rural community and economic development in a way that improves equity, health and prosperity for future generations?

Our research activities included:

- **Literature Review.** CSG staff first collected and reviewed a wide range of publications – reports, books, academic papers, studies and lessons-learned articles and narratives – to help shape our thinking for our interview protocol and to ground the introductory sections of this report.
- **Hub Interviews.** CSG staff then conducted in-depth interviews with 43 different rural and regional intermediary organizations. (See *Appendix D.*) We identified the list of organizations to interview through multiple channels, primarily on the advice of the Rural Development Innovation Group (RDIG). Initially founded and convened in 2016 by the Northern Forest Center, the U.S. Endowment for Forestry and Communities, and the Aspen Institute Community Strategies Group, the Rural Development Innovation Group is a set of seasoned rural development practitioners and intermediaries from across the country who are well networked and deeply engaged in advancing rural community and economic development. Each of the 15 RDIG members was asked to contribute a list of intermediaries doing the best development work in rural America. CSG then combined and culled the list, in conjunction with our partners at the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, to reflect and represent the wide range of intermediary organization types that act as Rural Development Hubs, as well as the range of geographic regions, economic bases and resident populations that comprise rural America.

Why interview 43? We interviewed as many Hub organizations as we could within the limits of our available time and resources. Our curation down to the group interviewed focused on establishing the range and balance described above within that number. There are many more organizations working in rural America that we would consider Hubs, or that are engaged in many of the Hub approaches and practices we define in this report.

CSG interviewed the Hubs in two stages. We first developed a 19-question interview protocol, with question groupings that addressed the internal operations and approach of the intermediary, critical factors external to the intermediary that affected their work in the region, and issues related to their capacity and sustainability over the long term. After we conducted the first 25 interviews, we drafted initial findings and tested them with the members of RDIG and key Foundation staff. We then conducted a second set of interviews with the remaining 18 organizations on the list. We asked all interviewees the same questions and probed with follow-ups as needed. We conducted the majority of interviews with the CEO or president of the intermediary, the remainder were with key leading staff members or with a staff team.

- **Rural Development Hubs Brief and Release.** We released our initial topline findings in a four-page brief on May 14, 2019. The release was accompanied by a public event – livestreamed nationally and moderated by Aspen Institute President, Dan Porterfield – that engaged in conversation with four Hub leaders: *Rural Development Hubs: Action Infrastructure for Rural Prosperity*. CSG invited anyone who participated in the event or who read the brief to provide additional comment and perspective.

Note: The brief has now been revised into the separately available executive summary of this report. The event video can be found online by searching for its title on either the Aspen Institute website or on YouTube.

All these activities, taken together, provided the base for the content of this report.

How to Spot a Rural Development Hub

Many people have asked “Are you going to publish a list of Hubs?” and “How do I find the Rural Development Hub(s) in my state?”

This report and the research behind it represent a first foray at positing that there are indeed rural intermediaries acting as innovative hubs for rural community and economic development – agile, enterprising, cross-issue organizations that are taking on tasks and building capacity “well beyond the usual” to do whatever needs to be done to improve health, equity and prosperity outcomes for rural people, places and economies in their regions. It was not our intent to identify and list all such organizations. Rather our aim was to talk to organizations that already are recognizably doing this, to hear in their voice about the enabling environment that would help them do more and better, and to provide an opening nomenclature – *Rural Development Hubs* – that gives them a common name.

However, we can offer some guideposts for detecting characteristics and behaviors that can help anyone identify the “Hub Factor” within organizations. In doing so, please keep these caveats in mind:

- There is no clear on/off or yes/no switch for Hubs. It is more of a spectrum. Many rural regional organizations have both some strong elements of a Hub as well as factors that need strengthening. Our hypothesis is that the nation needs robust Rural Development Hubs as components of the essential infrastructure for rural innovation, systems change and progress. So, working with organizations that already demonstrate Hub characteristics and action – and strengthening Hub factors in all regional rural organizations – is a critical investment in all of America’s future.
- Hubs are critical players for improving regional outcomes and changing systems. But as we state earlier in this report, non-Hub local organizations focused on key issues are also critical, and Hubs need them as local partners. In other words, the fact that there are effective organizations acting and emerging as Rural Development Hubs does not mean that other local organizations are not also essential and deserving of investment.

Hub Recognition Factors

Here are some pointers for how to identify and gauge the “Hub Factor” of a regional organization working in rural America. These factors can be assessed in conversation with an organization’s board and staff, by reviewing an organization’s materials and media, or by “asking around.”

- **Read the *What are Rural Development Hubs?* section of this report.** It describes some key behaviors of Hubs that you can use as a partial checklist.
- **Remember: A Hub may be any type of organization.** We listed the many types of organizations that are acting as Hubs earlier in this report. (See the *Rural Development Hubs: Not Just Any – Or Any One Kind – of Intermediary* subsection of *What are Rural Development Hubs?*) Keep in mind, though, that if one CDFI or community action agency or community foundation (etc.!) is a Hub, it does not mean that all organizations of those types are Hubs.
- **Examine the mission and functions of the intermediary organization.** Most rural and regional Hubs are focused on finding solutions, and see improving a *system* of individual, family, community and economy outcomes as central to their mission – not just one of those. This sets Hubs apart as *transformation* organizations, rather than *transactional* ones that are more focused on one issue, and/or on delivering direct services that meet immediate needs.
- **The Region Test: Look at the geographic scope.** The geographic reach of rural and regional intermediary organizations varies widely; there is no specific optimal size, large or small, for a Hub. However, Hubs all work a *region*, across multiple jurisdictions – be that within one county, across multiple counties or even across multiple states. Some may be rooted in rural places, but also serve urban centers within the region – or vice versa.

- **Look at board and staff expertise and diversity.** Hubs tend to work hard to diversify the professions, geographic locations, age and class representation on their staff and boards – and strive to achieve the racial and ethnic diversity of the region they serve.
- **Look for evidence of an organizational strategy and future orientation.** CEOs we interviewed have been intentional about taking the time, making the space, and finding the resources to work *on the organization* itself – its meta-strategy and the organizational development to pursue it – rather than simply to continue the work *of the organization*.
- **Consider their relationship to power.** Hubs are not power brokers for the region, nor do they work to maintain status quo power structures. Hubs seek to build power among residents, to increase the capacity of other public-interest-minded organizations, and to increase collaborative leadership in the region. Hubs work to advance equity in all its forms – power, race, class, gender, and so forth.
- **Look for “building from within.”** Hubs focus on engaging the community and identifying local assets, building solutions from the ground up rather than seeking rescue from outside the region. They develop outside relationships to support the work on the ground and to find partners to fill gaps, not to be “the first answer.”
- **Look for a creative “stretch factor.”** Most Hubs start with the core area of expertise called for by their type or organization – like business assistance or charitable giving or education or direct service to poor families – but stretch to do things outside the “typical action zone” of their type of intermediary when the situation calls for it. Look for whether the organization has done new and different things, and built collaboratives, to find solutions.
- **Look at diversity of funding sources for their Hub work.** Because Hubs are doing creative, entrepreneurial work, their sources of funding *tend* to be more numerous and unusual than that of more “transactional” organizations.
- **The Showing-Up Test: Look at the extent and frequency of their rural presence.** Hubs have lots of miles on their odometers. The extent to which staff (and board members) show up in different parts of the region, not only when work demands it, but simply to listen and establish relationships, is a key Hub indicator. Having offices and staff physically located in rural environs of the region is another good sign (though not always a deal-maker or deal-breaker).
- **Look for evidence of vision, healthy risk taking, assessment and reflective practice.** Visionary leadership is what ultimately pushes an organization to go beyond basic program delivery and to think creatively about assets, gaps, and the “right” role of an organization in a place. Almost all our interviewees said their ideal board is made up of systems thinkers who encourage innovation, not “yes people” who rubber stamp things. Look for a board and staff that pushes the organization to take risks, reflects on what they have learned on a regular cycle, and that openly talks about failure.
- **Talk to existing Hubs.** If you want to find a Hub in your state, one good idea is to contact one of the Hubs we interviewed and ask for their suggestions. Since Hubs are typically collaborative and humble, you are likely to get an honest and helpful response. (*See the list of interviewees in the next appendix.*)

Finally, we are not averse to developing a provisional list of Rural Development Hubs – though we have no means or field methods at this juncture to certify any organization as a Hub. But we offer this opening to start such a list. If you think your organization (or an organization you know well) is a Hub, we want to know. Please send us a note at csg@aspinst.org introducing the organization, and in what ways you think the organization is a Hub. By crowdsourcing information from around the country, we may be in a better position to point the next well-meaning soul who inquires to an existing or aspirational Hub in their state or region.

List of Rural Development Hubs Interviewed

David Adame – *President and CEO*. **Chicanos Por La Causa**. Phoenix, AZ

Diana Anderson – *President and CEO* / **Scott Marquardt** – *Vice President*. **Southwest Initiative Foundation**. Hutchinson, MN

Brian Angus – *CEO*. **Fresno Economic Opportunities Commission**. Fresno, CA

Keith Bisson – *President*. **Coastal Enterprises, Inc.** Brunswick, ME

Derek Brandes – *President*. **Walla Walla Community College**. Walla Walla, WA

Terry Brunner – *Chief Program Officer*. **Grow New Mexico**. Albuquerque, NM

Bill Bynum – *CEO*. **HOPE**. Jackson, MS

Stacy Caldwell – *CEO*. **Tahoe Truckee Community Foundation**. Truckee, CA

Michael Cartney – *President*. **Lake Area Technical Institute**. Watertown, SD

Nils Christoffersen – *Executive Director*. **Wallowa Resources**. Enterprise, OR

Mike Clayborne – *President*. **CREATE Foundation**. Tupelo, MS

Chrystel Cornelius – *Executive Director*. **First Nations Oweesta Corporation**. Longmont, CO

Brian Depew – *Executive Director*. **Center for Rural Affairs**. Lyons, NE

Rob Goldsmith – *President and CEO*. **People Incorporated**. Abingdon, VA

Molly Hemstreet – *Executive Co-director*. **The Industrial Commons**. Morganton, NC

Cheryal Lee Hills – *Executive Director*. **Region 5 Development Commission**. Staples, MN

Heidi Khokhar – *Executive Director*. **Rural Development Initiatives**. Eugene, OR

Peter Kilde – *Executive Director*. **West Central Wisconsin Community Action Agency, Inc.** Glenwood City, WI

Jim King – *CEO and President*. **Fahe**. Berea, KY

Anne Kubisch – *President*. **Ford Family Foundation**. Roseburg, OR

Angie Main – *Executive Director*. **NACDC Financial Services, Inc.** Browning, MT

Charley Martin-Berry – *Executive Director*. **Community Caring Collaborative**. East Machias, ME

Justin Maxson – *Executive Director*. **Mary Reynolds Babcock Foundation**. Winston-Salem, NC

Nick Mitchell-Bennett – *Executive Director*. **Community Development Corporation of Brownsville**. Brownsville, Texas

John Molinaro – *President and CEO*. **Appalachian Partnership, Inc.** Nelsonville, OH

Ines Polonius – *CEO*. **Communities Unlimited**. Fayetteville, AR

Steve Radley – *President and CEO*. **NetWork Kansas**. Wichita, KS

Rebecca Reynolds – *Executive Director*. **Little Dixie Community Action Agency**. Hugo, OK

Rob Riley – *President* / **Joe Short** – *Vice President*. **Northern Forest Center**. Concord, NH

Kelly Ryan – *CEO*. **Incourage Community Foundation**. Wisconsin Rapids, WI

Mikki Sager – *Director, Resourceful Communities and Vice President* / **Kathleen Marks** – *North Carolina Director, Resourceful Communities* / **Monica McCann** – *Associate Director, Resourceful Communities*. **The Conservation Fund**. Arlington, VA

Monica Schuyler – *Executive Director*. **Pennies from Heaven Foundation**. Ludington, MI

Kirsten Scobie – *Director of Tillotson Funds*. **The Neil and Louise Tillotson Fund of the New Hampshire Charitable Foundation**. Hanover, NH

Karl Stauber – *President and CEO (outgoing)* / **Clark Casteel** – *President and CEO (incoming)*. **Danville Regional Foundation**. Danville, VA

Jennie L. Stephens – *CEO*. **Center for Heirs' Property Preservation**. Charleston, SC

Frances Sykes – *President* / **Jackie Edwards** – *Vice President of Strategic Engagement*. **The Pascale Sykes Foundation**. Redbank and Vineland, NJ

Jeff Usher – *Senior Program Officer*. **Kansas Health Foundation**. Wichita, KS

Dennis West – *President*. **Northern Initiatives**. Marquette, MI

Sherece West-Scantlebury – *CEO*. **Winthrop Rockefeller Foundation**. Little Rock, AR

Gregory Williams – *President* / **Kimberly McKay** – *Vice President for Student Services* / **Valerie Jones** – *Vice President for Instruction* / **Donald Wood** – *Vice President for Institutional Effectiveness*. **Odessa Community College**. Odessa, TX

Patrick Woodie – *President* / **Jason Gray** – *Senior Fellow for Research and Policy* / **John Coggin** – *Director of Advocacy* / **Tiffany Gladney** – *Policy and Government Affairs Manager*. **NC Rural Center**. Raleigh, NC

Duane Yoder – *President*. **Garrett County Community Action Committee**. Oakland, MD

Adam Zimmerman – *President and CEO*. **Craft3**. Seattle, WA

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Final Page - Clockwise from the top: Photo by Kertis Creative; Photo by Wayne Fawbush; Photo by Shawn Poynter; Photo by Franzi Charen