

Community Strategies Group



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Bonita Robertson-Hardy

Chris Estes

Co-Executive Directors

A Connecting Hub for Equitable Rural Community and Economic Development



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Hub of Hubs

Peer Learning

Field Development

Opportunities for Rural

- **Reorganize federal** rural programs in wake of recent expansion & existing morass.
 - **Measuring Success** in Rural
 - **Health** intersections of rural development
 - **Climate Change/Disaster/Energy**: connect it to rural, especially essential minerals - new ways of Disaster Resilience
 - **Outdoor Rec Economy**: link environ & local asset building
 - **Rural Development Hubs**: focus for capacity investments
 - **Thrive Rural/WealthWorks**: local wealth & systems change
- 



Interdependence & Interconnectedness





Explore
Regional
Wealth
Building

Identify a
Market
Opportunity

Construct a
WealthWorks
Value Chain

Gauge
Wealth-
building
Impact

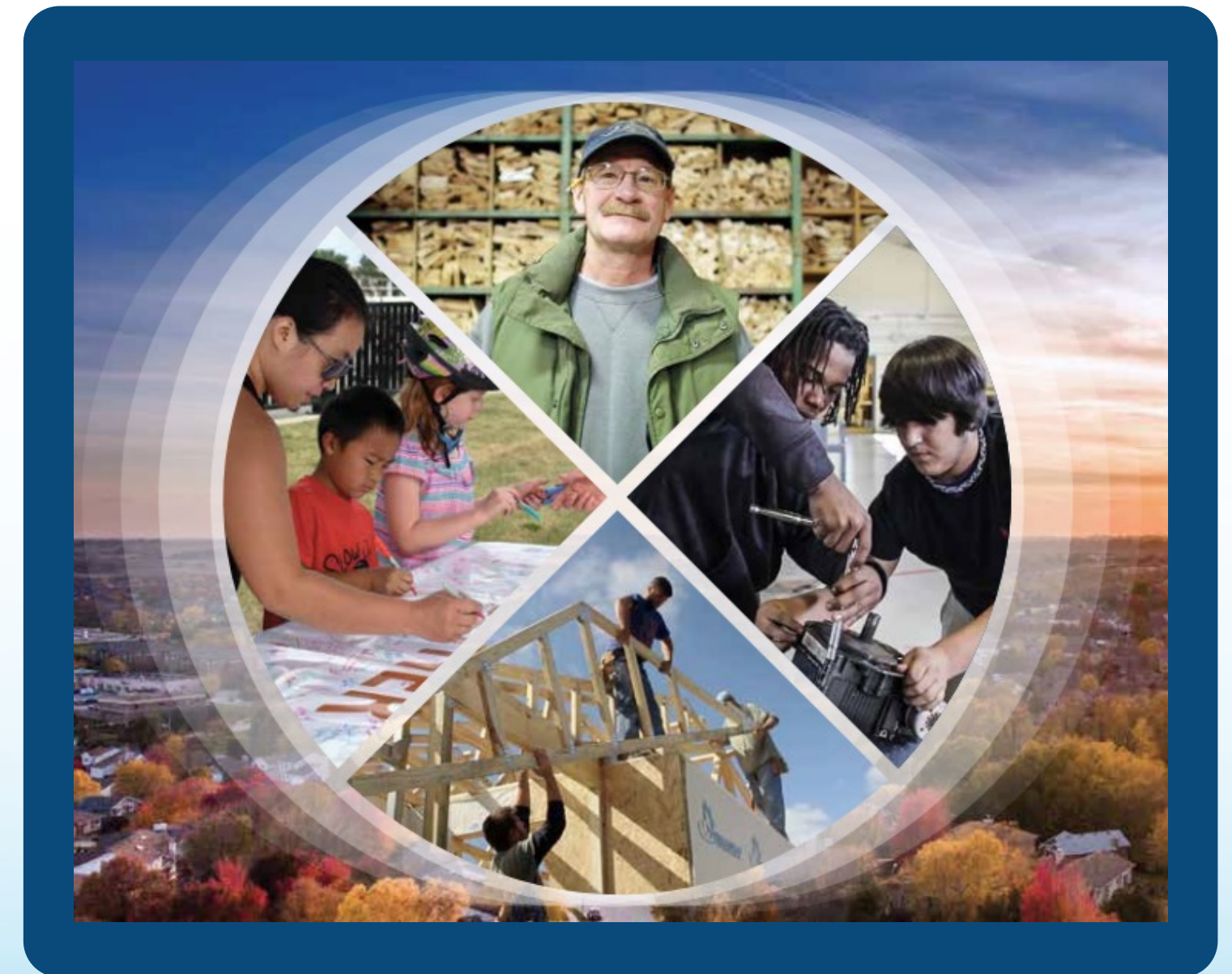
Qualities of Hubs



- 01 Think and work "Region."
- 02 Assemble the region for discovery and dialogue.
- 03 Are of their region, know their region, and build trust in their region.
- 04 Take the long view.
- 05 Bridge issues and silos.
- 06 Analyze at the systems level and intentionally address gaps in the systems.

Qualities of Hubs

- 07 Collaborate as an essential way of being and doing.
- 08 Create structures, products, and tools that foster collaborative doing.
- 09 Translate, span, and integrate action between local and national actors.
- 10 Flex, innovate, and become what they need to become to get the job done.
- 11 Take and tolerate risk.
- 12 Hold themselves accountable to the whole community.



THRIVE RURAL FRAMEWORK

Rural Voice and Power

Equitable Aims and Design

Resources for Productive Action

Local-Level Building Blocks



Welcome All to the Community



Advance Personal Well-Being



Strengthen Local Ownership and Influence



Build from Current Assets



Balance Development Goals



Design for Everyone to Thrive



Prepare Action-Able Leadership



Organize an Action Infrastructure



Act as a Region



Build Momentum

Systems-Level Building Blocks



Rural Voice in Design and Action



Aligned Rural Fields and Actors



Accurate Rural Narrative



Balanced Development Outcomes



Cohesive Rural Policy Lens



Valued Rural Stewardship



Rural Stakeholder Equity



Ready Rural Capital Access and Flow



Rural Data for Analysis and Change



Regional Analysis and Action



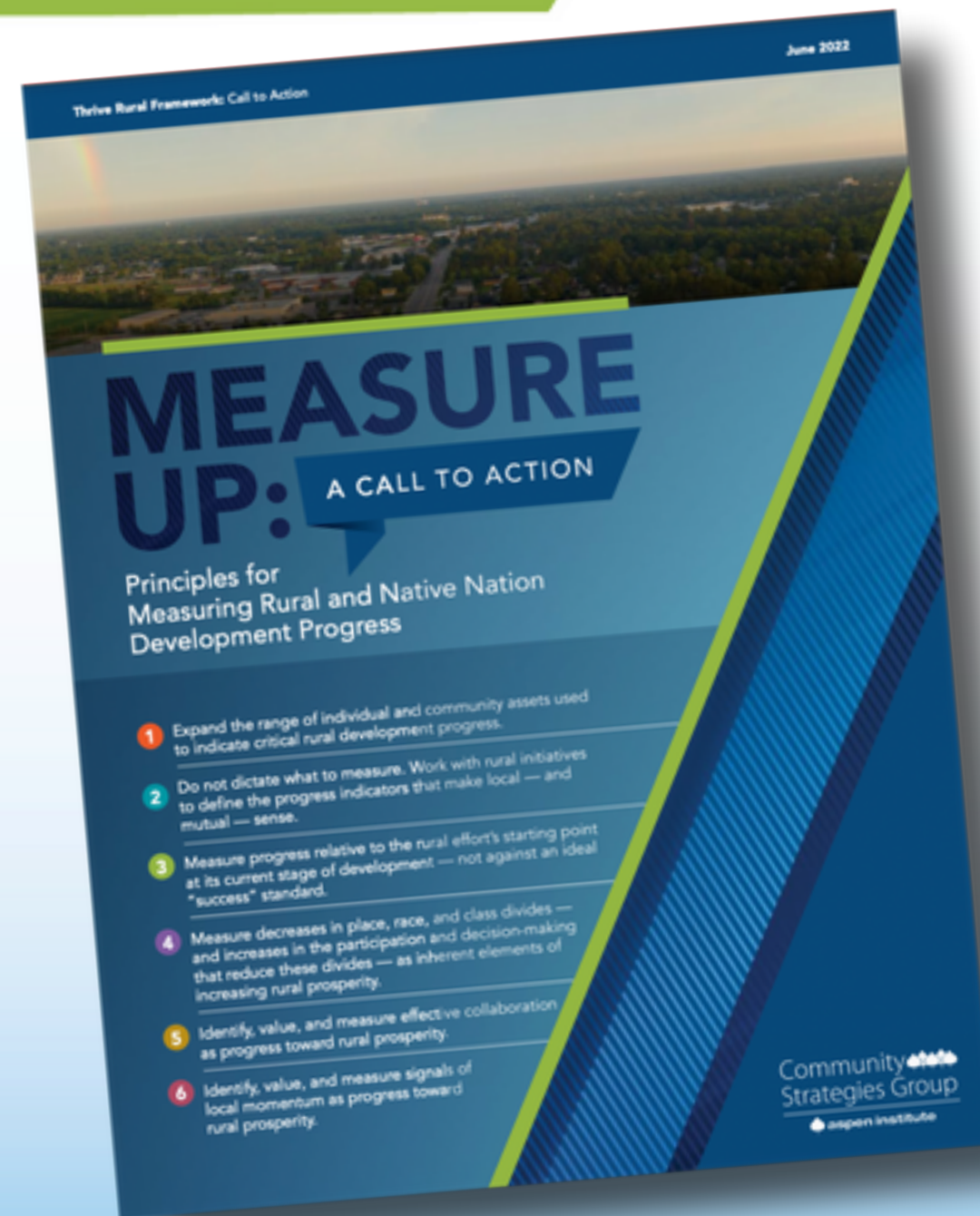
The Foundational Element requires identifying and dismantling historical and ongoing discriminatory practices that disadvantage rural people and places based on place, race, & class.

Why Measurement is Important



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Why Measurement is Important



A fundamental reassessment of how we measure rural development progress and who defines success



Funding pipelines from all sources will have far greater impact



There has to be mutual respect, and I think oftentimes communities value what funders bring to the table because of the connection to the financial resources that will come along with them. But that same respect isn't always given or shown by funders who walk into a space acknowledging the [local] work. . . If you don't demand that, it doesn't happen.



Felicia Lucky
President, Black Belt
Community Foundation

1

Expand the range of individual and community assets used to indicate critical rural development progress.

There is a need for broader, more holistic sets of community and economic development progress measurements.

“

The data for Puna says that 78% of households are ALICE (AssetLimited, Income-Constrained while Employed) and in poverty. A woman from Puna told us, ‘We might be the worst when it comes to income, but we are the best when it comes to ‘ohana (family): None of us are making it on our own, and all of us are making it because of ‘ohana.’ The definition of wealth for Hawai‘i Island communities is very different from what’s being presented to us as a measure of success.

”



Janice Ikeda
Executive Director,
Vibrant Hawai‘i

2

Do not dictate what to measure. Work with rural initiatives to define the progress indicators that make local - and mutual - sense.

Extensive reporting requirements are time-consuming, extractive, and inhibit grantee effectiveness.

“

It seems to me that in rural communities there may be a different quality of conversation about what matters, because of the strength and importance of our social network and our quality of life, more so than how much someone makes, or their status.

”



Ajulo Othow
Founder and CEO,
EnerWealth Solutions

3

Measure progress relative to the rural effort's starting point at its current stage of development - not against an ideal "success" standard.

More progress is made when communities are allowed to assess progress from their own starting points.

“

How you perceive is how you proceed. I believe this and I witness misperceptions about Native America all the time. These misperceptions limit our opportunities and we use a lot of resources to break down these misperceptions just to get to a starting point with funders.

”



Lakota Vogel
Executive Director, Four Bands
Community Fund



Measure decreases in place, race, and class divides – and increases in the participation and decision-making that reduce these divides – as inherent elements of increasing rural prosperity.

Policy and investment designers should reach out to the “unreached rural” in every region, race, and class.



To us, rural is a culture, and when we define it as a culture and make it a topic around equity, I think it’s harder to marginalize rural people in rural places. [A] huge part is just ensuring that people understand who we are and that we have representation in those different buckets – to not only see our successes and see our wins, but to understand how to digest our data and make it a story that’s positive and not weaponize it against us.



Justin Archer Burch
Former Director of Workforce
Development, Rural LISC



5

Identify, value, and measure effective collaboration as progress toward rural prosperity.

Collaboration must be built on trust, shared understanding and goals, broad participation and decision-making across stakeholders

“

[In rural America] nobody has the resources to go it alone. One of the things it takes to do better – that almost no funding streams are willing to pay for – is collaboration. They're willing to pay for that particular project, but the glue that holds it all together is just probably the most difficult piece to find support for in rural communities.

”



John Molinaro
Principal,
RES Associates, LLC



Identify, value, and measure signals of local momentum as progress toward rural prosperity.

Youth engagement is a particularly good indicator of momentum - it increases young adults' belief that they can find a way to stay in the community.



Our native youth, of the ones I was able to survey on Cheyenne River, feel optimistic that they can do better than what their parents had access to. That is a direct reflection of how recently colonization happened to us. You can tell from your grandma going to [non-Native] boarding school that "I'm going to have a better access to education or better opportunity access than what my grandma did." I think that optimism from youth could be a good measurement of success in rural America.



Lakota Vogel
Executive Director,
Four Bands Community Fund





Health Equity & Measurement

Using a community's own understanding of identity and measurement of health is critical for equitably addressing health conditions and supporting community prosperity.

Natural Disaster to Prosperity



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Principles to Move from Natural Disaster to Prosperity in Rural Communities

1

Understand and address the underlying conditions unique to rural affecting disaster vulnerability, response, and recovery

2

Advance worldviews that restore balance and relationships among rural communities and natural systems



Principles to Move from Natural Disaster to Prosperity in Rural Communities

3

Use disaster response to advance equity and increase regional prosperity

4

Build local and regional capacity to address disasters

5

Provide flexible and responsive funding for disaster preparation, response, and recovery

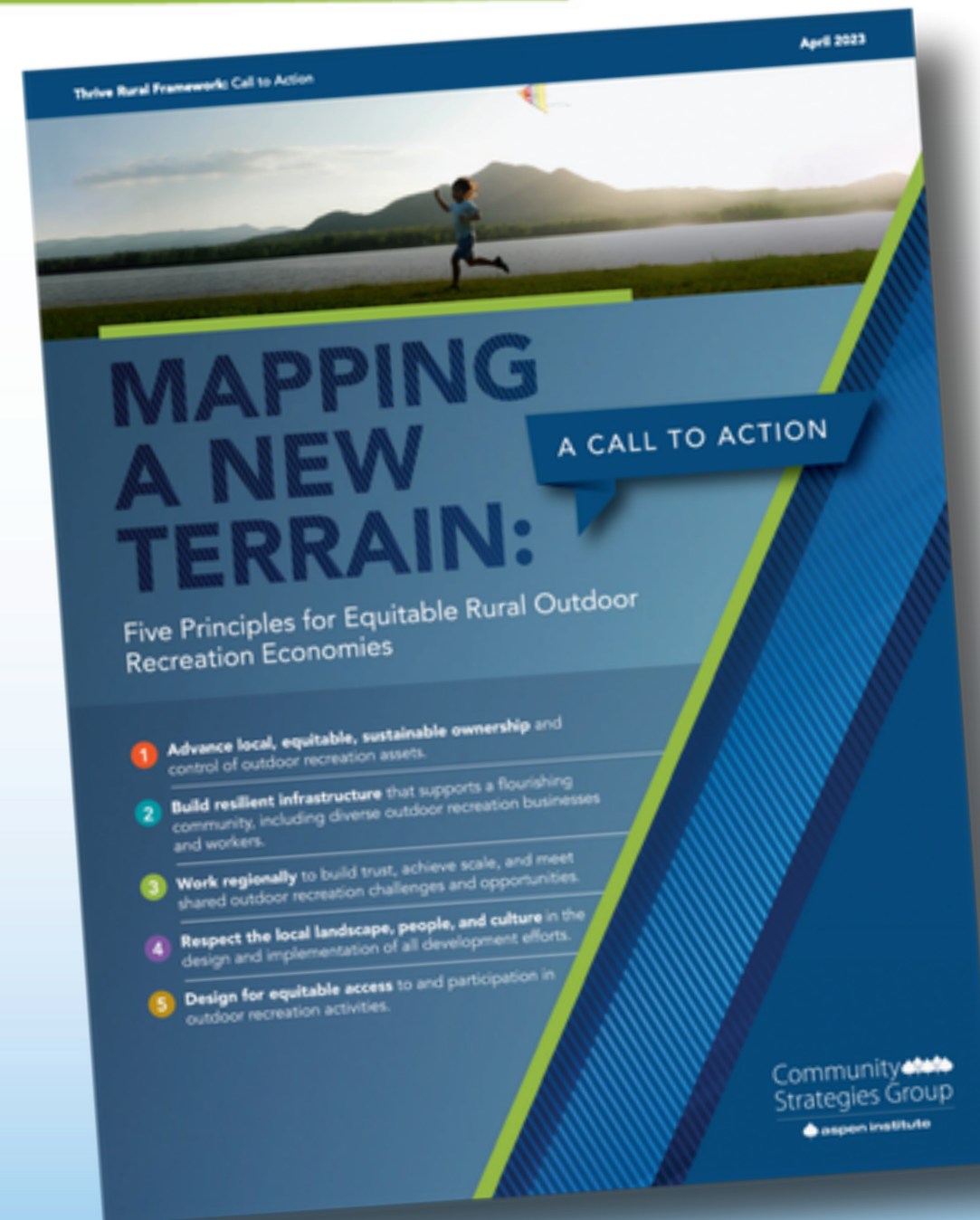


Mapping a New Terrain



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1

Advance local, equitable, sustainable ownership and control of outdoor recreation assets.

Equitable development prioritizes resources that are owned locally and/or advised by stakeholder community members.

“

There's going to be a big transition of wealth over the next 15 to 20 years as boomers age out of business ownership. And in a lot of rural communities, sons and daughters are not interested in taking over these companies that are anchors in the community. If there was a model to transition that could create more cooperatives, it would give a new destiny and opportunity to the community as a whole.



Merald Hollaway
Founder, NC 100

”

2

Build resilient infrastructure that supports a flourishing community, including diverse outdoor recreation businesses and workers.

Equitable rural prosperity necessitates an inclusive development process and steps to avert challenges before they become intractable.

“

Our Chamber of Commerce promoted the National Forest as a place for folks to come up and recreate in the winter. That was great, except our highways and city roads weren't prepared for the traffic. People lined up along the highway out of town and backed up traffic through town, creating hazardous conditions for visitors and people just trying to get through town. It had to be pulled back and rethought with more partners, which took a lot of resources.



Emery Cowan

Program Manager, Rural Voices for Conservation Coalition

”

3

Work regionally to build trust, achieve scale, and meet shared outdoor recreation challenges and opportunities.

Regional action allows localities to address shared challenges and opportunities together and achieve outdoor recreation outcomes at a productive scale.

“

Don't pit small communities against each other. Instead, encourage them to come in together on a grant. Funders shouldn't make it too prescriptive. Every landscape is different. To make it work, a program or grant has to be specific to a rural place, considering its culture, needs, and assets.

”



Ta Enos
Founder and CEO,
PA Wilds Center

4

Respect the local landscape, people, and culture in the design and implementation of all development efforts.

A balanced, respectful relationship is only possible where all participants enter the relationship voluntarily and with the power to shape the interaction.

“

Regenerative tourism means shifting from an extractive relationship to investment and reciprocity. It starts with an awareness of belonging, and from that sense of belonging to that place and community grows what we call kuleana (responsibility, seen as a privilege). It means the aloha spirit, the way of welcoming a person to feel a sense of belonging that translates into a deep sense of responsibility to that place.

”



Janice Ikeda
Executive Director,
Vibrant Hawai'i

5

Design for equitable access to and participation in outdoor recreation activities.

Practitioners expressed fear around engaging with federal funding, given the high stakes involved with potentially making a mistake in project administration or reporting.

“

We need to invest in capacity in the community itself. Thinking about health, kids that get outdoors are much more resilient in the future when they're struggling at home. And so, how do we start doing that in our community? Even these rural youth are not getting outdoors.

”



Oak Rankin
Executive Director,
Glacier Peak Institute

Strategies for Rural

- **Interconnected and Interdependence**
 - **No siloed conversations – everything is in the regional and system**
 - **Non traditional partners / think regionally (dimensions)**
 - **Being Inclusive is more than an invitation – build trust and listen**
 - **Understand all of your regional assets / capitals**
 - **What is really like to be/have a Rural Development Hubs**
 - **New narrative for rural – lead with opportunities, focus on local capacity (abundance vs deficit/scarcity)**
 - **Momentum build community engagement**
- 

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Bonita.Robertson@AspenInstitute.org

Chris.Estes@AspenInstitute.org

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